

EXCHANGE REPORT
SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY, SINGAPORE
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



Serena Yung
BBA (Marketing & Management)
Fall 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part I Monthly Activity Log	2
Part II General Exchange Information	4
Part III Items to Bring	6

Contrary to Singapore’s traditional British education system, SMU is modelled after Wharton School (University of Pennsylvania) and thus offers an American-styled education. The campus is situated right at the heart of the city, making campus life convenient and very accessible with plenty of shopping malls and museums surrounding the school, in contrast to UST’s secluded location.

Part I. Monthly Activity Log

i. August 2016

SMU’s fall semester begins about half a month earlier than UST, with the official first day of school being 15 Aug for my exchange. August was a busy half month of settling into residence, getting used to classes and meeting new friends. SMU also gave all exchange students a tour of Singapore, with a local tour guide bringing us around and explaining the history of Singapore.



(Both photos taken from Marina Bay Sands viewing deck)

ii. September 2016

September was a very relaxing month with classes just starting, so I used this month to go around with friends to explore more of Singapore’s bars, visit Universal Studios Singapore, and made full use of pools at friends’ condos.



(Left: Rooftop bar of Marina Bay Sands, Right: Rooftop bar at 1-Altitude)

iii. October 2016

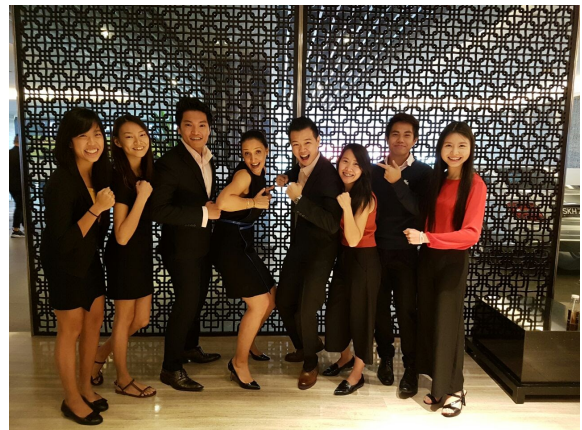
The first week of October was recess week, so I went to Bali for the entire week. Midterms follow straight after the break. Local students use this week to work on group projects, but they are very understanding about exchange students missing out on meetings and not contributing much during this time. I also came back to Hong Kong for a week during October because I only had 2 days of classes a week. Workload starts to get heavier during this month and group project meetings become much more frequent, but if you plan your time well and communicate with your groups it is still possible to travel!



(Left: Taken on the river cruise from Clarke Quay to the Merlion, Right: OCBC Skywalk at Gardens by the Bay)

iv. November 2016

Beginning of November I made a trip to Phuket for a week. Presentations happened during this month, and final exams started in late November. I came back to Hong Kong again for a weekend during this month, and spent the rest of the time finding new restaurants to try and visited the casino that is free entry for us as visitors (bring your passport!) but charges a great entry fee for locals.



(Both photos taken with course professor after group presentations)

v. December 2016

1st December was my last exam, so I had one week to pack and move out before my flight back to Hong Kong.



(Left: At F Club with exchange friends, Right: Dinner at Mexican restaurant Lucha Loco)

Part II. General Exchange Information

i. Visa Procedures

A Student Pass is needed for us to stay and study in Singapore. The SMU office sends instructions through email about a month or two before the exchange semester, so be sure to keep an eye out for their emails. Everything after that is quite straightforward, but the procedure can be quite lengthy so read carefully and submit everything as soon as possible!

ii. Orientation Activities

SMU has an orientation at the beginning of the semester, and some school clubs will send emails early on with activities you can join if interested.

iii. Accommodation

There are no on-campus dorms, but SMU partners with several hostels to offer lower prices for accommodation. The hostel SMU recommended to us was yo:Ha @ Pearl's Hill, located conveniently in Chinatown about a 10-min bus ride from campus. I paid SGD\$800/month (approx. HKD\$4800) inclusive of utility fees for an apartment with 4 people in 2 bedrooms. Personally, I wouldn't recommend yo:Ha as it's located on top of a hill with staircase access from a hawker centre near Chinatown, but the gate for that closes quite early, so if you are returning late you will need to walk up the hill from the other side (about a 10-min walk uphill). It also gets mouldy really easily in the rooms and ants are a problem in the shower and kitchen. Also, make sure to read the hostel contract very closely and remember details because it can be a hassle if you forget certain dates about how much in advance you need to notify them of changes. That being said, this is probably the cheapest accommodation available for us exchange students. Alternatively you could rent a condo with other exchange students, which is made convenient through the Facebook page that SMU initiates for all exchange students of that semester. Most people will communicate through the page to find people to live with.

iv. Course Registration

SMU uses a bidding system where you have 100 credits to use to bid for courses. This will all be explained in the emails that the school sends out, but there are several rounds of bidding and most exchange students will be able to register for the courses they want to take. Try not to change your mind after bidding as it will be harder to get courses if you drop some and want to bid again. Exchange students are allowed to take four courses, but if you wish to take more you can apply for overloading.

v. Teaching & Assessment Methods

All of my courses (4 Marketing courses) were heavy on attendance and participation marks, and each class lasts for 3 hours, as opposed to the usual 1.5 hour lectures we are accustomed to in UST. Course TAs sit in every lesson to note down which students raise their hands to answer in class discussions, and these are transferred into participation marks. For all my marketing courses there was a group project, and the professors all stated a requirement that one exchange student must be in each group, so don't worry about having to form your own groups. That being said, the local students are very eager and I was asked to join their groups right after the first lesson so be sure to attend the first lesson.

vi. Finance and Banking

Some choose to open a bank account in Singapore, but for me I just activated my Hong Kong HSBC ATM card for use in Singapore and withdrew cash there, combined with credit card.

vii. Health and Safety

Singapore is extremely safe even for a girl travelling alone past midnight. In terms of health, SMU has a clinic on-campus readily available.

viii. Food

There are many hawker centres around Singapore and you can get a decent meal for around HKD\$30-40. I mainly went to restaurants throughout my exchange (around HKD\$100 per person) and my friends and I visited nicer restaurants occasionally that can go up to around HKD\$500-600 per person. There are plenty of bars around Singapore, but alcohol is generally more expensive than in HK, averaging around HKD\$110 per drink. Nicer bars can go up to HKD\$150-200 per drink (check out the “Other notes” section of this report for restaurant/bar recommendations).

xii. Transportation

MRT and bus are the two most common methods of transportation in Singapore. Get a EZ-link card at any of the MRT stations (essentially like our Octopus card except that it can’t be used to pay at convenience stores). Uber is also a popular method of getting around, and is slightly cheaper than the price of HK taxis. Download the “Citymapper” app that has a comprehensive database of MRT and bus routes to inform you of the quickest ways to get to your destination – this app made life so much easier for me!!

xiii. Climate

Singapore is hot all year round, with average temperatures of about 25-30 degrees Celsius. However, like Hong Kong, Singapore blasts their air conditioning in malls and on the bus/MRT so be sure to bring around a cardigan or thin jacket anyway.

ix. Communication

English and Mandarin are the two most commonly used languages in Singapore, though you can get around with just English. Most of the older generation will speak Mandarin and Hokkien, and the younger generation English. Some locals also speak Cantonese.

x. Costs and Expenses

ITEM	COST (HKD)
Airfare	\$4,000
Accommodation	\$18,400 (\$4,600 x 4 months)
Student Pass and Fees	\$1,000
Transportation	\$2,500
Food & Drinks	\$11,200
Miscellaneous (personal spending e.g. shopping, souvenirs)	\$8,300
TOTAL	\$45,400

(Not inclusive of my 2 trips back to HK and Bali and Phuket trip)

xi. Other Notes

Restaurant/Bar Recommendations:

- Nosh: a really nice and chill alfresco brunch place, serves good pancakes and yellow watermelon juice!! Will need to Uber there as it is not as accessible but I highly recommend it.
- SQUE: located at Clarke Quay (bar/club district) but serves really good Linguine Vongole and happy hour is from 9-11PM so good for pre-drinks.
- CE LA VI: rooftop bar on top of Marina Bay Sands with nice view of the city. Ladies get free entry and one drink on Wednesday nights.
- 1-Altitude: another rooftop bar with 360 degree views of the city. Recommend going during sunset when they play chill music and you can sit on the sofa chairs all night long! Usually HKD\$180 for entry and one drink, but ladies get free entry on Wednesdays (ladies night).
- Garibaldi: a fancy Italian restaurant where you can book their private



(Brunch @ Nosh)

room (for 6+ people) for no additional charge. Food is quite expensive here, but if you are looking for a fine dining restaurant for birthday dinner/special occasions I would recommend Garibaldi.



(Left: Private room at Garibaldi, Right: Crab linguine at Garibaldi)

- SMOKE & MIRRORS: If you are into Japanese-themed cocktails, this bar serves very unique drinks (I ordered “Painting class” and it had edible paint on the glass and in the drink). However, also not cheap but has very nice view of Marina Bay Sands.



(Drinks at Smoke & Mirrors: “Painting Class”, “Usagi’s Tipple” and “Charles’s Journey”)

Part III. Items to Bring

- Summer clothes
- Umbrella
- Mosquito repellent
- Thin jacket/cardigan
- Suit (I just brought a black dress and flats for presentations and that was sufficient)
- Credit card

If more information is needed or you want more recommendations, feel free to get my contact from SBM Exchange Team by emailing at bmugexch@ust.hk.