

Exchange Report - Fall 2017  
National University of Singapore



CATHERINE  
BBA in Finance and Marketing

## Monthly Activity Log

### August 2017 (School Week 1,2)

Although Singapore is just a one-hour flight from my hometown, I had never visited Singapore prior to my exchange semester. Thus, I arrived in Singapore on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2 weeks prior to the start of school to get myself familiar with the environment and travel around Singapore and NUS. Unlike HKUST, NUS starts the academic semester at mid-August, 2 weeks earlier.

I *checked-in into Raffles Hall*, one of the oldest halls in NUS. My room is a one-person room. There is no AC, basin, and fridge inside the room. The room in Raffles Hall is more spacious than that in HKUST. Raffles Hall provided compulsory meal plan for breakfast and dinner; its breakfast was my favorite during my stay. Raffles Hall is quite near to other university facilities such as University Sports Centre, Yusof Ishak House (where 7-Eleven and canteen are located), and University Town.

During my stay, the hall manager has been very helpful.

### September 2017 (School Week 3,4,5,6)

During this month, I got myself familiarized with the courses here. Assignments, projects, and quizzes started to come in the middle of this month. Workload for the business courses I took at NUS were a little bit more than those of HKUST.

Despite school work, I managed to participate in a volunteering event organized by NUS to spend weekends with the migrant workers.

### October 2017 (School Week 7,8,9,10)

It was an intense month as I need to catch up with presentations, midterms, and cases due within the first-half of this month.

In the middle of the month, we my friends and I attend an *outdoor concert at Botanic Garden*. This concert by NUS Wind Symphony featured the anime soundtracks from Miyazaki's works such as Totoro and Spirited Away.

Besides attending *orientation*, I spent 2-weeks of my free time to travel around NUS or Singapore with my family. One of the perks of going on exchange during Fall semester in Singapore was that I got to experience *Singapore National Day celebration* at August 9th. There were fighting jets and firework shows, a unique experience while in Singapore.

After getting my student card, I used it to get a free admission to NUS Museum, located just opposite of Raffles Hall. Later, I also found out that I could *enjoy free admission* to National Gallery Singapore with my student card. At the end of the month, my friends and I visited a special exhibition by Yayoi Kusama.

I also had a wonderful time experiencing the annually held *Singapore Night Festival*. It is a street festival with lots of lights performances where you can be immersed in Singapore's arts and cultural heritage.

Near the end of the week, there was a recess week. So, I spent my time eating around Singapore with friends. We spent the evening eating ramen and have a nice and cheap karaoke near the MTR Station called Beauty World.

Most of my outings in Singapore are food-related. During *Deepavali*, my friends and I spent a great dinner at a hawker center eating Biryani, Martabak, and curry.

Besides, we get to try a restaurant which uses Durian as one of main ingredients. Durian pizza and Durian ice cream for the win!

### November 2017 (School Week 11,12,13)

Out of my 5 courses I took, 4 of them turned out not to have finals or tests during the Final Exam Periods, which was after week 13. Thus, November was a very intense period where I need to juggle between assignments, projects, and exams. At least, I got to enjoy my holiday earlier than other students.

After the school ended, I spent a whole day taking "graduation" pictures with a Taiwanese exchange friend and 2 HKUST business school friends who went together on exchange to NUS with me. We had lunch at School of Engineering canteen which we had never tried, and after that we were ready to take a lot of farewell pictures at UTown, Yale-NUS, back of NUS Museum, Central Library, and Mochtar Riady Business School building. Many spaces in NUS are quite beautiful.

This month, my friends and I went to have lunch eating the famous salted egg chicken. After lunch, we used our privilege as student-card holders to get free admissions to National Gallery Singapore for the second time. On November, the Gallery features two exhibitions, one was masterpieces from the Musée d'Orsay and another one was paintings by Raden Saleh and Juan Luna. At the same day, I attended another night concert with free admission titled On the Beautiful Danube at Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music at NUS, which is located just opposite of my hall.

A day before my *flight back home*, I spent a farewell dinner with my Singaporean friends at their home. It was quite an experience.

## **General Exchange Information**

### Visa procedure

A representative from NUS will email you the instruction on student visa. The application of student visa can be submitted through online application after you were given the SOLAR No., approximately 1.5 months before your arrival to Singapore. The process is quite easy as long you have submitted the required documents. Based on the latest regulation, students who went there on exchange for less than 6 months are not required to submit medical report form.

### Orientation activities

NUS sent emails about various activities for international students to join. There were Briefing Session to let students familiar with administration procedure, Welcoming Party, Exchange Buddy event, and tours around Singapore. Orientation activities started around 1.5 week before the school week.

### International Services & Activities

NUS hosts a number of activities for exchange students. You can get the notification via email.

### Accommodations

Students can rank their top 3 choices for their accommodations amongst halls, colleges, and residences. If you want to avoid transportation using shuttle buses to travel to class, you might want to match your accommodation with your class location (Map). NUS Business School is within 5-minutes walk from Kent Ridge Hall, Sheares Hall.

NUS Campus Map: [http://map.nus.edu.sg/download/NUS\\_Campus\\_Map\\_full.pdf](http://map.nus.edu.sg/download/NUS_Campus_Map_full.pdf)

Hostel and Meal Plan Rates: <http://nus.edu.sg/osa/housing/non-graduating/hostel-and-meal-plan-rates.html>

### Courses Registration

Before submitting your exchange application, you will be provided via email a list of business modules that can be taken. You can just simply follow the guides.

After you have known your time table, it is better for you to check the location of your classes and make sure that you have gotten enough time to travel from one to another classes. Usually, most of the instructors will dismiss the class 20 minutes earlier than the scheduled time to allow travel time in this big campus.

Exchange student will be able to do add drop of the courses through submitting paper application form to the related department in NUS.

### Teaching and Assessment Methods

The teaching and assessment method in NUS is very much similar to the one at HKUST. Based on my experience, the assessment criteria on the business courses I took comprised of case presentation, project (presentation and report), individual assignments, and examinations. The classes in NUS were relatively more active in NUS as students asked questions during lecture.

I took 5 courses in NUS:

- FIN3103B: Financial Markets
- FIN3116: Options and Futures
- MKT3402B: Consumer Behaviour
- GEH1015: Cultural Borrowing – Japan and China
- LAR1201: Arabic

Information on Bell Curve in NUS: <http://blog.nus.edu.sg/provost/2012/01/20/the-bell-curve/>

### Finance and Banking or Expenses

|  | Estimation in SGD            |
|--|------------------------------|
| Accommodation (Single Room – Raffles Hall) | 2,200                        |
| Compulsory Meal Plan (Raffles Hall)        | 450                          |
| Compulsory Miscellaneous Student Fees      | 125                          |
| Student Pass                               | 120                          |
| Personal expenses for one semester*        | 1,500                        |
| Total                                      | 4,365 (or around 25,000 HKD) |

\*I did not travel to other countries during exchange

### Climate

Singapore has tropical climate. During my exchange period (August – December), the weather in Singapore for the first-half of my exchange period was a little bit hot especially in the afternoon. Near the end of the term, it rained a lot. Thus, do close your room windows when you are out of your accommodation to avoid rain getting into your room.

### Health and Safety

There is a health clinic in NUS if you need some medical check. Singapore has top notch Health and Safety. During the first Briefing Orientation for exchange students, students will be familiarized with important contacts in Singapore.

### Sports and Recreation Facilities

There are University Sports Centre, running tracks, swimming pools, gyms, etc.

## Food

Living in Raffles Hall, I had a compulsory breakfast and dinner meal plan. The food was good and nice as I heard that the Raffles Hall changed the caterer. Breakfast was provided from 7 to 9.30 am, and dinner started from 5 to 8 pm. Students can either eat in the dining hall or take away.

On campus, NUS has a lot of canteens. In my opinion, the food in the Faculty of Arts was cheaper than those of other canteen. My personal favorites were Yong Tao Foo, Chicken Rice, and Waffle from the Faculty of Arts, as well as Ban Mian from Food Clique in Utown. The price is also relatively cheaper than the one in UST.

Out of school, there were a lot of hawker centres or fancy restaurants to choose from.

## Transportation

There were shuttle buses to commute around NUS. They operate from around 7.15 am to 11 pm on weekdays. Often times, you can also notice that students cycle around campus using third party bike sharing services like Ofo.

Information on Shuttle Bus in NUS:

[http://www.nus.edu.sg/oca/doc/Bus%20Frequency%20&%20Route%20\(2015\).pdf](http://www.nus.edu.sg/oca/doc/Bus%20Frequency%20&%20Route%20(2015).pdf)

Similar to Hong Kong, Singapore has MRT, Grab or Uber, Taxi, and Buses to ease the commute from one place to another. An Octopus Card equivalent in Singapore is called EZ-Link Card, but it is only limited to MRT and buses. When travelling on buses, you need to tap twice for entrance and exit. I found out that some buses in Singapore do not have Information Display for bus stop names inside the buses, and this might create some confusion if you are going to the area you are not familiar with. No worries. You can check if you have arrived at your destination at the screen near the exit or entrance door where you tap your card.

To check how to best travel around Singapore, I used Gothere: <https://gothere.sg/maps>.

## Communication

Singapore has 4 official languages, namely Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, and English. English is widely spoken on or out of campus and there should not be any problem in communication. However, it depends from person to person as for the level to get used to the Singaporean accent and slangs. Some people are also able to communicate in Cantonese and Hokkian.

Students in NUS use WhatsApp to communicate with each other for group projects or assignments.

There are quite a lot of choices for Prepaid SIM Card.

## Social Clubs and Networking Opportunity

NUS provides quite a lot of students societies that you can join, usually you can do some 'shopping' of the clubs on the Welcoming Party arranged by NUS.

## **Items to Bring**

- ❑ LAN Cable or Wi-Fi Router (as there is no Wi-Fi on your room)
- ❑ Formal Clothes
- ❑ Important Documents (Eg. Passport)

## **Useful Links and Contacts**

Useful links are provided under the corresponding topic.

You can get my contact from SBM Exchange Team by emailing at [bmugexch@ust.hk](mailto:bmugexch@ust.hk) if you need more information.