



## Tsinghua University, Beijing, China

### 'Experiencing China, 2019'

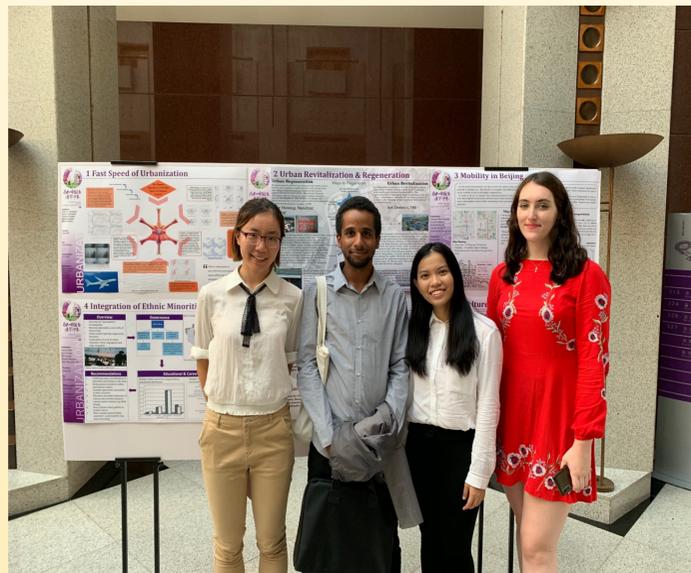
#### Why and what?

Tsinghua University is a leading Chinese and global institution, famed for its elite status and its legacy of producing leading figures in a variety of disciplines. Furthermore, the university is located on land once belonging to the Qing Dynasty royal family and it is also located in Beijing, a leading city in the world.

The 'Experiencing China' international summer school has been designed to introduce foreign students to China and Chinese society whilst also promoting the ongoing openness of the Chinese government. During this all-expenses paid two-week scholarship, Tsinghua allows students to take on a stream of their choosing, ranging from; Architecture, Creative City, Industry Frontier, Environment, International Relations, Gender Studies, and Urbanisation. The school is open to both undergraduates and postgraduates. I chose to apply for the scheme as I have a great interest in travelling and I wanted to experience China, a country that I may otherwise not be able to visit.

#### Experiencing China!

Thanks to Tsinghua University and the wonderful volunteers, I was able to experience much of Beijing, ranging from the Great Wall to the Temple of Heaven!



#### Tips and advice!

- (1) If applying for a Chinese visa, be aware that it is very costly and it can also be difficult as you need to go in person
- (2) China is very cheap and the pound goes far, but make sure that you have cash on arrival as some places do not allow foreign cards
- (3) In Beijing, the heat reached up to 40 degrees so a strong sun protector is advised
- (4) Tap water in China needs to be boiled for safe consumption
- (5) Whilst most of the older population speak no English, they will still help you as best as they can
- (6) Be cautious of the Great Firewall and internet restrictions
- (7) Carry your passport at all times and do not possess any potentially sensitive material that may refer to the Hong Kong protests or even the Tiananmen Square massacre. Additionally, Google Maps do not work easily so find an alternative
- (8) Pollution in Beijing is strong and can be harmful

#### What I gained from the experience

- I worked in a team of international students and this was vital as it helped give me a greater understanding of different perspectives
- After presenting in front of 200 students I gained confidence in public speaking
- Having spent an academic exchange in Canada I was exposed to another approach of education and teaching that has given me a versatility that is helpful towards any student and their understanding of a discipline

#### What to do in Tsinghua and the local area

You can easily spend an entire day exploring the Tsinghua campus alone. There is a museum on the campus dedicated to the arts and it offers an interesting insight into the history of China and its traditions. Campus life is also very active with numerous games of football and basketball being held each night where individuals are free to turn up.

For those more adventurous, there is a local area named Wudaokou that is roughly a twenty minute walk away from campus. It is similar to Leamington Spa in that it is a student hub and there is a lot to do in the area. For instance, my group would often go to Wudaokou for the food on offer that ranged from traditional Chinese dishes to Korean BBQ to western-styled meals. There are also shopping centres in the area and there is a metro centre that can take you into Beijing.

The metro is convenient and easy to use with English translations provided. We were able to use the metro and visit central locations such as the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square. With Tsinghua, trips were also organised to the Great Wall and the famous 798 Arts District that is known as a cultural hub for arts in Beijing.

