



# National University of Singapore

## Exchange Report

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## Introduction

Greetings. I am here to tell you a bit more about NUS and why I would recommend you to this top school in Asia. If you have been wondering where to go for an exchange, I wish you can gain some insights from this report. The following report will be subdivided into mainly 4 parts. Hopefully by the end of this report, you shall be granted some acknowledgement about the institution and what to do per month during the exchange. You will also be advised on what to bring when you leave Hong Kong. Finally, I will try to list out some “useful” links for your information.

All in all, I would love to see more talents joining NUS and learn from their academic excellence and proficient critical mindsets. Enough said, let me take you to the details right away.

## Before your Departure

You might want to check if your passport is eligible to allow temporary stay for more than 4 months. Go to the Singaporean Immigration Department website for more information. The institution will send you loads of email regarding the school’s registration process and the administrative matters for student pass. If you have an internship over there, you need a separate working pass for that as well.

The instructions are quite clear and straight-forward so I do not think you should be having any problems at all. Remember to check your email every day to see if there are any updates at all and bring all required materials.

## 1. Monthly Activity Log

### 1.1 August

You should be advised to arrive at NUS in early-August because all the orientation events are hosted during that time. Information sessions for both the general NUS SEP program and NUS Business School will be provided. Make sure to make friends with different countries and **DO NOT SIMPLY PLAY WITH PEOPLE FROM HONG KONG**. It is really a waste of money and time if you do that. Do be reminded that those events are not compulsory so if you have any other arrangements, you can comply to that and not join the events.

School starts right after the orientation in mid-August so be prepared to adapt to the heavy workload and pressure under high performing student counterparts. However, most profs are just going to start off slow and do not worry. I would recommend your study routine to be conducted at least once per week because the learning process at NUS is quite different from what we have in Hong Kong. Lessons at NUS tend to be quite daunting and lengthy. In other words, procrastinating is not a good thing to do at NUS.

Before the school commences, you should be already finished enrolling the respective courses that you desire. NUS have quite a unique platform for the enrollment process. Essentially, you will apply through an online system for the enrollment of subjects. Do note that core subject modules and business modules are separated so you need to enroll the subjects on two different platforms.

## 1.2 September

To be frank, September is quite a stressful month for me because I have to grind through waves of stressful internship application processes so I do not pay much attention to the coursework at all. However, I do realize that NUS has a profound history of compacting tests and assessments right away after the school year begins. I was quite astonished by the fact that I quickly adapted to their style of learning within September and survived.

Other than the tight schedule of assessment and examination, we have a lot of club fair and welcoming parties which are held at UTown, a place where most exchange students and post-graduate students live, to recruit new members for semester one. I strongly encourage you all to take this opportunity and partake any one of them should you feel interested about it.

Should you encounter any problems regarding the course modules and class enrollment, this month is probably the last chance for you to submit a written request upon the respective matter.

P.S. Because I was too busy and exhausted by the internship job hunt, I went to explore the food options at NUS to brighten my days up. What I notice is that NUS has A LOT of CHEAP BUT TASTY meals for students. Key note in this regard would be that the proportion of food there is quite small because most Singaporean do not eat as much as we do.

## 1.3 October

This month is supposed to be your first nightmare at NUS. Tons of exams and assessments are rushing in with tight deadlines; especially if you plan to participate in any format of case competition like me. My advice to you is to be calm and do your best. One important thing to denote is that most class projects tend to be interactive and **THEY ACTUALLY MAKE YOU WORK FOR REAL CLIENTS!** In short, NUS offers quite a remarkable learning environment for us. (NO WONDER THEY ARE SO SMART AND RANKED TOP IN ASIA)

You shall have occasional holidays and study break from this point onwards. Use that time to explore around Singapore. I would recommend going to the Universal Studio during the Halloween and Gardens by the Bay for the scenic view. In fact, I did not spend much time exploring because I had fun cooking and watching movies with my friend so make sure you do not spend the time alone.

## 1.4 November

Throughout my exchange experience, I would say November is the best month for me because I can have a break from work and school life. November tends to be a period for me to slack off and do nothing but eat every day because I was not having the drive to strive on my grades. However, weekly revision is still strongly recommended because you still have to prepare yourselves for the finals. Note that the mean average and standard deviation per exam is quite high and dispersed so you can actually get a bad grade if you are not careful enough.

The rest of the month is basically full of final exams and nothing else.

## 1.5 December

We do not have school in December so you can actually choose whether to stay abroad or come back. I cannot tell you anything else because I actually came back to work directly after the exchange. So, have fun with your exchange.

## 2. General Exchange Information

### Visa Procedures

As stated, the visa procedures for going to NUS is quite straight-forward. Make sure you follow the instructions properly and ask the respective officer should you have any inquiry.

### Orientation Activities

Basically, all the orientation activities are simply talks and information sessions with food and seminars. Be sure to talk to the locals for more information. You will be shocked how welcoming they can be. Stay out of your comfort zones and be ready to mingle.

### International Services & Activities

NUS do have these kinds of services but I do not think we actually need those because Hong Kong and Singapore share similar cultures and lifestyles in general. NUS do have a place near the alumni house which is near to our business building for exchange matters. That place is also a place for exchangers to have a gathering so you can try going there for international services.

### Accommodations

Most exchangers will be staying at either PGPR or UTown Residence. Be sure to choose UTown Residence first because PGPR is quite an old hostel for students with poor humidity control. I actually had to throw away many clothes because of the mold problems.

In addition, UTown Residence offers better tranquility to students with several FnB outlets serving Western, Japanese and Korean cuisines. Sometimes, movie showing events and large-scale party are held there and those are open to exchangers as well.

### Courses Registration

This is the most important thing in this section. Long story short, do not wait until the deadline. Most students are competing for modular seating so the faster you decide on what to study, the earlier you get the assurance.

Also, you might experience the loss of pre-enrolled courses (which made me drop my second major). Be sure to write to the department for the issue and ask for help by submitting a hand-written form for course enrollment. Other than that, may the Gods smile upon your course enrollment.

### Teaching & Assessment Methods

Pretty much how we teach in Hong Kong. I have no further comments to that.

### Sports & Recreation Facilities

We have quite some venues for sports. Because I am not a sports person, I cannot recommend anything to you so you better go find it out yourself.

### Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses)

Excluding normal tuition fee paid to HKUST, I spent around HKD15,000.

### Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

You should have ample exposure to these opportunities if you attend the orientation events. Be sure to approach and ask respective coordinators should opportunities arise. I have mingled with quite a few local students during the GENUS semester one concert. It is fun to come across people with similar interest and hobbies; especially when you are facing immense academic pressure.

### Health & Safety

Singapore is a place with sound legal administration so it is safe to hang around with your peers. NUS is located near NUH, a national hospital with modern medical facilities and amenities, where patients opt to receive treatment provided by specialists. I would not recommend NUH to outbound exchangers because the medical fees are relatively expensive. There is a medical healthcare center within the campus where NUS students go when they are feeling unwell. With easy access via school shuttle services, I am sure you will have no health problem under minimal medical expenditures.

### Food

To be frank, I would say the most precious experience I acquired from the exchange is always in correlation with food options in Singapore. Compared with Hong Kong, Singapore has more cuisines to offer. Whether it is Nasi Lemak or Beef Wellington, this Asian Food Hub provides tons of delicacies for us to enjoy. More importantly, the associated price for the sensation is always CHEAP. I did have the thought of visiting Singapore after the exchange because I am in MAD LOVE with the Malay spicy hot pot and their alluring blueberry juice.

### Transportation

Transportation around Singapore is relatively easy because it is not a big place. Typically speaking, you would only need to take MRT if you wish to save money. There are other options such as bus terminals, Grab, Uber and taxi for you to consider. Do be careful that NUS has no shuttle bus services at around 11:30pm. If you wish to go out late, be sure that you have enough money for extra transportation costs. General range for transportation is around SGD\$6 – SGD\$10.

### Climate

This is supposed to be the worst thing about Singapore. In short, bring your umbrella and always DEHUMIDIFY your clothes. Before you end your Fall exchange, you should be experiencing a high intensity of rainfall with loud thunder and temporary discomfort. Make sure you dry all your clothes and CLEAN THE CABINET before you place your belongings. I have to throw away several clothes because of the weather and the poor humidity control around hostels.

### Communication

If you are not confident in Putonghua or English, I would say this is the perfect chance for you to testify your language skills. Singapore has a distinct culture in regard to communication. While older generations prefer Putonghua, youngsters all use English to communicate. So, you get the best between two worlds if you study in Singapore.

### Cautionary Measures

Be mindful of your belongings. Being on an exchange is fun because you get to experience the lifestyle without supervision and guidance. In my opinion, I quite enjoy this freedom. I would suggest you all to always check your belongings when you are outside the campus. Crime rate in Singapore is low so you should be fine unless you travel late at night. If you are a drinker, I would advise you to be highly cautious about your alcoholic intake because NUS can expel you for being drunk around the campus. As a drinker, I notice that the concentration of liquor shots in Singapore is slightly higher than those in Hong Kong so ladies, be careful.

### 3. Items to Bring

- Clothes (T-shirts aka lots of them)
- Umbrella (Singapore is constantly having raining problems)
- Laptop
- Towels
- Shampoo and Conditioner
- Tooth paste and Tooth brush
- Body washer
- Sandals
- Money
- Lunchbox
- Cooking utensils
- Disinfectants

### 4. Useful Links and Contacts

Because I do not require much assistance from them, I basically handled and settled any arising issues myself so if you really want to know more about the exchange in details, I can only give my contacts to you haha.

If you have anything to ask, please feel free and find me through my Facebook via Louis Chan. :]