



EXCHANGE REPORT

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Term: Spring Term (2021-22)

University: Singapore Management University

Country: Singapore

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1. Monthly Activity Log

Monthly Activity Log

[SMU 2022 Spring Term Dates Jan 10 – May 01]

January 2022

Rough timeline of administration-related tasks

- Jan 04: Onsite completion of Formalities (going to SMU Administration Building and giving relevant documents in order to create your Student Pass)
- Jan 06: Virtual Orientation Briefing (compulsory)
- Jan 07: Singapore City Tour (subsidized by SMU)
- Jan 10: Semester starts!
- Jan 11: Collect your Student Pass (Singapore Card), do your online matriculation to get your SMU Student Card (For University)

Over the course of January, I signed up for a variety of different events primarily the one-off clinics where societies/clubs would have trial sessions. For example, I signed up for a Muay Thai class, a Taekwondo class, the library's introduction to python workshop, the Japanese and Indian welcome 'tea' events, and so on. This was a great opportunity to explore the different societies, meet people outside of the classroom, and introduce myself to potential new hobbies! Also, SMU has many welfare drives where they distribute free goods to students, so stay tuned via email and telegram chats (sign up fast, first come first served)! Outside of university, I also went to an Art Museum, many restaurants and cafes, and attended the Singapore city tour that was subsidized by SMU. Overall, this month I focused on finishing the administrative and COVID-19 related requirements, getting accustomed to the university and my accommodation area, meeting new people, and exploring what SMU had to offer!

February 2022

In February, the classes started to get a bit intense with quizzes and assignments but I really enjoyed and took peace in knowing that all I had to do was pass 😊 I also joined the Japanese cultural society and took part in the weekly intermediate language lessons. I also signed up for a one-off Rumba dance workshop where I met one of my closest local friends! This month, I was mostly meeting new people and exploring different restaurants as the food culture in Singapore is huge!

March 2022

In March, I was able to attend a 3D modeling workshop opened to all students, explore the Bugis area, visit Fort Canning Park (there is an entrance from SMU), attend a Rangoli workshop in Little India, attend a chocolate making class, attend an event in Shangri-La in which Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong spoke briefly at, attend a longboarding session at Stadium, go rock climbing, go on a day trip to the southern islands, visit Botanic gardens and more! This was an eventful month as I found myself exploring Singapore more and getting a better understanding of the lifestyle there. I also had many assignments and meetings during this semester, and two of my closest friends actually came from these groups!

April 2022

Although this is an obvious tip, be sure to meet people for many activities too rather than only meeting them for meals or coffee first, as time goes by very fast during exchange! In the last month, I crammed in a lot of activities including: inline skating, a Taylor Swift Piano Light concert, a dance performance in NUS, Haw Par Villa, river cruise, night safari, East Coast Park, Esplanade, Newton Hawker center, railway hike, Museum of Ice Cream, Southern Ridges hike, and more. I crammed all of these activities alongside my finals, but it was the best month yet!

May 2022

The semester ended on May 1st, I left on May 6th as all student passes expired on May 8th unless you applied for short-term visitor pass 7 days before the expiry of the student pass. More details regarding this expiry and extension will be shared with you.

2. General Exchange Information

General Exchange Information

- **Visa Procedures**
 - Get offer for SMU through HKUST
 - [September] Apply to SMU directly
 - [End October] Acceptance from SMU
 - [November] Apply for Student Pass (Student Visa)
 - Cost:
 - STP application fee is SG\$30 (non-refundable)
 - Student Pass In-Principle Approval (IPA) issuance will cost SG\$60
 - Additional multiple journey visa fee of SG\$30 (for selected nationalities if applicable)
 - Once approved, save the IPA (In-Principle Approval) letter to enter Singapore, you are considered a STP In-Principle Approval (STP-IPA) Holder

- You will collect the actual student pass after completing the ‘Student Pass Formalities at SMU’ in January, till then carry the IPA letter with you everywhere
- **Orientation Activities**
 - There was a simple virtual orientation that was compulsory to attend due to COVID. There was no campus tour, so be sure to explore the campus early on!
- **International Services & Activities**
 - SMU ISEP (Inbound Exchange International Office) are the ones coordinating everything, they are very helpful 😊
- **Accommodations**
 - SMU unfortunately did not provide accommodation for exchange students, however they did recommend options and resources. Accommodation does get booked fast, so don't wait till the last minute. Here are some options I recommend:
 - Option 1: Stay at a student hostel called YoHa, the closest branch of theirs to SMU is called YoHa @ Pearls Hill. Very basic amenities and decent living space.
 - Option 2: Stay at a co-living space called Coliwoo, the closest branch of theirs to SMU is called Coliwoo @ Lutheran. Higher living standard than YoHa, more amenities. More costly than YoHa. This is the option I chose.
 - Option 3: Rent an apartment on your own with other exchange students you meet online, for example through the SMU Exchange Facebook page that you will be invited to. Cost depends on the apartment and number of occupants.
- **Courses Registration**
 - SMU will give you details regarding the process, and its relatively straight forward.
 - You can find the syllabus (helpful if you need to submit it on the credit transfer website) on the course catalogue link they will send you as follows:

ACCT - Accounting		
Catalogue Number	Description	Action
.414	Accounting Analytics Capstone	View Class Sections
001	Accounting Study Mission (Asian Studies)	View Class Sections
009	Overseas Project Experience (Accounting)	View Class Sections

ACCT .414 sections for 2021-22 Term 2					View All	1-2 of 2
Section	Session	Topic	Course Outline	Status		
G1-SEM (1313)	1	SMU-X	View Course Outline	●		
Days	Start	End	Room	Instructor	Dates	
We	12:00PM	3:15PM	SMUC Active Learning CR 3-3	BENJAMIN LEE, PAN SHAN CHI, GARY	10/01/2022 - 17/04/2022	

- You will have to ‘bid’ for your courses with the allocated money they give you, be strategic with how much money you allocate to each course. Refer to previous biddings for the courses you want, and see what amounts were successful. For example, some courses are in high demand and require more money than average so be sure to allocate a competitive amount to secure your seat.
- **Teaching & Assessment Methods**

- Size: Most classes have around 30-40 students
- Pedagogy: The professors tend to be quite interactive, class participation is often graded, classes follow lecture slides
- **Sports & Recreation Facilities**
 - SMU does a good job in emailing you with various opportunities and facilities for you to use.
- **Finance & Banking**
 - As Singapore is quite cashless, I would recommend creating a bank account and carrying card with you. I personally got an account at DBS and used a debit card for my trip. Another bank you could consider is FRANK by OCBC which has a branch conveniently located in SMU!
 - Singapore currency also looks small in number, but be sure to convert it until you get used to it! Singapore is more costly than Hong Kong, so do budget well.
- **Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities**
 - There are many opportunities you can join that you will learn about through the SMU email communication. You can also join all the telegram chats of the organizing committees to get more frequent updates.
- **Health & Safety**
 - Singapore is quite safe☺ There is a medical center on campus if you need.
- **Food**
 - Hawker centers are local food centers all across Singapore. Food in Hawker centers are very reasonable, can range from SGD\$2 to SGD\$15. However, the vegetarian options are limited in Hawker centers.
 - Restaurants in malls or along the city roads are more expensive but more variety.
 - If you want to cook regularly, I would suggest going to NTUC (Fair Price) which is a grocery store and is priced slightly cheaper than another famous grocery store called Cold Storage. But because I didn't get the opportunity to cook frequently I would buy from whichever grocery store was more convenient.
- **Transportation**
 - Payment: Both trains, buses, and some stores use an EZ Link card which is basically Singapore's Octopus Card. But you can use your credit/debit card instead if you don't want to apply for this additional card, just be careful not to lose it as you will take out the card quite frequently!
 - Train: In Singapore the train system is called MRT, unlike MTR in Hong Kong. It's pretty convenient but the stations are much bigger and often takes time to go from one side to another.
 - Buses: I found myself using buses more often than the train, and while it is fairly reliable do check the frequency of the buses you are taking.
- **Climate**
 - The Singapore weather can be incredibly hot, but because indoor facilities have strong air conditioning you will also need a light sweater.
 - It rains a lot and quite randomly, so do be prepared with an umbrella.

- **Communication**
 - Telegram is used for almost everything – a group chat for your courses made by your TA with your peers sometimes professor as well, groupwork course chats, event or activity group chats, university wide telegram chat, etc.
 - I would recommend getting a Singapore number alongside data package to stay updated with emails, telegram messages, for OTP confirmations, etc. I used a prepaid sim card from M1, but Singtel and Starhub are also good options, see which package suits your needs best from these companies. You can buy a SIM from the airport itself, buy it online before your trip to Singapore, or buy it at a store while in Singapore.
- **Cautionary measures**
 - You can download Straits Times or CNA (news channels) on your phone or subscribe to their chats on Telegram for updates. This helped me stay in touch with what was happening locally and for COVID-related information.

3. Items to Bring

Documentation Checklist

- Passport
- Immigration Papers (ex. IPA Letter)
- SMU Acceptance Offer
- Accommodation Proof

General Packing List

- Computer
- Smart Phone
- Chargers for Devices – *no travel adaptor needed, same plug point as HK*
- Summer Clothes
- Formal clothes – *for presentations, other SMU events*
- Light sweater – *for indoors where the AC is strong*
- Shoes – *sandals, sneakers, formal shoes*
- Bug Spray – *for general precaution + in case of dengue outbreak (mosquito-borne tropical disease)*
- Sunscreen – *daily usage SPF50 is good, for beaches/islands SPF130 is important*

Day-to-Day Essentials to carry with you

- Smartphone with a Singapore SIM
- SMU Student Card
- Student Pass Card
- Credit/Debit Card (if possible) – *most transactions are cashless*
- EZ Link Card – *for transportation on trains/buses, and some stores*
- Umbrella – *carry daily*

- Napkin/Reusable Facecloth – *its very hot in Singapore!*

4. Useful Links & Contacts

Links:

<https://oasis.smu.edu.sg/> - the SIS of SMU

<https://elearn.smu.edu.sg/d2l/login/?target=%2fd2l%2fhome> – the Canvas of SMU

<https://maps.smu.edu.sg/> - SMU Map

<https://t.me/findplango> - Telegram chat for Singapore activities

Apps:

Outlook

Telegram

Google Maps

Grab

Gojek

Gothere.sg lite

SG buses