



Exchange report

Fall 2017

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**BBA in Operations Management
and Management**

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Monthly Living Log

August 2017

The fall semester in SMU starts about 3 weeks earlier than UST. The official school day was 21 Aug in 2017. Before the semester starts, SMU provides various activities to exchange students, like one-day city tour, buddy program, orientation session etc. For the one-day tour, there is a local tour guide bring us to the Singapore's attractions and explain Singapore's history. For the orientation, it told some basic student information, like grading system, credit allowance, school facilities etc. I thought this session was quite useful and important for new students. On the other hand, I spent some time to settle my stuff in hostel and collect my student pass for immigration. As I had two weeks before the semester starts, I went to explore Singapore with other SMU exchange students. For instance, Garden by the Bay, Clarke Quay, Orchard Road, Chinatown and so on. I would recommend everyone to plan visiting Singapore this period as it was hardier to find time for travelling after class started. In late August, the semester started and the classes in SMU are quite different from UST. The classes are small size with around 45 students. There is only one lesson (3 hours) per week for each course, which also include a short break (around 15 minutes but depends on Professor).



September 2017

It was quite relaxing in early September. I used this period to walk around with my friends. We visited Universal Studios Singapore in Sentosa, Singapore's bars etc. I also tried Singaporean delicacies in hawker centers. Afterwards, there were many in-class quizzes, mid-term and interim project presentation started. I took 4 courses in total and only one course without group project. Meanwhile, some courses required individual assignments on weekly basis. It required a lot of time and effort to handle these works at the same time.

October 2017

After the mid-term period, which was week 7, there were a study break for students. It is a good opportunity for planning a longer trip near the regions. Most of my exchange friends went to Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Bail. For me, I spent few days for discussing the project with my groupmates and finishing my parts. After that, I went to Sentosa and visited “Adventure Cove Waterpark”. My Singaporean friends strongly recommend me to be there. I took the hydro-magnetic coaster and many high-speed slides. These was so excited and went there two times.

November 2017

This month was the busiest month for SMU students. These were many presentations and project deadlines. The local students worked very hard in the project. They spent many personal time to deal with it. We met every week and we would discuss the agenda for the next meeting. Therefore, all



the stuffs in the projects were worked on the right track. The group projects were finished before one week of the deadline. So that we could modify the report in detail for a week and get a good grade eventually. At the end of November, there were a short break before exam. I spent most of my time for preparing the exam.

December 2017

At the beginning of December, I finished all the exam and started the winter break. I spent one more week in Singapore even I finished my last final exam. In this week, I went to buy some souvenirs and visited other local restaurants. Also, we had a farewell party with my flat mates and local friends. Finally, I went back to Hong Kong for winter holiday.

General information

1. Visa Procedures

After receiving the acceptance letter by SMU, student can simply apply the Visa. You will also receive an email from SMU office, which mentions the step of applying student pass. Then, you can follow the instruction and login Student's Pass Online Application & Registration (SOLAR) to start the process. Please read the guidelines carefully as some of the procedures are quite lengthy. After that, you need to hand in the documents to SMU on a given day. You will get your Student Pass in SMU around one week afterward.

2. Orientation Activities

There is an orientation session for all SMU incoming exchange students. The session briefly introduces the school facilities and the law regulation in Singapore. Also, there is a short campus tour guided by local students, which can let us to know more the school environment. In addition, there are various activities for exchange students, like buddy program, one-day city tour, welcoming dinner. There are also some activities hold by SMU clubs and society. Just freely register all the activities via email. You can meet new friends through these activities.

3. International services and activities

SMU provides various supporting services for exchange students. There are inbound department in SMU, you can email them if you have any questions. For the international activities, SMU organizes buddy program and "mix and mingle" activities for exchange students, which can make friends in all around the world.

4. Accommodations

I stayed in yo:HA hostel, which is a hostel that rented by SMU. I chose this hostel because of it is the cheapest option (around HKD 18500/4 month and with quarter room). Some of the exchange students chose to rent another private hostel. The rent price was higher, but the environment is nice and convenience. However, I thought yo:HA Hostel was also a good choice. It located in Chinatown, which is only took 15 minutes by metro. And you can also walk around 30 minutes to school. Moreover, there are many local restaurant and food complex (like a food court in Hong Kong with more than 200 small restaurants).

5. Courses Registration

SMU adopts bidding system for course registration. Exchange student will allocate 100 e-dollar for bidding the course you like. SMU will provide the past statistics for all the courses. In order to enroll the courses that you want to take, you should “invest” the e-dollar in strategy. You should decide the certain amount of e-dollar for each course before the bidding system starts. There are 3 bidding rounds, if you can not enroll the course in the first round, you can adjust the e-dollar and then bid in the second round. If you encounter any problems about the bidding system, you should email to SMU exchange office immediately. Also, SMU only allows exchange students taking 4 courses in each semester. If you have valid reasons to take extra course, you should get permission.

6. Teaching and Assessment Method

The class size in SMU is around 40 students. Each class lasts for 3 hours with a short break. Typically, SMU courses are comprised of participations, individual assignment, group project, mid-term exam and final exam. These components are quite similar to UST business courses. However, the courses in SMU are heavy on participation marks. The courses TA would sit in every lesson for taking student attendance and participation. Each student is recommended to put a name tag in front of your seat, which helped the TA noting down participation marks in class. Apart from the active participation in class, some of the courses are required the passive participation in online discussion. For example, the discussion forum for exchanging student ideas, question board for asking class related questions etc.

7. Sports & Recreation Facilities

There is a swimming pool and gym room in SMU. Also, there are some café in campus. As the campus is in the city hub, you can find some large shopping mall nearby, like Bugis junction and Plaza Singapura.

8. Finance and Banking

I chose to activate the foreign bank account in Hong Kong, so I could withdraw cash in Singapore. Some student would decide to open a new bank account in Singapore.

Cost and expense (in HKD)

Items	Cost (HKD)
Airfare	\$3000
Accommodation	\$18500
Student Pass and fees	\$1000
Transportation	\$1500
Food	\$15000
Miscellaneous	\$1500
Total	\$40500

9. Social Clubs and networking opportunities

There are many social clubs in SMU, which are normally organized by local students. Like fishing club, board game club, pop dance club etc. They are welcomed exchange students, but some clubs are required participation fees (around SGD5 to 20 per one semester).

10. Health & Safety

SMU provide medical insurance and clinics for students. You can visit campus clinic for free. Also, you do not need to worry about safety, Singapore is an extremely safe city.

11. Food

You can easily get a decent meal in Hawker center, which cost only \$20-50. Apart from the cheapest option, you can go to restaurants for enjoying food in diverse countries. As most of the restaurants in Singapore are required both 10% charge and 7% tax, the food cost would be higher.

12. Transportation

You can get a EZ-link card at any MRT stations, which costs SGD\$12 (including SGD\$7 stored dollars). It like our Octopus card and you can use it for taking public transportation and buying stuff in stores. MRT and bus are the most convenience and common transportation in Singapore. You can also download the apps in “Singapore MRT & LRT” for checking the routes.

13. Climate

Singapore is hot in whole year (around 25-30 degree Celsius). Remember to bring umbrella as it is a tropical country, especially in November and December.

14. Communication

The first language of Singaporean is English, while the second is Mandarin. Most of the older generation understand both languages. But some of young can just speak English.

Items to bring

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| ✓ Summer clothes | ✓ Medicine |
| ✓ Jacket/ cardigan | ✓ Charger |
| ✓ Both suit and smart casual wear | ✓ Acceptance letter and documents
(for Visa application and student pass) |
| ✓ Umbrella | ✓ Laptop and stationery |
| ✓ Sunscreen | ✓ Money and credit card |

Useful Links and Contacts

<https://www.smu.edu.sg/>

<http://undergrad.bm.ust.hk/exchange/outbound-exchange/exchange-choices>

http://arr.ust.hk/ust_actoe/index.php

<https://solar.ica.gov.sg/solar/index.xhtml>

<http://www.smrt.com.sg/>

<http://www.singapore-guide.com/attractions/>