



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	National University of Singapore
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2 - 2022
Otago degree(s)	Bsc Biomedical Sciences
Major(s)	Reproduction, Genetics, and Development

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
Synthetic Biology	English	GENE300
Immunology	English	MICR334
Developmental Biology	English	ANAT333

Total Otago credits gained: 54 points 72 points 108 points _____

Any comments about these papers?

I would really recommend the Synthetic biology paper to anyone taking bio/chem classes at NUS. It is a really forward-thinking class where you find out about discoveries in the past 5 years and the professors teach you how to plan and get excited to do your own research.

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

A lot different. The academic rigour was much higher but I also feel that there was more support. Every mid-term exam would have a full review given, with explanation of the correct answers, and there would be unmarked exams just to check your own understanding, without any pressure.

I also really appreciated the openness of the sciences at NUS. We were allowed our phones in the labs and were encouraged to take photos, come back into the lab after-hours, and there were plenty of opportunities to join a research group or intern even as an undergrad.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in the NUS campus halls, specifically Kent Ridge Halls.

Cons – No aircon (unless you won the lottery for a room that includes). Honestly terrible for the first week but then you get used to 32 degree and 100% humidity. Would still recommend going elsewhere (eg. Library, malls) during the day.

Pros- An absolute plethora of clubs and study groups to join. No shortage of events to attend and all the residents are BFFS. The food is pretty good and is unbelievably cheap. To be honest, you shouldn't stay anywhere else in Singapore but student housing, just for the costs and all the issues with finding your own accommodation. If you're lucky try applying for the new student housing like U-Town.

Money matters

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

Flat rate of housing, around \$3000 NZD for the term, including food.

Flights are a bit of a killer but luckily I got the Otago Exchange grant to cover some.

Singapore is like any big city, you can eat Michelin star food, or you can have amazing street noodles for \$2. Overall food is much much cheaper than NZ. However, don't be surprised when you go out and a cocktail is a minimum of \$25 sgd.

Get a train pass and don't uber. Getting the card and topping it up weekly means you'll spend \$25 a week on the trains but can be out all day.

See below for visa and insurance.

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

Creating a bank account there may be a pain in the butt. Everyone takes cash, apple apply, payWave or etc instead.

Visas & Insurance

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

Yes, its easy as. Just get accepted into NUS, fill out the Singaporean migrancy form, pay, and you'll get your visa within 2 weeks.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes. Make sure Otago and your exchange university is on the same page about your agreements eg. Insurance coverage and student service fees because otherwise they're going to both try charging you. I would not recommend Student safe outbound, get the insurance that is recommended by your exchange university instead.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

Honestly there were so many events that I didn't really go to any. Its everything from cultural tours of Singapore, meet and greets with coffee, travel groups around SE Asia, and more. Anything you could ever want. I'd recommend the ones where you actually meet Singaporeans (aka the activities held outside of the International student office) instead of the ones you're surrounded by other exchange students.

What was the university/ city like?

University campus is pretty old but situation outside the CBD area in a jungle-like environment. Loads of monkeys and trees which is quite beautiful.

As soon as you leave the campus, you can be downtown. It usually bustling with tourists during the day, but you'll find its nice (and safe) to walk around after the sun is down. Beautiful lights, everything is clean, and you're just 20 minutes from your dorm room.

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

Anything Marina Bay Sands. Make sure to hit all the restaurants there, the art & science museum, rooftop bars, and if you can then get a hotel room before leaving. Sentosa is nice for seafood and some beach clubs but I wouldn't recommend getting in the water. The Universal Studios is tiny too.

Singapore is a great hub for travel. Go to Kuala Lumpur on the weekend, and Thailand or Indonesia during your midterm break.

Any tips for future students?

Spend your 9-5 studying in libraries and cafes in Singapore. At any other moment, leave Singapore. Its super easy and surprisingly cheap. A semester in Singapore is perfect for backpacking SE Asia while still getting your degree checked off.

Overall Experience

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

I meet some of my favourite people ever in Singapore. You will really learn the definition of work hard, play hard here. It is a great place to hustle and make connections with your future industry, as well as to travel and have fun.

During my time at NUS, I got offers for post-graduate study, did an internship, meet some of the world-leaders in my field, and passed all my exams lol, all while spending time in Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Malaysia, going to Singapore's F1 2022 race, and of course concerts and festivals.

Go to NUS if you're ready to do it all.



General pics of SG





From NUS ^

F1 Weekend:

