



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	National University Of Singapore
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 1, 2019
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Science
Major(s)	Computer Science

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
CS3245 Information Retrieval	English	COSC 300 level	18
CS3211 Parallel and Concurrent Programming	English	COSC 300 level	18
MA2219 Introduction to Geometry	English	MATH 200 level	18

Any comments about these papers?

Parallel and Concurrent Programming doesn't have much programming.

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

Grade is not as heavily reliant on final exam. Seems to be more independent learning as most papers just have one 2-hour lecture and one tutorial or lab a week. Workload is probably a little less than Otago per paper

Accommodation

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

I stayed in Residential College 4, which is the 4th residential college to be built. Having a name like that really makes it difficult to get into the College Spirit but fortunately the college was nice enough

to help out by offering lots of opportunities to participate in things like the inter-college games or just general floor activities. The residential colleges are all located in UTown and are probably the nicest places to live on campus. Most people hang out in UTown so living there makes things quite easy. All exchange students are pretty much guaranteed to get on-campus accommodation and there are a few options that may be closer to your classes but you won't be going to any of those as an exchange student so my recommendation is UTown. The only real con of the residential colleges is that they cost more but you also get better food and aircon so you won't wake up drenched in sweat.

Money matters

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

Flights : Return to NZ I paid about \$1800 but spent an extra like \$1200 on various flights around south-east Asia during and after the semester

Food : about \$40 a week since breakfast and dinner was supplied by dining hall

Accommodation : \$4000 for the semester including food plan for breakfast and dinner

Insurance : \$800 for exchange and travelling Asia afterwards

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

I just used my Visa card and paid the 2% overseas rate. Might be better alternatives. You can open a bank account here with one of the banks as a student but I'm not sure about the details.

Visas & Insurance

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

You have to apply for a student pass before you arrive in Singapore. NUS will send an email about how to do this. You will need to print your approval letter out and present it when entering Singapore. Then there is a special day on which you can finish your application on campus and pick up your student pass later on in the week.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Not that I'm aware of but maybe they just forgot to charge me.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

NUS has heaps of clubs for basically anything you can think of open to join but some only take in new members in semester 1 (which is Semester 2 at Otago). There is a number of activities exclusively for exchange students in the first couple of weeks which I would recommend attending since they are a great way to meet people.

What was the university/ city like?

Singapore is very clean. Singapore can seem quite strict when you read about all the laws and rules inside of campus but most of these are really just there to scare people and are not really enforced. It's easy and cheap to get around the city using public transport which is very well organised. City is very modern and everyone other than some of the staff in the food stalls on campus speaks english which is a great bonus if you are an ignorant white person like me.

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

Food on campus is pretty cheap and tastes decent. More of a quantity guy when it comes to food since I enjoy the taste of most things. Keeping that in mind there's a few decent buffets around and I occasionally will hear people mention places with great food. Food is a big part of people's lives in Singapore, which I guess is a thing in most places since people need food, but you'll hear Singaporeans talk about it more often than others. Places to visit are not as many as the tourism board may have you believe as you can see most of the major things in a couple of days. This includes things like the Gardens by the Bay and the Gardens by the Bay. There's also a pretty good clubbing scene if you're into that sort of thing.

Any tips for future students?

For group projects just try to get into groups with the locals since they will probably do most of the work for you. As a straight A student, I would encourage you to stay on top of your school work during the semester as I know a lot of exchange students that were panicking towards the end as they realised that they actually needed to get a few of the answers correct to pass. Doing this also means you can get in some more time travelling during reading week. Students at NUS are graded on a bell curve, which means your grades are based on how you compare to other students in the class.

Overall Experience

Overall Singapore was a great place to go on exchange since it has a huge number of other exchange students who will be very keen to hang out and travel with you any time. Singapore is also a great place to travel from if you want to see Asia. I really enjoyed my time and made some friends from other countries.

Also some pictures. I'm really happy in all of these even if it doesn't look like it.



