



Student Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Otago degree(s)	Llb & BCom	Major(s)	Law and Accounting
Host University	National University of Singapore (NUS)	Semester & Year of Exchange	S 2, 2017

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
Developing States in a Changing World Order	English	Laws 300 level paper	18
International Disputes Settlement	English	Laws 300 level paper	18
Fixed Income Securities	English	Finance 300 level paper	18

Any comments about these papers?

Although being promised a couple of papers from the exchange university within the business department, I was only able to secure one paper. Not only was it difficult to find cross creditable papers to my degree, I found the exchange coordinator at the business school unhelpful. Generally, the exchange coordinators at the University of Otago were very prompt in their email responses.

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

- 3 hour lectures - one per paper each week
- Discussion based, seminar like lectures
- Called for an opinion based answer rather than that of a factual basis in law lectures, more 'less law intensive papers' and more holistic thinking
- Participation and class presence mandatory

Accommodation

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

I stayed at the University Town Residence apartment style, on campus accommodation. It was the best option for me of which I really enjoyed.

Pros:

- On campus and central locality
- Many exchange students stay in U-town residence, so it was easy to meet other exchange students
- Apartment styled accommodation made it easier to get to know flatmates - some accommodation types only had single rooms without a common living space
- Many post graduate students also
- Clean and modern because the buildings are only less than 5 years old

Cons:

- Did not meet as many locals because the majority of students were exchange students
- Not all apartments have air conditioning. Singapore is a very humid and hot country so people who can't cope with heat may not find this appealing. In saying that, this is similar with many of the accommodation types. You will find each accommodation (hostel) only allocate a limited number of air conditioned apartments.

Money matters

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

- Accommodation \$2,500
- Flights return \$1000
- No visa required for Singapore
- Food \$3-6 per meal
- Travel Insurance for 5 months \$300

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

- Cash Passport and then withdrew cash - foreign bank account required a lot of administration and transfer costs from my NZ bank to the foreign bank account proved that it was not worth me opening a foreign bank account

Visas & Insurance

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

Singapore did not require a VISA for NZ citizens, however, I did require a student pass. The University talks us through the application process. It is a long process that begins from when you first apply for the university (before leaving for Singapore and before the exchange started). Received it by the end of orientation week. There is an alternative option that means you can collect it from the immigration office at a later time, as arranged by appointment.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

I believe so.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There are many. Attend the clubs day at the beginning of the year to discover what you would like to join. There are arts, sports, culture, you name it. Most activities require one training/ practise

session per week, but some require more commitment. I joined boxing which required an hour a week. I thoroughly enjoyed it, it was \$80 to join and I had to purchase my own boxing gloves.

What was the university/ city like?

Modern, expansive (a lot of area), catered for student life very well. There are 6 inner campus buses to transport students to their hostels, lectures, the MRT, etc.

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

- Super Trees
- Gardens by the Bay
- Marina Bay Sands
- China Town
- Bugis area hawker food markets and temples
- Sentosa Beach
- Universal Studios
- Water world
- Night Safari
- Jurong Bird Park
- Singapore Flyer



Eat:

- Hainese Chicken Rice
- Mee Reebus/ Siam (same flavour, different types of noodles)
- Cheese Prata
- Laksa
- Chilli Crab
- Bak Kut Teh
- Mee Goreng

Drink:

- Sugar Cane juice
- Teh Tarik
- Lime Juice
- Avocado Juice

Any tips for future students?

- Be prepared for the heat. Singapore is one of the hottest and most humid countries in the world.
- NUS has a substantial amount of administration tied up in enrolling as a student and in applying for papers in the first few weeks (week before orientation week).
- If you are interested in travel, make sure you make the most of your early weekends before tests and due dates for assignments set in place.

Overall Experience

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

Living in South East Asia for half a year

5 months, 9 countries – spanning Singapore, Philippines, France, Laos, Indonesia, Brunei, Vietnam, Cambodia and Japan. Initially, the reason I decided to undergo my exchange with the National University of Singapore (NUS) was centred around its academic value. It is a top ranked university within Asia, the competitive climate and international scene attracted me, and the exchange programme appeared to be very well established. The student exchange programme provided all of those features and more. Singapore turned out to be a great centralised hub to travel to and from, not because of the number of flights it offered but also because Singapore became a comfortable, safe and efficient home we could return to, post excursion.



The opportunity to live in the technology rich, commerce filled country of Singapore was appealing. The only real vice of living in Singapore was the heat and humidity. Although it proved to be swelteringly overwhelming at first, the skyscraper skyline, the cheap and yummy eats and efficiency of transport, more than made up for slight discomfort.

The student led programmes within the exchange itself were very well organised. Prior to orientation week, several activities were offered for exchange students: many meet and greets, shopping trips (to set ourselves up), food tours and city adventures were available, just to name a few. Additionally, the university and each separate hostel celebrated festivals such as the Chinese Autumn Winter Festival and Indian New Year, Deepvali.

Class was also a bit different to what I was used to. Three hour lectures, with a class of up to 50 students meant that we could be called on to answer questions at any point of the lecture. Despite the shock at first, this became a favourable way to learn. The lecturers themselves, were each esteemed of course, and put forward a range of topical ideas in a seminar like lecture, with less than 50 students in each class. The discussion based classes proved successful and easier to engage and participate in discussions.

Going into the exchange, some of the memories that I take away with me include eating a tarantula in Cambodia, shooting an AK74 gun at the Cu Chi Tunnels in Vietnam, and meeting 13 female elephants in Laos. Apart from experiencing things I never expected I would, I grew an appreciation for the Asian culture, its history, and the people who live there today. The education I received from the National University of Singapore, coupled with the travels I embarked on, fed my curiosity and hunger to learn, and continues to push me to pursue a higher education and greater thirst for knowledge in a more focused and poignant way.

I couldn't speak more highly of the experience and how it has benefited me.

Thank you to the University of Otago, the exchange department and Westpac for their support and making such a great opportunity available to me.

