



## Student Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<b>Otago degree(s)</b>	<b>BCOM BA</b>	<b>Major(s) International Business, Economics</b>
<b>Host University</b>	National University of Singapore (NUS)	<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange S1, 2018</b>

### Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value

Any comments about these papers?

I chose 2 South East Asian economics papers, and 1 Bahasa Indonesian paper. The South East Asian papers were very interesting but I wouldn't recommend the Indonesian paper. Many of the students grew up with a Malaysian or Indonesian nanny so they have had much more exposure. Even at the entry level the pace was very fast and not as suitable for someone that has never come into contact with Indonesian or Malay as they are somewhat similar. The 100 level entry level paper was around the pace and difficulty of a 200 level language paper at Otago.

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

I had fewer classes a week in comparison to Otago, but classes were generally 2-3 hours long. In terms of selecting papers, prepare some back-ups, you won't always be able to get all the ones you want, or some may have clashes. You will be given time upon arrival to change around your papers just like at Otago.

## **Accommodation**

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

Most exchange students stay at UTown including myself. It is a new area equipped with a field, infinity pool, gym, two cafeterias, 24hr convenient store and multiple study areas. Food in the University is relatively cheap because it's subsidized. There is usually one cafeteria per faculty building/area. Each cafeteria is similar to a food court with different types of stalls you can choose from. Average meal plus drink would cost around \$5-\$6. In terms of the types of food offered, each cafeteria has at least one Malay, Chinese, Indian, vegetarian and western stall. All rooms have a fan, not all rooms are equipped with air conditioners, but it's part of the experience. Shower heaps and keep your windows open.

In terms of accommodation, Utown is an area; Utown Residence is the building most exchange students are in. Within Utown, you will be put into apartments that have 4 bedrooms each with a single bed. You will also have a shared lounge, toilet and bathroom. You can't cook but there is a fridge, microwave, sink and kettle. There is a shared laundry for the residence equipped with washers and dryers. You will need coins or your metro card for these.

## **Money matters**

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

In terms of money it can really depend on how much and how your travel. If you really want to keep the budget low then exploring Singapore and sticking to UTown food will save you a lot of money.

Flights to and from NZ \$1500

Accommodation \$2730

Students pass (visa) \$30

Insurance \$400

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

I opened a bank account at DBS in Singapore. DBS has a branch in uni, they also offer a multi-currency card free of charges. It's also great for travelling. Transferring from a NZ account directly to a Singapore account incurs a fee of around \$50. I have found that transferwise is the most cost effective option. You do need to either take enough cash for 2 weeks or use your NZ card for the first 2 weeks or so before your card is all processed and activated.

## **Visas & Insurance**

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

If you have a NZ passport you don't need a visa, you just need to apply for a student pass. Nus will send you detailed information after you get accepted. There is just a small processing fee you will need to pay online.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

### **Extra-curricular/Social Activities**

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

There is almost a club for anything ranging from sports to photography. Clubs are a good way to meet local students but some of them can be time consuming. Joining clubs is a good option if you plan to travel less and spend more time in Singapore.

What was the university/ city like?

The university is a bit far out from the CBD, but there's a shuttle from University that will take you to the MRT station and from there you can get to the CBD. Another option is Grab which is their version of Uber. If you are heading in with a few friends Grab is probably a better and faster option. The bus system is also very good and on time. Citymapper is a very good app for this.

The weather is always humid and hot. Singapore only has two seasons. It's either rainy or non-rainy season. In terms of clothes, you sweat a lot so I recommend breathable and light fabrics.

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

Any tips for future students?

Go with an open mind, you will meet students from many different places. Explore the city and for girls, I wouldn't bother too much with makeup because you sweat so much it will probably end up coming off eventually. It is very humid and hot so drink heaps of water and wear breathable light clothing.

Hawker centres are like cheap food courts with cheap and good food. They can be found all over Singapore.

### **Overall Experience**

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

Singapore is an amazing hub. It's super cheap to fly out of Changi and it is one of the most efficient airports I've ever seen. The idea of cheap international flights is foreign to us in NZ but Singapore will really open your eyes on how cheap flights can be. Sometimes a taxi home from the CBD will probably cost more than a flight to Bali. Singapore is efficient, clean, modern and orderly. It allows you to access and explore all the countries in Asia easily but also gives you a home to come back to after chaos. We did a test once to see how quick we could get out of Changi Airport. From the moment we got off the plane to getting into the Taxi, it took us exactly 20mins. This might not seem significant but once you see the size of that place, you will be amazed.

My experience in Singapore made a significant influence to my personal growth and enhanced my knowledge academically. I was given the opportunity to learn about the economic environments of south East Asia, and also travel to many places in Asia. Singapore is a good option for those who want to gain a better understanding of the growing Asian region but still having the comfort of familiarity. English is the first language in Singapore who language barrier isn't a problem. Although it may take some time to get used to the Singaporean accent.

During my time abroad I mostly studied the dynamics of South East Asian economies and was at the National University of Singapore. The campus is quite big in comparison to Otago but there are shuttles that run around the campus so there's no need to worry.

In the first few weeks you get endless opportunities to meet other exchange students in the same position as you. These people will soon become your family, friends and travelling buddies! For all the ladies reading this! Wednesdays in Singapore is Ladies Night so most bars and clubs will have free entry and free drinks for you!