



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	National University of Singapore
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester Two 2019
Otago degree(s)	Commerce
Major(s)	Accounting

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
FIN3707B	English	300 level unspecified finance	18
MKT1705X	English	MART 112	18
MNO1706X	English	MANT 101	18

Any comments about these papers?

The National University of Singapore (NUS) didn't offer any accounting papers in the semester that I applied for, which made finding papers difficult. However, I managed to cross credit two 100-level business core papers and substitute a finance paper for a 300 level accounting paper to make it work.

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

The teaching style is very similar to Otago. There is just the one lecture a week and it will go for 1.5-2.5 hours, with a tutorial every fortnight. I found the workload surprisingly doable, leaving plenty of time for other things!

Accommodation

University town is the hub for all socialising with a gym, pool and large sports green. It's also where you eat your meals so it's where you want to be. I stayed at U-town Residence (non-AC) and I would highly recommend it! It's apartment style living with two 25 story tower blocks. There are four people to an apartment, which is usually a mix of exchange and local students. There is only one gender to a floor so some floors will have all girls and others all boys etc. The apartment is nice (very plain), but definitely sufficient. There aren't any cooking facilities but there are two large food courts in Utown with cheap meals (between \$3-\$6). There is a cleaner who will come in every week and give your apartment a clean. The rooms each have a fan, and come furnished. There aren't any towels or sheets so you need to either come equipped or buy them the day you arrived. There is the

option to have an air-conditioned unit, but they are highly sought after and not guaranteed. They are also on the lower stories of the buildings so you don't get the view. I found the non-AC to be fine as you adjust to the humidity pretty fast. University town is close to the lecture halls and is a 10-minute bus ride from the nearest MRT where from there you can get into the city. There is also a laundry room where you can wash and dry your clothes.

Money matters

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

Accommodation in Singapore is subsidised for students. My accommodation was NZ\$160 per week and this included electricity and wifi. I bought my flights quite late. I flew Air NZ, which give you a baggage allowance of 46kg, which definitely takes out the stress of narrowing down what to take/take back. My flights were also direct and cost \$1700 return. I also took out travel insurance, which cost around \$800. I bought my flights and insurance through flight centre. I don't recall the visa being too expensive, there was a fee at the beginning of \$90 with no other fees. Food is very cheap in Singapore (much cheaper than NZ). If you are in a non-catered accommodation, you will be buying each meal and this will cost around \$150 per week. You are also going to want to have excess funds going over for travelling!

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

I didn't bother opening a foreign bank account. I used my debit card a lot and would use this to get out cash. The Singapore economy is very cash heavy and you will find yourself carrying cash everywhere. I would recommend exchanging some money before you leave so that you have some money to pay the cab driver etc. You will also need to buy a nets or ezlink card when you get to Singapore and put about \$100 on this. This is what you will be using to pay for the MRT and public buses. Some shops also accept this card as a payment.

Visas & Insurance

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

You have to apply for a student pass through ICA SOLAR. Once I had been accepted by NUS, they sent me the details on how to apply for the visa and it becomes clearer then. Once your visa is approved, they will send you a letter to take to the Immigration checkpoint in Singapore. This will get you into the country. The New Zealand officials aren't used to these letters so they may stop you to inspect it (as they did with me). You should also be given instructions on the letter of all the items you need to bring to your appointment in Singapore where you will collect your student pass. It will save you a lot of hassle if you get everything that you need to bring to them before you leave NZ. Regarding insurance, NUS requires you to enter into their insurance scheme, which is round \$60.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

The University puts on student events. There are also a lot of meet and greet events for exchange students near the beginning. On Facebook, there is a page called Hazel's Guest list that the exchange students request to join where exchange students receive complimentary entry into bars and clubs. They also put on Exchangers night outs, pool parties, private island getaways, trips and lots of other cool things. The university has many clubs and societies that you can join as well.

What was the university/ city like?

The university is very impressive. It's very big, much bigger than Otago! It has its own bus system to get from class to class. There are videos on YouTube of campus tours that you can look at. Singapore itself is very beautiful. It's very modern, clean and full of people! It's incredibly humid. Don't bother bringing anything warm unless you plan on travelling elsewhere. At most, you will need something light to put on when the AC is too strong. Singapore has a very good transport system, making it easy to get around by yourself. It's also close to many other countries in South-East Asia. It's a bus-ride from Malaysia and only a couple hours by plane from Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Indonesia! You can also easily travel to the Philippines while you are there. If you are a city person and you enjoy the heat, then I would highly recommend Singapore!

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

If you are looking for somewhere to eat you should visit a hawker centre. My favourites were Lau pa Sat and Newton Food Centre. Sentosa has lots to do with a beach, theme park and waterpark. Gardens by the Bay is a must and there are light shows every night that are amazing! Clarke Quay is great for the nightlife. There are also some high rise bars that Hazel's Guestlist usually advertise such as Cest La Vie (on top of Marina Bay Sands), Bar Rouge and 1-Altitude. The Bugis District is worth checking out with Haji Lane and Arab Street. Chinatown has cheap souvenirs and good food. There are also a few nice bush walks. Orchard Road is amazing for shopping with thousands of shops. You won't be short of things to do.

Any tips for future students?

My advice is to make the most of it by saying yes to things. If you get the chance to go on a Weekend trip to Kuala Lumpur or Bali, I would go! The first couple weeks are a very easy time to meet people and a lot of the people you become friends with you will meet in this time. It's a very important time and sets you up for the rest of your exchange.

Overall Experience

My exchange experience was incredible. I experienced living in a beautiful city with friends from all corners of the world. I was also able to visit many other countries that are very different from Singapore making my experience that much more special. I travelled to Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia and Cambodia with the friends that I made.