



Exchange Report

National University of Singapore

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BBA GBUS & MARK

2017/18 Fall Exchange

Part 1 – Monthly Activity Log

August 2017 *Key Event(s): Orientation, Appeals Round*

August began with several orientation activities, with the semester officially starting on the 14th. One of the most important activities this month is the Appeals Round. Until the end of the month, students are given the chance to appeal to add, drop or swap modules.

As this is only the first month, there were very few assignments, so I had a lot of free time. Not to mention, each of my modules only had one 3-hour session per week, so I had several day-offs. Hence I had many opportunities to explore the city. It is very easy to meet people at NUS, through hall activities, class, the exchangers Facebook group, etc. Grab a few friends and explore the city together!

September 2017 *Key Event(s): Classes*

Life started to get more hectic in September. Class time at NUS is less than at HKUST, however, there seems to be more projects, reports and presentations. I was really impressed by the local students, as they are very driven and ambitious. They actively participate during class, and the quality of their discussions, presentations and assignments is very high, so I was able to learn a lot of from them.

October 2017 *Key Event(s): Mid-term Break*

After two months of hard work, we had a one-week break in mid-October. Most exchangers used this week to travel around Southeast Asia. Some popular destinations include: Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, etc. I chose to visit Kuala Lumpur for a few days. The food there was delicious and really cheap. Also, as I joined my hall's dance team, we had a performance at the end of the month to celebrate Halloween. Halls tend to have more sports and arts activities to join, compared to residences in Utown or PGP.

November 2017 *Key Event(s): Assignments, Presentations, Reports, Tests, Reading Week*

November was relatively more intense, as I had a lot of projects and presentations due. Not to mention, instead of having finals in December, my courses had in-class tests during this month. Hence, it was a bit stressful having to juggle studying and project work simultaneously. However, as most of my groupmates are local students, I was able to have some peace of mind since most of them invest a lot of time and effort into the projects. The semester finally ended on the 18th, followed by Reading Week, which is meant for studying.

December 2017 *Key Event(s): Exams*

There are exams this month. However, as mentioned earlier, all of my exams took place in class in November, so I had a lot of free time, which I used to explore more of Singapore. Most accommodation offers ended on the 10th, the Sunday after the last day of exams. Students may opt to pay more and extend their stay, emails about this will be sent during the semester.

Part 2 – General Exchange Procedure

Visa Procedures

NUS will email detailed instructions on visa application around 2 months prior to the start of the exchange. The application is done online using the Singapore government's SOLAR website. Students will first need to complete online registration with the ID provided by NUS. Then, fill in and submit eForm16 through the website. Finally, print all the necessary documents required to pick up the Student Pass. Students can get the Student Pass at NUS on a date specified by the university. If you miss this opportunity, you will need to visit the ICA at Lavender station to get the visa.

Orientation Activities, Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

Most orientation activities take place at the beginning of August, with various talks and tours for students to meet people and familiarize themselves with the surroundings. There is also a welcoming party for exchangers once the semester begins. At the party, student societies and clubs will have booths so Exchangers can sign up. Additionally, an official Facebook group is made for exchangers in order to ask questions, exchange information and meet new people.

There are also various opportunities for exchangers to meet up throughout the semester. For example, the hall committee will sometimes offer events specifically for exchangers and international students. There are also other activities during holidays to encourage students to actively participate in hall life. In addition, many halls offer team activities, in sports, performing arts, photography, etc. These CCAs (co-curricular activities) usually involve two days of meeting/practice every week, and are a great way to meet more local students.

Accommodation

NUS has a wide variety of accommodations, and students can select their top 3 choices in the online housing application. Most exchange students opt to stay in Utown. The rooms there have air conditioning, and there are more varieties of food in their meal plans. Not to mention, Utown is well-equipped with a pool, gym and lots of restaurants. PGP (Prince George's Park) is another popular option. It has 2 canteens and a grocery store. Plus, it is near Kent Ridge MRT station and the business school. However, I felt that these two options are a bit expensive, so I looked into the other halls as well.

I ended up choosing Raffles Hall, which is very conveniently located. It is a 5-minute walk from Utown, the Central Library, the University Sports Center, Yusof Ishak House (aka YIH. It has a canteen, subway, 24/7 7-11, bubble tea, etc). There are also many direct buses from the Opp YIH bus stop to the business school). As for the hall itself, Raffles is very vibrant and often has many activities, often with free food provided 😊 And despite being one of the oldest halls on campus, I felt that the rooms are quite clean and spacious. Overall, I think Raffles is a good choice, if you don't mind having no AC.

The most convenient hall for business students is probably Kent Ridge, which is the closest to biz. Temasek and Sheares are also quite near. These halls are also in close proximity to several canteens.

Also, note that there is no wifi in rooms. So remember to bring a LAN cable and router. You can purchase one from the NUS Co-op but it's expensive there.

Course Registration

Students may select business and non-business modules when completing the online student registration for NUS. However, it is important to note that selected modules are not guaranteed, even if the system says they have been approved. This may be because the course is not available that semester or not enough quota has been allocated for exchange students.

Fortunately, there will be an Appeals Round in August for students to add/drop/swap modules. For business school courses, you will receive the appeals form during orientation. Alternatively, you can print the form from your email, or get one from the business school.

However, appealing is not always successful, as some courses are very popular, or maybe the professor is unwilling to increase the quota for exchangers. Hence, in addition to submitting the appeals form, I also tried approaching the staff at the business school exchange office. After talking with the staff, I was able to understand why my appeal was unsuccessful, and see which modules I am more likely to get in. Students may try to bring a list of modules they are interested in to find out whether they have vacancies.

Priority for the modules allocation may be affected by the student's major, so I would recommend mentioning your major in your appeal. Marketing modules are especially popular, so I felt very lucky that I was able to get 4 marketing mods, which can all be mapped back to UST courses. One of the most interesting modules I took is MKT3415 Marketing in a Digital Age. This course is taught by a Google employee, and the project involved creating a digital campaign for a company of our choice. This course is very popular, I heard from local students they have to bid thousands of points in order to get into this course.

As for non-business modules, students have to submit the appeal form to the specific school. It is quite common for students to take language courses while on exchange, so here is some basic info on some of the requirements. You will need to submit a letter indicating your proficiency during the online registration (just follow the template provided on the NUS website). For beginners, students have to declare the number of hours they have come into contact with the language. As for higher levels, students have to complete a proficiency test. I have heard that NUS is very strict with this process, so don't lie about your proficiency level.

Finally, here are two useful websites for course registration:

nusmods.com: Can be used to build your timetable.

ivle.nus.edu.sg: NUS's equivalent of Canvas. Use this to access course materials. You can also keep refreshing this page to see whether they got into their desired module.

Part 3 – Additional Information

Teaching & Assessment Methods

I only took marketing courses during my exchange. The assessment of marketing courses is very similar to HKUST's, with a heavy emphasis on participation, case discussions and group projects. There were also some quizzes. Most of these quizzes took place during the semester, before the finals period, which meant I ended the semester earlier than many of my classmates.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

Utown is the most popular destination for exercising as it has a gym and swimming pool. Another option is the newly-opened University Sports Center (USC), which has a gym (although it's a bit smaller than the one at Utown), a swimming pool (bigger than Utown's) and many other facilities. Some halls also have their own gyms, but they tend to be smaller and have less equipment.

Food

The hall fees include meal plans, so breakfast and dinner are usually provided, and students only need to worry about lunch, and meals over the weekend. There are plenty of tasty and affordable options around the campus. The biz canteen is very convenient for business students. However, if you are willing to walk a few minutes more, The Deck canteen at Arts (Faculty of Arts and Social Science) has great reviews. It is one of the cheapest and most delicious dining options on campus. There are many more canteens at the different schools, I recommend trying all of them at least once. Unfortunately, these canteens are not open on weekends. Usually I will go to the Utown restaurants or canteens on Saturday and Sunday.

Clementi and Kent Ridge MRT are close to NUS, and there are many restaurants there as well.

Transportation

There are free shuttle buses on campus. You can download the app "NUS NextBus" to see the bus stations, routes and schedule. Another useful app is "Around NUS", which has a campus map. If you want to leave campus, you can take the shuttle bus to Kent Ridge MRT. There are also paid buses which can take you to Clementi, Bukit Timah, etc. To take trains and public buses, you can use a EZ-Link card, which can be purchased from any MRT stations or at the airport.

Communication

Most exchange students use the Singtel plan, which you can purchase at the airport or at 7-eleven, Cheers, etc. You can easily top up the value on the sim card at any convenience stores (there are several on campus), or Singtel shops.

Climate

Singapore has a tropical climate, so it's basically summer all year round. This is one of the main reasons many students opt for the AC rooms in Utown or PGP. However, I personally found that having a ceiling fan in my room is sufficient. Some students who cannot stand the heat bought additional fans or mini-ACs.

Also, it rains quite often in Singapore, so I would recommend always carrying an umbrella with you just in case.

Healthy & Safety

There is a clinic on campus. Although I did not make a visit there personally during my stay, the local students told me the clinic does charge a small fee. There is also a hospital (NUH) at Kent Ridge station, which you can reach by the NUS shuttle buses.

Finances

Compulsory Expenses

Items	HKD
Plane tickets	2,700
Accommodation	15,300
Visa Application	700
NUS Miscellaneous Fees	720
Total	19,420

Daily Expenses

The cost of living in Singapore is slightly higher than Hong Kong's. But in general, the amount I spent on food, transport, groceries, etc, did not differ much from my usual spending back in Hong Kong. In fact, food at hawker centers is much cheaper in Singapore. However, dining at restaurants tend to be more expensive compared to Hong Kong due to GST.

Banking

Students staying in Singapore for less than 6 months are not eligible to apply for local bank accounts. Ensure you have enough cash with you prior to your arrival.

Items to Bring

- LAN cable
- Router
- Bedding: Pillow, sheets, etc.
- Smart/Business casual attire (may be required for some modules' presentations)
- Flip-flops
- Umbrella
- Clothes
- Toiletries
- Passport
- Stationery
- Laptop