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Fall Term 2022-23

National University of Singapore (Singapore)

Monthly Activity Log

August

My initial impression of Singapore is one word, HOT. Yes, you heard it right and I even come from Malaysia which is super-hot as well but in Singapore it is not just hot but humid too so you will most probably sweat 15 minutes after leaving your accommodation here. Due to some urgent changes in the procedures of obtaining student visa, had to rush down to NUS on my very first day in Singapore in the rain to obtain them. It was a once in a lifetime experience. However, I got to experience clubs and sports that I never had the chance to do in the past which are playing contract bridge, Riichi mahjong and squash. Finally, to top it all off, also met with some friends from HKUST as well and we had a meal together at Lau Pa Sat which is a very famous hawker center here in Singapore. Studying in NUS is also a wide opening experience as well since the campus is huge (We must travel by bus to classes in campus) and there are multiple floors of classes in different buildings.



September

A month into classes at NUS and my overall impression of studies here is that it feels more “chur” than Hong Kong. We have mini cases and assignments that start from Week 0 and participation counts for more than 15% of your grade for some courses. It was an eye-opening experience seeing students being very proactive in classes. Nevertheless, I went to visit places as well. Me and my friends also visited the Singapore Science Museum where we took pictures of optical illusions, played a miniature escape room etc. I also went on a food tour around Singapore trying out foods ranging from Asian to Western. Here is a picture of one of the largest chicken chops I see in Singapore.

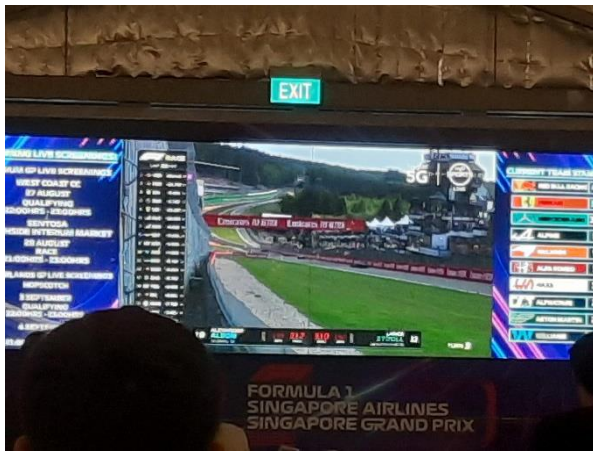


October

When October kicks in, it is time for loads of midterms. As all say when you are on exchange, take your studies chill but I still want to do well in them. Most interesting thing about one midterm which is based on R coding. The professor found a lecture hall that doesn't have many chargers provided and seeing that we all have to use laptops and it is a 3-hour exam, most of the students' laptops ran out of battery before the exam ended so all of us have to take turns to charge our laptops at the scarce plugs in the room while completing our exam at the same time. A unique experience I would say. For fun experiences is definitely the visit to Universal Studios Singapore (USS) to experience the famous Halloween Horror Nights that just reopened these doors this year due to Covid. Me and my friend



had a great scare when we visited the most intense haunted house alone as 2 since the park is about to close. We got the full experience and every single scare possible so definitely worth our bucks going there.



November

During my final month in Singapore, I explored the islands of Sentosa where me and my friend caught the F1 Grand Prix game on a big screen while exploring some historical sites which dated back to World War 2. I also brought a German friend of mine to explore Malaysia. We went back to my hometown Penang to enjoy some great food then headed south to visit historical sites in Kuala Lumpur and Melaka. We ended our trip by doing some shopping in Johor Bahru before heading back to Singapore. Overall, the

entire trip was amazing, and we had some cheap and delicious food along the way.

Visa Procedures

Singapore requires all exchange students to obtain a student visa to remain in Singapore for the entirety of your exchange semester. I will be stating more on my experiences from a Malaysian passport point of view.

Completion of eForm 16

You can go to <https://eservices.ica.gov.sg/solar/index.xhtml> where you can fill in the form with these particulars (SOLAR Application number → Will be received in your email, Name, Nationality, Date of Birth, Sex)

After submission, do print a copy of your submitted responses to Singapore for visa collection purposes.

Pay Processing Fee

Once application is processed, do check your email regularly to pay the processing fee before the stipulated deadline

Receive IPA Letter (with conditions) + Submit Required Documents + Pay Issuance Fee

After receiving your IPA letter, print it out and bring it to Singapore. IPA letter is used as a one-time entry pass to Singapore for both Visa and Non-Visa Required Countries so there is **no need to apply for a separate visa**. Do check your email regularly to pay issuance fees at least 2 weeks before you arrive in Singapore so that you obtain the IPA Letter to collect your student pass.

Obtaining Student Pass

Upon arriving in Singapore, you would need to obtain your student pass at most 1 month after your arrival in Singapore since Singapore Short Term Visit Pass will only allow you to stay in Singapore for 30 days. There are 2 ways to obtain your student pass at your time in Singapore.

1) Off-Site Enrollment for Student's Pass.

These processes are the most convenient way to obtain your student pass seeing that they are done on-campus. To go to these appointments, it is only **by appointment** so be sure to check out your email for sign-up information and do sign up as early as possible.

2) Offsite Enrollment for Student's Pass

If you are unable to obtain the student pass on campus, there are appointments to obtain student pass from the ICA building at Kallang Road. You can make an appointment through this website here. <https://eservices.ica.gov.sg/ibook/index.do>

If you are choosing this method, a general tip is to book these appointments once you have obtained your IPA letter and with a FIN number seeing these slots are booked up to a month in advance.

Tip: You can do both your registration and off-site enrolment on the same day as they are usually held on the same spot-on campus

Orientation Activities

These activities are usually organized by the school that you are at, for instance there is a separate session of orientation for business school students and science school students. It is usually done by their Global Relations Office and Peer Advising Leaders on the 2nd week of classes to meet other exchange students. There is one smaller scale orientation activity done by the Peer Advising Leaders where you could sign up and it usually consists of some ball games and a picnic near the U-Town fields.



International Services & Activities

NUS does not provide pick-up services from the airport to the campus itself, but it is quite convenient to travel here by Grab or the MRT system which I will touch base later. The Peer Advising Leaders held a Chinatown cultural tour for us exchange students where we visited some unique attractions in Singapore in Chinatown and Little India where we visited temples, historical sites etc. with your newly made exchange friends. These events must be pre-booked in advance so do be quick to sign up for them if you are interested. All this information will be sent to your NUS email address once you have activated them.

Accommodations



There are three main types of accommodations which exchange students go for at NUS. **On Campus Accommodation, Off Campus Student Accommodation and Student Hostels.** Personally when I am on exchange at NUS I stayed at a student hostel so I will touch base on that into more detail

On Campus Accommodation

In NUS, there are six main residence halls, 4 residential colleges, 2 student residences and 2 houses in which you can apply too. Firstly, I will explain the main differences of each one in a table format.

Student Accommodations	Descriptions
Residence Halls	Halls that have experiential learning involved (I.E Sports clubs, art activities etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meal Plan is compulsory. - Academic Programs are provided but optional. - Hostel Activities are required (May be different for exchange students) - Single and Double Room Types
Residential Colleges	Environment that has compulsory academic programs to enhance a living-learning environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compulsory meal plan - Single and Double Rooms - Hostel Activities are required (May be different for exchange students)
Student Residences	Very flexible learning environment with no programs offered for personal development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Optional Hostel Activities - Only single room available.
Houses	Strong focus on peer mentorship and focusing on student wellbeing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No meal plan or academic programs. - Hostel Activities are required (May be different for exchange students) - Only single room type

Off Campus Student Accommodations

These accommodations can range from HBD's, Private Residences, Condominiums etc. Depending on the accommodation and location you go for, price can range from 800SGD a month to 2000SGD a month per pax. Would recommend finding accommodation near Clementi, Dover, Queenstown and Commonwealth since these places are close to NUS campus. The websites that I used are.

- PropertyGuru (<https://www.propertyguru.com.sg/>)
- 99.co (<https://www.99.co/>)
- Emails sent from NUS admission Office.

Student Residences

These residences are mainly accommodations that are available under secondary / high schools in Singapore or condominiums / apartments which are used to hold students under a student visa here

in Singapore. I personally lived in one during my exchange at NUS and it does provide the student life experience if you are unlucky and are unable to secure on-campus accommodation at NUS.

The student residence that I stayed at is MDIS Residences located in Queenstown. I found this residence through an agent from Property Guru (Tip: Do locate for agents to obtain for housing under MDIS Residences if that is your choice since their official website shows their rooms are shown to be fully booked). The entire application process to getting a room offer is about 3 days and you would have a week to pay the deposit plus entire rental period (Usually 4 months for your exchange period). For reference, I paid 735SGD a month for a double room which I shared with a friend from HKUST as well. (Tip: As they also cater to secondary students as well, do find a roommate from HKUST to share the double room with for a better study environment).

MDIS does not provide meal plans but there is a canteen present on the campus itself. Washing machines cost 2sgd per wash and 2sgd more for drying services. There is a laundry service on campus which will take 4 items of clothing each day. For activities, usually we can't join the activities that they provide to their own students but there is a badminton court and a gym on campus.



Courses Registration

Prior to your exchange at NUS, you will have to initially select courses to rank your preference then submit it to the admission team to review. All allocation of courses is done by their course review team, and it is not through a first-come-first serve basis unlike HKUST where courses are able to be selected if there is quota and you meet the requirements. For most NUS courses, their school-based courses are reserved and prioritized for exchange students that exchange under that school itself (I.E Business school students are more likely to obtain business school courses than science school students). **Restriction:** A special case about business school courses is that only students that exchange with NUS business school can study them.

After selecting your courses, you will receive an email stating the courses that are pre-registered to you from the course registration team at NUS. Usually course registration are based on a few factors: 1) Priority you set on your list 2) Ability to study that course (Reason why they require you to send your HKUST official transcript to understand what courses you have taken for their pre-requisite judgement) 3) Quota + Student Criteria (Usually students from partnering university with NUS business school and are also enrolled in NUS business school for exchange gets priority).

If the courses / timing of courses is not as you wanted, there is another course selection process which begins 1 week before the term starts for you to select / change timeslots for your courses. Once again, these submissions are purely evaluated by the course registration team but there is a deadline to submit your applications.

To read more about courses information at NUS, most students utilize NUSMods ([https://nusmods.com/modules?sem\[0\]=1&sem\[1\]=2&sem\[2\]=3&sem\[3\]=4](https://nusmods.com/modules?sem[0]=1&sem[1]=2&sem[2]=3&sem[3]=4)) to obtain information regarding description, workload, timeline and it comes with a timetable planner as well. However, searching on forums could provide more detailed information for certain courses at NUS.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

Currently after the Covid-19 pandemic, most NUS business courses are now all face-to-face classes with lectures only providing Zoom recordings to students for very special cases. The courses usually comprise of a main lecture and some courses have lab sessions. They are usually 3 hours long (For courses with pure lectures) or one and a half hours each (If the course has both lecture and lab sessions). Overall, each course's total teaching time per week is around 3 hours. Class sizes usually are about 30 to 40 students per class and they are very interactive. Professors usually ask questions to students most of the time and class participation takes up a huge percentage of a student's overall grades. I took 5 courses during my time at NUS exchange so do contact me if you want to know more about these courses. These courses are mainly business analytics and operational courses due to my double major in Information Systems and Operations Management (ISOM)

- BSP 3701 (Case study course focusing on business operations as a whole)
- DOS 3703 (Coverage on Service Operations Management)
- DOS 3704 (Operations Strategy)
- DBA 4702 (Business Analytic course focusing on causal analytics for decision making)
- DBA 3702 (Business Analytics in R)

Finance & Banking

For most banks in Singapore, exchange students can obtain a bank account through utilization of their student visa. The required documents are (1) Passport, 2) Student Pass, 3) Proof of Residence, 4) Tax Residency Status). Personally, would recommend DBS Bank as they the application process is more straightforward (All through their online application) and the application time process is short as well. Apart from traditional banks, you can also consider digital banks such as Wise and Revolut to get your money transferred into Singapore.

In Singapore, the main currency used is SGD. My finances breakdown could also be summarized as the table below.

	Day of Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
Rent		24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	
Transport (Mrt / Bus)		5	5	5	5	5	10	10	
Food (3 meals included)		20	20	20	20	20	30	30	
Groceries									
	Drinks	3	3	3	3	3	5	5	All Values are in SGD
	Snacks	4	4	4	4	4	6	6	
	Fruits	4	4	4	4	4	8	8	
Entertainment									
	Grab Rides	0	0	0	0	0	30	30	
	Admission Fees	0	0	0	0	0	20	20	Total
		60.5	60.5	60.5	60.5	60.5	133.5	133.5	569.5

Climate

For Singapore, the temperature usually stays consistently around 32 to 36 degrees in the day and 30 to 33 degrees in the night. Usually there is more rain during January to February where it is Singapore's monsoon season and it is more windy as well.

Health and Safety

For NUS, every student is provided access to the University Health Centre. It is open during regular office hours from Monday to Friday. Most medical services are covered under the compulsory medical insurance that you have to pay as an exchange student to NUS.

Apart from medical support, NUS also have on-campus counselling services, and they are covered under your medical insurance scheme as well.

For safety, the Office of Campus Security of NUS provides 24-hour security services and there are emergency call points situated around campus to connect with security officers.

Food

Inside NUS, there are multiple eateries and there is usually at least one eatery at each building. The price of these foods' ranges from 4sgd to 10sgd depending on what you order and there are various cuisines ranging from Chinese, Malay, Indian, Thai, Japanese, Korean, Western etc.

Transportation

There is a free shuttle bus service inside NUS which allows you to travel to each different building in-between classes. Do factor in travel and waiting time during peak hours (I.E during class transition period) as the bus can get really packed. Outside NUS, there are usually 3 main travel methods I.E Bus, MRT and private hire cars. For bus and MRT, each journey will take about 1 to 2 SGD and will rarely exceed this amount. Private hire cars such as Grab and Gojek here will cost roughly 20 SGD to 40 SGD depending on distance, peak hours factors etc.

Communication

Singapore has a wide range of communication services so people here obtain a SIM card with data plan services to communicate with others. The main telecommunications provider here is Singtel where for your reference, 3GB of data each month will cost you around 20 SGD. However, apart from Singtel there are other telecommunications providers such as Starhub and M1, which also provides call and data services.

There is Wi-Fi throughout the NUS campus so there is no need for data usage on campus itself. However, it is useful to be used when travelling abroad and Singtel do provide overseas data packages as well if you plan to go on holiday during your exchange time.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

As NUS is a huge campus, there are multiple gyms and sports facilities on campus. Such facilities include badminton, tennis, squash, basketball courts with football fields and multiple swimming pools as well. These facilities have to be booked through their booking system (https://reboks.nus.edu.sg/nus_public_web/public/facilities).



Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

Each semester, NUS will hold a clubs and society day which is usually held at U-Town. During these days you can learn more about the 100+ clubs and societies that they offer and join them during their regular sessions. Most of these clubs have a separate info day where you can meet other interested participants and learn more about their events in general. Personally, I joined the Riichi Mahjong club where I learnt more about Japanese Mahjong.

Cautionary Measures

In Singapore, the main language which is spoken here is English but most Chinese vendors understand Chinese as well. There aren't much big customs here in Singapore however there is a culture called "Chope" seating here where people places small items such as tissue paper and bottles on tables to "reserve" them while they get their food at the hawker center. Therefore, don't

sit on seats which have these items on them and yes you can definitely do the same to reserve your own seats as well.

Items to Bring

As Singapore is a tropical country, a huge part of your luggage is saved from carrying winter clothing. However, mosquito repellent and a mini fan are essential here if you are afraid of mosquitoes and the heat. Here are some things that I recommend bringing to Singapore.

Things to Bring	Rationale
Five pairs of short sleeved T-shirts and pants	Usually Singapore is very hot, therefore wearing short sleeves is the preferred choice for most students here.
Five pairs of long jeans	Up to personal preference but I usually wear long jeans when I go to study for my classes. Plus, as the weather is very hot the air conditioning in classes can get cold at times.
Handkerchiefs	Depending on personal preference but I use them a lot
Small Basket	Useful for carrying your toiletries as the bathrooms may get wet if it is shared with a few people.
Toiletries	Useful to get enough toiletries for the first few days in case you have no time to get them from the orientation / registration activities.
Notebook	Writing down notes
Hangers	Cupboards here do not provide them
Small Locks / Number Locks	Useful to lock important documents
Bedsheets	Can get your own personal ones
Files and Folders	Useful for holding school materials
Adapters and Chargers	Especially essential for chargers of a different plug type. They use plug type G here
Stationeries	Useful during classes
2 Towels	Interchangeable when you bring your clothes to wash.
Jacket / Hoodie	Classes / Dorm room may get cold
Sportswear / Swim Equipment	Depending on your favorite sport
Backpack	Useful for outdoor excursions
Umbrella	Singapore rains a lot at unexpected times
Wipers	First time cleaning of dorms
Socks	Go with your sneakers
Sport Shoes / Sneakers	Depending on your sport type / outing
Cash	Enough cash on hand before you get your bank account set up.

Useful Links and Contacts

[Canvas \(All classes have been transitioned to this platform\)](#)

[NusMods \(Useful to check course information\)](#)

[EduRec \(Check academics, financial information\)](#)