



Student Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Otago degree(s)	LLB/BA	Major(s)	Politics/History
Host University	Singapore (NUS)	Semester & Year of Exchange	2018 S1

Academics

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
South East Asian POLITICS (PS2245)	English	POLS200	18
Govt & Pols of Singapore (PS2249)	English	POLS200	18
History of Modern Japan (HY2232)	English	HISTS200	18
History of Asia (HY1101E)	English	HIST100	18

I loved taking a selection of papers that helped me understand the diverse history and politics of the region. The lecturers at NUS were amazing and lectured in a similar way to Otago; however seemed to put slightly more focus into internal assessment rather than external, (credits were received through essays, map quizzes of the region, contribution in class, presence and presentations in tutorials and end of year exams tended to be 40%).

The history and perspectives towards certain events that I studied in Singapore also displayed quite different perspective on the same history that I had learnt in NZ high school/University which was very interesting.

The workload was manageable with time to spare for travel every second weekend for me personally, and for some of my friends even more. It was quite easy to rearrange my schedule to allow for Fridays off every second week to allow for this. On Monday I didn't have class till 4pm so would often arrive back Mondays.

Both history and Politics department assigned quite a few readings however it was a manageable amount and the sort of readings that were easy to read on planes.

The exams were of a similar style to Otago – 3 hour exam with a combination of essays or problem questions and you do 2or3 out of 5or6 options.

Accommodation

I stayed in Unitown Residence and I cannot recommend it enough. This was where most exchange students stayed and was right in the middle of Utown.

Utown is the equivalence of perhaps central library/link/hangout areas in Dunedin except on a much larger scale as it is the place that all students come to hang out. It has a field, gym, sky pool, 24hr minimart, 2 Food courts, rooms for yoga and studying and connects to the efficient bus system.

The location therefore is amazing as it is right in the thick of the social activity day to day.

It also houses only exchange students and post grad students and they divide it up with 2 post grad and 2 exchangers per 4man apartment so you will be guaranteed to meet locals and exchangers. They also divide men and women with women on odd floors and men on even floors (same sex flatmates).

This cost around 150p/w and included all power/Wi-Fi.

Only cooking facilities we were allowed were microwave and fridge. This was ok to be honest as most of the food at the UTown food courts was between \$2-5 and was a cool way to meet people.

Money matters

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

Flights: STA travel \$1200 in total to get to SG and then home

Insurance: Southern Cross - about NZ\$400 for 6 Months

Accommodation: SG\$140 p/w including power and Wi-Fi

Visa: SG\$300 including a combination of fees from start to finish of the process

Food: SG\$105 p/w (made breakfast at home but ate out a lot)

I used a travel-Ex card which I pre-loaded with SG dollars and a few other countries I knew I would travel to and used this for online purchases (e.g. flights) to avoid fees

Additionally ANZ had a student deal with tertiary pack, which removed international ATM or transaction fees so I used ANZ to get money from ATMs and used cash mostly the whole time.

Visas & Insurance

You need a visa to enter Singapore however when you have been accepted into the university they send you via email an application and clear instructions on how to apply.

There are a few steps you need to take before you travel to Singapore however during orientation at NUS the university organizes students by country and they line up and complete their application for their visas together.

NUS had a mandatory insurance that cost around SG\$200 for one semester however did not cover the requirements Otago university has for students travel insurance (only covered incidents in

Singapore and nothing outside of it) so I still needed regular travel insurance. The NUS insurance meant I could claim back all money spent on doctor's visits among other things.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

NUS provided so many different extra-curricular activities. There was advertising for them all around campus and specific lists are on the NUS website but they had regular yoga, ultimate Frisbee, volunteering teaching English opportunities, cheerleading, dance, religious and karate groups.

O-Week especially has a lot of organized activities for exchangers e.g. City tours which are good to meet people and also the exchange community has a Facebook group that all exchangers get added to and any exchange students/the local student admins often organize trips for the exchangers.

What was the university/ country like?

The Country itself only takes 2.5hrs to drive across the width of but is jam packed with the same population as New Zealand so is an intense high-rise city landscape but still has amazing greenspaces and a monkey bush walk. It was also meticulously clean and very safe. Crime rates in Singapore are very low.

There is so much to do outside of university also. The metro is the most efficient and cheap method of transport and connects to all areas of Singapore directly into the main malls often. Most things are open till very late and they have dancing or karaoke or outdoor movie nights or amazing food deals somewhere every night.

Interesting thing to note is that women get into most clubs free and often receive free drink vouchers on entry, whereas men only receive free entry into most clubs and never get free drinks.

Definitely check out the Gardens by the Bay light show, the Macritchie treetop walk, and the marina bay sands club 55 Cheese and chocolate buffet.

Also take a \$15, 5 hr bus or \$30 45min flight to cool city of Kuala Lumpur for the weekend or a \$40 flight to Penang for a tropical beachside escape.

