



## My Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<b>Host University</b>	The National University of Singapore (NUS)
<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b>	Year 3 Sem 1 (Jan-May is considered as Sem 2 in NUS)
<b>Otago degree(s)</b>	BCom
<b>Major(s)</b>	Finance (minor in Economics)

### Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

<b>Course title</b>	<b>Language of instruction</b>	<b>Otago equivalent</b>	<b>Otago credit value</b>
EC2102 Macroeconomic Analysis I	English	ECON202 Macroeconomics	18
GEX1015/GET1029 Life, the Universe, and Everything	English	PHIL101	18
PL1101E Introduction to Psychology	English	PSYC111	18

Any comments about these papers?

- **Outline/summary/timetable/exam time** of every paper (they call it module in NUS) can be found on the **NUSMods website**.
- For the **detailed course syllabus**, you can **email the related department** or try to find in on the **LumiNUS website** (but NUS started to transfer online resources from using LumiNUS to Canvas from sem2 2023, so I'm not sure if it will still be available, at least give a try).

**EC2102:** It's important to attend every tutorial and make sure you know how to answer the questions intuitively, mathematically, and graphically. I would say this is the hardest paper out of all 3 papers I was taking, but it is manageable to get at least a B. Also, you have to at least present your solutions for tutorial questions at least once in class, in order to get your participation mark for this paper.

**GEX1015:** The prof's lectures were delivered very well, so I highly recommend you attend every in-person lecture. During tutorials, you will have a chance to discuss some philosophy trilemma with your peers, and it will be fun. Make sure you do the weekly quiz well, because it counts quite a bit towards your final grade. The final exam is not very easy but also can be handled if you train your logical thinking well throughout the semester, but however, the concepts they taught can be sometimes ambiguous, make sure you email the prof or TA to know what definition they want to use.

**PL1101E:** This module is graded by weighing your score of 4 online quizzes (have to open your camera and do them on Exemplify) throughout the sem and a final onsite exam, though they are open book exams, it is important to make sure you get good grade for those 4 online quiz and because of the time constraints, you actually don't have much time to check your book often, so make sure you revise well before each exam. In terms of the tutorial, they are not compulsory, but they are fun to attend, so I really recommend you to join the in class discussion and activities with your peers. You will also need to form a team within your tutorial to do a project (video) that weighs 30% towards your final grade, but it is fun too 😊

*How did the academic experience/ workload/ style of teaching differ from Otago?*

Workload- Local students usually like 5 papers per semester, compared to us who have 3-4 as our normal workload. They all study hard, and are being very active during tutorials in terms of attend class discussions and present their workings to other classmates.

Style of teaching- They teach in ways that make students want to listen more, as in, trying to make students to be more curious about what they are studying, rather than making them feel like they have to listen because they need to pass the exams.

## Accommodation

*What accommodation did you stay in? What were the pros and cons of your accommodation?*

I applied for UTown Residence (with Air-con), PGPR (Type A), and UTown Residence (without Air-con) as my first, second, and third preference respectively. I got in my first choice, ie. UTR (with AC), and I would say it is the best accommodation place for exchangers.

Pros: It is the centre of NUS, and it is surrounded by 2 convenience stores (FairPrice, Octobox), one bakery, one hair salon, ATMs, 2 food court (Fine Food and Food Cliques), Subways, Italian restaurants, Japanese and Korean restaurants, as well as 'Super snacks' (usually people go there for supper because it opens till 2-3am). Also, inside each food court you have more than 10 food type options (western, Middle East, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Malaysian, Singaporean, Fruits and juice, snacks, drinks, etc), as well as 3 bubble tea shops in total (吃茶三千, Gongcha, Coconut Queen).

In UTown, there are 3 public bus stops and one school bus stop, if you want to go to MRT station/lecture, you can all take school bus, and it's free 😊

## Money matters

*Please detail your basic costs, e.g. accommodation, flights, visa, food, insurance*

Food: in school canteen (eg. the Deck, Techno Edge, Frontier) usually is \$4-\$7 per meal, in UTown food court (Fine Food, Food Clique) is usually \$5-\$9 per meal). If you go to the mall for meals, it would be around \$6-18 for a proper meal. If you go to residential area's food court, it would be around \$4-8 in general.

UTR accommodation fee: \$3219 (application fee is \$33)

Student Pass (Visa) application fee: \$38

Student Pass Insurance fee: \$110

Flights: CHCH TO SG = \$2160 (Dec 2022); SG TO CHCH= \$915 (MAY 2023)

Sim card: \$20 ish per month ( I used Giga)

*What means did you use to access your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, Cash passport, foreign bank account, etc.)*

In malls I mainly use credit card (visa card), but in school foodcourt/canteen/hawker centre outside of school, you need to either use PayLah, PayNow, or cash.

In order to use PayLah and PayNow, you have to open a local bank account (eg. DBS) and it takes 2 weeks or longer to receive it, then you can transfer your money into that account and use it.

Personally I didn't bother to get one, because in UTown and all MRT stations they have DBS ATMs that can withdraw money with \$5 transaction fee, so before I headed to sg I already changed some sgd cash for daily use on food, I also withdrew money in Singapore using ATM (only once).

For taking train and bus, you can just go to the MRT station and ask to buy a EZLink card, and top up it as you use using the machines inside the MRT station. Please note that bus drivers cannot top up for you!

## Visas & Insurance

*Did you have to apply for a visa? What was the process?*

You can apply the Student Pass (Student visa) once you receive your offer from NUS in Nov. Then NUS will send you a very comprehensive email giving you all the instructions for applying visa on the ICA website.

Once you get the IPA letter that allows you to enter sg for 30days, you are done with the first stag of application. Then if you have already booked your flight ticket, you can make an appointment on Jan on the ICA website for going to the ICA building in person to your Student Pass card.

The alternative is that you can wait for NUS to have the student pass session that allow you to do the process onsite in school, but for that one, you cannot get your card straightaway but have to wait for 2 weeks, whereas the appointment that you can make online allows you to get it straightaway, it's just that you have to go there early in the morning on the day of your appointment, to get a number and wait for them calling you, but it will only take half a day at max.

After holding your Student Pass card in hand, you are able to leave/enter Singapore for travel till it expires.

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

When you apply for student visa(STP), you have to pay for STP insurance.

Also, university have a mandatory insurance: Group Personal Accident Policy, and you will pay it along your miscellaneous student fee. (once you get the offer, they will give u a brochure that has all the steps for everything, so don't worry! Just work on it along their instructions)~

## Extra-curricular/Social Activities

*What organised activities were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?*

They have many CCAs that you can join ( especially if you are going on sem1, because most of them are recruiting on sem1. But if you are going on sem2, you can still join by checking out this website ([CCA \(nus.edu.sg\)](http://CCA.nus.edu.sg)) and contact them to ask for more information.

*What was the university/ city like?*

The university is nice. If you don't get a chance to stay in UTown Residence, I strongly recommend you to visit UTown, because it is one of the famous places in NUS. For FASS (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) students, your lecture rooms are usually near the Deck Canteen and the Central Library, and you will be climbing up and down stairs quite often..

*Any recommendations for things to do, places to visit, places to eat etc.?*

-Clementi Mall for food (B1, level 3 Boleh Boleh food court, top floor Yakiniku Like)

-Chinatown

-Vivocity Mall (many food and places to shop around)

-Orchard, Somerset (many food and places to shop around)

-Jurong East (Westgate mall, IMM mall, Jem mall)

- Universal Studio of Singapore

-Sentosa

-Merlion Park and Marina Bay Sands

-Clarke Quay

-Gardens by the bay, Flower dome

-Raffles place

-National Gallery, National Museum

- Funan Mall (many food and places to shop around)

-Tanjong Pagar (Korean food)

-The Star Vista (FOOD)

AND... MANY MORE FOR YOU TO EXPLOREEEE!!

*Any tips for future students?*

Singapore is humid and hot, so please bring T-shirt and shorts. However, please note that when you are inside malls/library/MRT/bus/lecture rooms, the Aircon temperature is very low, so you have to bring long sleeve jacket or shirts to avoid catching a cold. ~

Just enjoy your time there and get to know other exchange students, as well as local students! They are all very friendly and nice! Hope you have a wonderful time there! (I enjoyed mine so much and don't even want to say goodbye to my exchange life~)

## Overall Experience

*Please write one paragraph (or more) about your exchange experience. Please include some photos!*

I applied to be in part of the exchange program because I haven't been able to go overseas since COVID, and I really wanted to train myself to be more independent and responsible. However, at the start I was scared to go aboard alone, since I was the only one who applied Singapore university in Otago, but my family and friends encouraged me a lot, so I made the move. Now, when I look back, I am very glad that I decided to go, because it turned out very well, I made lots of friends, we play together, eat together, and study together during exam period. I also get to know a lot about the country itself, their history and culture, as well as SINGLISH. The people there are very friendly, and the country is multi-cultural and diverse. I enjoyed eating different types of food (food there are cheap!) Lots of my exchange friends were travelling around Asia during the semester but I didn't, instead, I was spending a lot of time with local students and trying out different kinds of local food, visiting almost all places in Singapore and got to know the country in depth. However, it is very worth to go on trips around Asian countries since you are already in Asia! It would be much more convenient, and the flight tickets are much cheaper as well. So by the end of my semester, I went to Bali in Indonesia with friends for a few days' vacation after my final exams. After that, I also went back to my home country China for 1.5 months for travelling and visiting purposes.

FYI: The common countries that exchangers would travel to are Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Taiwan, Japan, Korea.

*Overall, going on exchange is a decision I've made that I would never regret! The experience I've gained during my exchange is very precious, and during that journey, I finally found my goal and pursuit in life, thank you!*

### SOME PHOTOS





