



EXCHANGE REPORT

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE

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BSC IN QUANTITATIVE FINANCE | SPRING 2022

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Monthly activity log:

January 2022

The spring semester began in January. My friend and I checked in to our residence, completed the procedures to get the official student pass, certified our vaccination record and gradually familiarize ourselves with the local life. With the orientation events, we got to meet and make friends with both exchange student and local students. Together we explored the campus and signature spots like Chinatown, Night Safari and etc.

February 2022

It came the Chinese New Year. My friends and I had a big dinner with a senior student who just graduated from HKUST and came to NUS for PhD study. We also went to a yearly themed light show at Rivers by the Bay. After the first month, we were already quite used to the local transportation, food and everything, and we continued to explore the city and the campus. For example, we went to the “infinity” swimming pool located in the University Town, and had a trip to the Universal Studio as well.

March 2022

The school work in March became heavier with the mid-terms coming, though for exchange students, it was definitely manageable. The main places I visited this month were Sentosa and Singapore Zoo. Fortunately, there was few tourists and the view was great. During those trips, you can really feel how harmoniously humans and nature co-exist, even though it could be a bit scary seeing a lizard-like animal slowly crawling in front of you and big black birds staring at you while you are eating.

April 2022

The last day of class was on April 15th, and my first final exam came on April 30th. As the covid-19 situation improved and the border-control measures also got less strict, my friends and I decided to have a trip in Singapore’s neighbour country, Malaysia. We took a bus that departed from Singapore and went all the way to Malaysia’s capital, Kuala Lumpur. It was a roughly 5-hour drive and the whole process was rather smooth. We went to Malacca and Johor in later days before returning to Singapore.

May 2022

My last final exam was on May 7th, and I went back to Hong Kong on May 10th. The process of checking out from hall was straightforward and easy.

General exchange information

Visa Procedures

After getting admitted to the NUS programme, there will be NUS staff writing emails to give instructions on registering for STP (Student Pass) via ICA(Immigration & Checkpoints Authority). Following the instructions, paying fees and uploading required documents, you will then receive the IPA(“in-principal approval”) from ICA. With this IPA, in addition to other documents that might be required during COVID-19, you can enter Singapore. Upon arrival, you will need to make e-appointments with ICA within 30 days and turn your IPA into the actual student pass. This can be done on campus during a specific period of time, and the whole process is not that complicated.

Orientation Activities

As an exchange student at NUS Business School, you can join orientation activities organized by both the business school and NUS in general. You will gradually receive invitations to the orientations when it approaches the commencement of the semester. Those activities come in various forms and would connect you with local students as well as other international exchange students, and brief you through the local culture, famous scenic spots and etc. You will also get to join a group chat with all the business school exchange student, where you can later receive latest information of activities and also recruit people for a fun trip somewhere.

International Services & Activities

Singapore is definitely an international city where you should be able to access whatever international services you may need. In addition, located in the centre of Southeast Asia, it is quite convenient to visit other countries nearby. Most of the exchange students would take on a trip to Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand or Vietnam during breaks or holidays. As the covid-19 situation eases, it would be a great opportunity to travel around and be fully exposed to SEA culture.

Accommodations

Before the semester, NUS would also email you to brief you through the accommodations they provide, but on-campus accommodation is not guaranteed. Personally, I got a place in the second round of application. If you are fortunate enough to get a hall, normally you would stay at PGP Residence or University Town Residence. There will be different room types, that come with different facilities. Given the local tropical weather, a room without air-conditioner could be unbearable. To address this, you may either be lucky enough to be assigned a air-conditioned room or have to look for some portable air-conditioners.

Courses Registration

I enrolled into four courses at NUS. The semester commenced on Jan 10, 2022. I received the instructions on module registration on Dec 20, 2021 and the period for submit module requests is from Jan 3, 2022 to Jan 4, 2022. After the outcome was released on Jan 9, 2022, we were also given an “add-drop period” from Jan 9 to Jan 21. One thing different from HKUST was that the tutorial sessions were registered after the semester began. You need to submit the tutorial requests separately on designated dates.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

In general, the teaching & assessment methods are quite similar to what we have at HKUST. The semester is also relatively short and you would expect different assignments or assessments to come in one month after the semester starts. Compared with the lectures at HKUST, the lectures at NUS seem to last longer usually. I have a 3-hour FINA lecture every week and other lectures are about 100 minutes. Of course there will be some breaks in between, but you might need some time to get used to it.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

The campus of NUS is really big. There are university sports centre and also other facilities scattered around. You can book those facilities online or directly walk-in, and they should satisfy all your needs regarding sports or recreation. Two other things to highlight: 1) There is a “infinity” swimming pool located in the UTown that can cater around 10 people. The view was great and I would recommend you to go in the early morning. 2) There is a big lawn also at UTown, you can have a picnic there if you want.

Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses)

I brought 1500 SGD cash with me for the 4-month stay, and the cash was usually spent at the hawker centres or at MRT stations to top up the transport card. Other than that, I usually pay with visa/master card, and the cash was roughly enough to cover all the expenses I need to pay in cash. If you plan to exchange for SGD prior to the trip, I would suggest doing it earlier as you might need to make appointments with banks.

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

There are indeed a lot of events and activities organized by the university or student organizations. Apart from participating in those orientation events, you can also try any other activities that interest you and make friends there. Also, you may want to connect with local professors and students as well during courses and group projects.

Health & Safety

Singapore should be one of the safest countries worldwide. Just be aware of the hot weather when going out and you are very likely to bump into wild animals if you go to some natural reserves. There could be monkeys, otters, lizards, crocodiles and etc. Perhaps pay more attention to your surroundings during those trips and not to tease animals.

Food

There are really diversified food choices available in Singapore. Together with what you can access in any international city, hawker centres are really featured in the country. In hawker centres, you can get to enjoy good quality and featured food, including Chinese, Malaysian, Indian and Western, at lower costs, though the eating environment might not be that ideal, especially those without air-conditioners.

Transportation

Singapore is geographically a small country with a developed public transportation system. It won't take too much time to travel to any places, though its buses and MRT are at least as costly as those in Hong Kong. The buses usually don't call out the stops so people usually

use Google Map to know when to drop off. If you'd like to grab a taxi, you can either use the app called "Grab" or go to a nearby taxi stand.

Climate

Personally I would say the local weather is a bit extreme. It either rains heavily or comes with huge heat and generous sunshine. The rain comes and goes quickly, and when it rains, the dehumidifier bags usually become useful in a short time. The temperature is always above 20 degree Celsius. You only need to bring summer clothes, perhaps with a coat for staying at airconditioned rooms. If you hate summer, Singapore might not be the best destination for you.

Communication

As far as I know, exchange students usually chose to have a local SIM card. There are different network providers in Singapore. You can browse through their data plans and make your own decision. I bought a pre-paid Singtel card at a 7-11 store and top-up my data every four weeks(SGD\$15 for 4-week 5GB).

Cautionary measures

Although it is not that likely, please stay alert to suspicious phone calls. I met with a fraud claiming that they were calling from MOH(Singapore Ministry of Health) and there was an illegal parcel delivered to me.

Singapore is a multi-ethnicity society, please be respectful of all ethnicities.

There are some special laws you need to be aware of, such as:

- Chewing gums is illegal
- Drinking alcohol in restaurants after 10:30 pm is now allowed
- Walking around naked in your house is illegal
- Bringing durians to public transportation vehicles is not allowed

Items to Bring

- Sufficient cash & Credit card
- Summer clothes, hats/sunglasses/umbrella, swimsuit
- Documents(IPA letter, Passport & Other documents required)
- Electronic devices and other things you need for study and recreation
- Medications (if any)
- Other daily necessities

Useful Links and Contacts

For exchange study at NUS

Apply for STP: <https://eservices.ica.gov.sg/solar/index.xhtml>

NUS Business School Introduction: <https://bschool.nus.edu.sg/>

NUS Modular System: <https://www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/academic-information-policies/non-graduating/modular-system>

NUS Modular Registration: <https://bba.nus.edu.sg/academic-programmes/module-registration-information/general/>

University Health Centre: www.nus.edu.sg/uhc/

Sports & Recreational Centre: <https://uci.nus.edu.sg/suu/facilities/about-suu-sports-facilities/usage-and-booking-of-sports-and-outdoor-facilities/>

Libraries: <https://libportal.nus.edu.sg/>

F&B: <http://uci.nus.edu.sg/oqa/retail-dining/food-and-beverages/>

For visiting Singapore:

Information about Singapore: www.visitsingapore.com/en/