

Exchange Report

National University of Singapore



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BBA FINA & ACCT

2022 Spring Semester Exchange

Part I – Monthly Activity Log

January

The semester started on the 10th of January. Unfortunately, I could only arrive in Singapore on the 19th given accommodation and personal issues. Hence, I missed some in-person orientation events and had to take the first few lessons online. Most classes were still in hybrid mode and important information was communicated through email, so my late arrival did not severely impact the continuation of my exchange journey later on. Upon receiving my negative PCR test result after arrival, I can finally start exploring life in NUS and in Singapore. For the rest of the month, my friends and I visited Sentosa, Gardens by the Bay, the National Museum of Singapore, and cycled along East Coast Park. I was very lucky to have friends who were willing to introduce me to their other friends, broadening my social circle. I was also able to meet new friends through in-person classes and other events in school. Throughout the semester, NUS Peer Advising was sending out emails to promote activities for exchangers. One of which that I joined was having dinner at a local student home. It was a great opportunity to have a sneak peek of local Singaporeans' lives and meet other exchangers. In addition, I tried archery for the first time by joining Fun Shoot held by the NUS Archery Club. Be sure to check out the Interest Development Series usually held in the first few weeks of the semester if you want to try out a few new sports and Instagram accounts of different clubs for orientation events.



February

The 1st of February is the first day of the Chinese New Year. I celebrated with other exchangers from various countries by having a hotpot dinner (called steamboat in Singapore) together. Reading week was another break from school in the month. It was a good time for traveling. However, given stringent border restrictions were still in place, traveling exchangers had to risk being unable to return to the country, so I chose to explore across the city instead. Along with my friends, we went to the Universal Studios of Singapore, several nature reserves (MacRitchie TreeTop Walk, Pulau Ubin, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve), Palawan beach, etc.



March

Schoolwork gets more intense after the reading week. I had to devote more time to assignments, projects, and tests in March. Yet, I managed to stay active by joining the aerobics club and ice-skating club which provided weekly lessons. In addition, I signed up with friends for night cycling organized by the Bizad Club. It was a fun experience cycling at midnight. Surprisingly, there were a lot of other Singaporeans doing the same thing too given the heat during the daytime.



April

April 13 was the last day of class for the semester. The semester wrapped up with a bunch of final presentations and reports in the last few weeks. Most of my groupmates are very diligent and smart. I enjoyed and learned a lot from them through working together on projects. The most memorable 'final exam' was the concert for my world music ensemble course. Our class put up a Balinese Gamelan and Malay Kompang performance in the foyer at the music conservatory. I would strongly recommend this fun and culturally eye-opening module to all future exchangers to NUS. Since I only had one take-home paper during the exam period, I travelled to Thailand with other HKUST exchangers in late April.



May

The month of saying goodbyes. Many exchangers left Singapore in the first week of May once they finished their finals. I spent the week clearing my to-do list in Singapore such as going to the two museums in NUS and having last meetings with friends before we depart. Finally, I returned to Hong Kong on May 8 and served my 7-day quarantine.



Part II – General Exchange Information

Visa Procedures

Upon my acceptance of the admission letter from NUS, the non-graduating team gave details about the Student's Pass (STP) Application. Most procedures and payments were completed online before departure. The last step of the application had to be completed in person either through off-site enrolment in NUS which was held a few days before the semester starts or by e-appointment.

Orientation Activities

There was a pre-arrival webinar organized by the Global Relations Office. NUS Bizad Club also organized a Welcome Day in the first week of the semester for exchangers to have fun and connect with each other.

International Services & Activities

NUS Peer Advising had been sending out emails about activities for exchangers from time to time as well as organizing the exchange buddy program where I met two very friendly buddies.

Accommodations

On-campus accommodation was not guaranteed. I could only join the hall application from the third round onwards as I failed to secure three modules at the beginning which caused the delay in the issuance of my admission offer. My third round and appeal rounds of application were all unsuccessful. Thus, I had to stay in off-campus accommodation which was expensive. NUS had provided a list of off-campus accommodation recommendations that were more affordable, but they were all fully booked at the time I was searching for one.

Courses Registration

The first round of module registration ended on 1 Oct 2021 where I submitted 8 choices but was only given 2 modules. A minimum workload of 3 modules was required for the issuance of the admission offer. Thus, I joined another round of registration in mid-Nov where I added 2 more choices and was offered 1 more module. In these two rounds, the business courses offered to exchange students were very limited and were primarily fundamental level courses for Accounting and Finance that I have taken at HKUST. At this stage, the three modules that I had secured were Strategic Management (BSP3701B), Introduction to Politics (PS1101E) and World Music Ensemble (MUA3219).

In January, there was another module registration exercise to request additional modules. The maximum workload for exchange students was 20MCs which usually translates to 5 modules. I was offered another module – Financial Markets (FIN3703B) in the submit module requests step and one more – Private Equity (FIN4761A) in the appeal step. More business courses were opened to exchangers in the appeal stage which were courses with vacancies after the registration of NUS undergrads.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

4 out of 5 modules that I took were conducted in person. Class participation was one of the common assessment criteria, weighing varied from 10% to 30%. From my personal point of view, the workload was comparable to that of HKUST while there were more projects than exams.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

The NUS campus is equipped with a wide range of sports and recreation facilities which includes swimming pools, fitness gyms, badminton courts, etc.

Finance & Banking

QR code payment is very common across Singapore and the facilitating payment App usually requires a local bank account. DBS is a common option for opening one.

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

The long list of student clubs can be found in the Student Organizations Directory on the Office of Student Affairs website. You can follow the clubs' Instagram pages and telegram channels for their latest events updates.

Health & Safety

Exchangers can seek general medical care and referrals from the University Health Centre at a discounted price.

Food

Singapore is a cornucopia of different cuisines with its diverse populace. Searching for hidden gems in hawker centers was one of the activities that my friends and I love to do in our free time. A wide variety of affordable food options are also found on campus. However, dining in restaurants is generally more expensive compared to Hong Kong after including the 7% GST.

Transportation

Most places can be reached conveniently with public transport (MRT and buses).

Climate

Singapore has a hot and humid tropical climate.

Communication

I bought a Singtel \$50 prepaid sim card at the airport and used \$15 monthly for a 5GB plan. During promotions, an extra 5GB was given by subscribing the plan through the App.

Cautionary measures

Singapore is a very safe country. Yet, one should never drop all caution, especially in an unfamiliar city.

Part III – Items to Bring

- Passport
- Business attire
- Umbrella
- Clothes
- Slippers
- Stationery
- Laptop

Part IV – Useful Links and Contacts

Useful Links

- NUSMODS: module information and timetable builder (<https://nusmods.com>)
- LumiNUS: Canvas of NUS (<https://luminus.nus.edu.sg>)
- Education Records System (EduRec): fees payment, transcript, module registration (<https://myedurec.nus.edu.sg>)

Useful Apps

- uNivUS
- NUSNextBus
- LumiNUS
- Singpass
- HealthHub
- Citymapper

Useful Contact

NUS Non-Graduating Students Team: nghelp@nus.edu.sg