Pre-Departure Briefing for CROATIA, ESTONIA, HUNGARY, LITHUANIA, POLAND & SLOVENIA

Friday, 22 November 2019
1. Highlights of SEP
2. Preparing for SEP
3. What to expect at your destination
4. Settling in
5. Homecoming
6. Q&A + Networking
SEP is an opportunity for students to:

1. Spend one or two semesters studying at a partner university
2. Earn modular credits toward their major in a new academic setting
3. Immerse themselves in a new place and culture
4. Enjoy tuition-fee waiver from the partner institution, and pay NUS tuition fees for the exchange semester(s)

What is SEP?
TOP REASONS FOR GOING ON SEP
(as reported by students)

1. To experience a different culture
2. Personal development
3. To experience a different education system

AFTER THEIR SEP EXPERIENCE...

~99% Felt more capable of taking care of themselves
~99% Felt more willing to try out new things
SATISFACTION SURVEY
AY2018/19

99% were either extremely satisfied or satisfied with their exchange

98% would recommend SEP to other students
Preparing for SEP

ROAD MAP

- Set personal goals
- Find out about host destinations
- Plan itinerary
- Work out budget

After applying with your host university

While waiting for your acceptance package

- Read pre-departure guide
- Attend country briefing

Upon receiving your acceptance package

- Follow instructions in acceptance package (read carefully & meet deadlines)
- Apply for visa
- Book accommodation
- Make travel arrangements
Preparation for SEP

STUDY PLAN

• Complete the module mapping process via the Education Records System (select Self Service – External Study).

• Include some spare modules in your study list in case you are unable to secure your preferred modules or when your enrolled module(s) has been cancelled.

• Should there be any changes to your study plan, seek approval from your home faculty immediately.

If You Fail to Plan, You Plan to Fail - Benjamin Franklin
PASSPORT & FLIGHT

• Ensure that passport is valid for 6 months after return date.

• Do **NOT** confirm flight booking until you have received:
  1. the acceptance from the host university and;
  2. received your visa

• Arrive at least 2 weeks before study period and attend orientation programme.
Preparing for SEP

VISA

The following information are general tips. Ensure that you verify the visa requirements and application information with the relevant embassies before you embark on your SEP!

• Follow instructions and advice from your host university
• Check online and with relevant embassies for additional details
• You may need to visit an embassy in a neighboring country
• Allow sufficient time (e.g. at least one month) for your visa application process
• Visa application process usually takes one of two routes:
  • Apply for and receive Student Visa at embassy in Singapore (or neighboring country) before entry into the host country.
  • Enter host country on a tourist / short-term visit visa, then apply for a Residence Permit with the host country government authorities.
Preparing for SEP

HEALTH & INSURANCE

• Read through the coverage from the NUS Students Travel Insurance http://www.nus.edu.sg/finance/InsuranceCoverforOfficialNUSTrips.html.

• Have a comprehensive travel and health insurance coverage for the full duration of your stay abroad, including travelling.

• You may need to purchase additional health and/or travel insurance from your host university.

• Bring along the emergency hotline numbers and a copy of your insurance policy.

• Report accident/loss at the earliest possible opportunity.

• If you are taking any medication, please continue and bring along an adequate supply.
The following tips are over-and-above the NUS student insurance, and are subjected to the requirements set by your host university / country.

• Your host university may require you to purchase a specific in-country insurance package. Check with them if the NUS insurance is sufficient to cover the requirements; you may be required to submit a waiver request.
• When applying for your visa, the embassy may require you to show proof of insurance coverage as a supporting document.
• Always check if the insurance packages cover your intended activities whilst overseas. In general, having additional insurance coverage is never a bad thing.
Preparing for SEP

CHECKLIST OF THINGS TO BRING – DOCUMENTS

- Valid passport and visa
- Proof of acceptance by PU
- Study plan
- NUS transcripts (to facilitate module registration)
- Proof of financial support
- Letter confirming accommodation
- Receipts of payments made (housing, admin fees, etc.)
- Medical records (including vaccinations)
- Insurance
- Forms of identification (ISIC youth card, driving license, etc.)
- Bank draft/ credit card/ cash
- Confirmed flight ticket
- List of emergency contacts

Please remember to make a copy of all important documents. Keep separate sets in different places. You might also like to leave a set at home, so that these documents can be easily sent to you in the event that you lose those with you.
Preparing for SEP

CHECKLIST OF THINGS TO BRING – NECESSITIES

☐ Appropriate clothing (ie windproof and water resistant jacket with a hood)
☐ Medication & First-aid kit
☐ Multi-plug, Multiple-USB port (and adaptor)
☐ Umbrella/ raincoat
☐ Appropriate footwear (ie water resistant, non-slip shoes)
☐ Toiletries
☐ Hairdryer
☐ Digital camera
☐ Photos and souvenirs of home/ Singapore
☐ Foodstuff (pre-mix sealed in vacuum pack)
☐ Passport photos
Preparation for SEP

PACK IT RIGHT FOR YOUR FLIGHT

**PROHIBITED ITEMS**
- Items not allowed on an aircraft
  - Explosive, flammable, corrosive or poisonous items
  - Firearms and weapons

**CHECKED BAGGAGE**
- Items that must be checked in
  - Sharp objects
  - Bulky items
  - Liquids, aerosols and gels of more than 100ml

**HAND CARRY BAGGAGE**
- Items that passengers can carry on board an aircraft
  - Liquids, aerosols and gels kept in containers of not more than 100ml each
    - All must fit into a transparent, re-sealable plastic bag with maximum capacity of 1 litre that is completely closed
  - Up to 2 spare lithium batteries for portable electronic devices (including power banks)
    - Packed individually to prevent short circuits
    - Must be hand carried, cannot be checked in

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LiJbnnWxDalQ&feature=youtu.be
Preparing for SEP

DON’T FORGET TO REGISTER WITH MFA!

- Singaporeans/PRs should register themselves with Singapore MFA at https://eregister.mfa.gov.sg/eregisterportal/common/preLoginEregisterView.action.
- NS men must notify MINDEF of their trip and apply for the Exit Permit if required at www.ns.sg.
- International students should contact their country’s diplomatic missions.
USEFUL RESOURCES

• Partner university specific information:

• Partner University application instructions and university information:
  https://share.nus.edu.sg/ng/Partner%20University%20SEP%20application%20material%20for%20s/Forms/AllItems.aspx

• Read seniors’ reports of host university:
  https://share.nus.edu.sg/ng/SEP%20Report/Forms/AllItems.aspx

• On being prepared while overseas:
• Generic term that originated from the communist regimes of the countries in the region.

• Economically less well-off than countries of Western Europe, but culturally no less vibrant.

• Erno Rubik was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1944.

• Czechs consume the most beer per capita in the world.

• It is considered rude to wear a hat indoors in Poland. And kissing a woman’s hand is still in fashion.
What to Expect at Your Destination

WEATHER

• Winter (Dec to Feb) and Spring (Mar to May)
• Air will be dry – put on lots of moisturizer.
• Have a good coat with you; the weather can change rapidly.
• You may experience gloominess because you are not used to the short days and cold weather. Try winter activities (e.g. skiing) to cheer yourself up.
What to Expect at Your Destination

COST OF LIVING

- You should work out a budget covering accommodation, food, transport, clothing & entertainment.

- **Estimated cost of living per month:**
  - **Eastern Europe @ €600 - €1,150 per month (approx. SGD 1,000 – SGD 1,900)**

  *Exchange rate as of April 19 (via Google)*

- You can save money by shopping at local supermarkets, buying tickets in advance and taking budget airlines.
What to Expect at Your Destination

COST OF LIVING – SENIORS’ TIPS

• Cook!
• Enjoy student discounts/privileges (with your student card)
• Consider eating in school
• The nearest grocery store might not be the cheapest
• Plan your trips in advance to save cost
• Source for alternative means of traveling (e.g. bus rides instead of flights, buying a bike, etc.)
• Use apps that will give you discounts
Apply as soon as you receive email on school accommodation
Accommodation (especially for city campuses) are in short supply and run out quickly before the accommodation application deadline.

Keep your room neat
- Not every hostel has a housekeeping service
- Some hostels conduct spot checks
- You might forfeit your deposit if you leave your room in a mess when you leave

Roommates
- You can request but you might be randomly assigned a roommate
- Beautiful bonding or horror story
Source for off-campus accommodation if you really cannot stay at the university accommodation

Your safety, sanity and well-being should be of utmost concern. If you are not able to stay in shared university accommodation, do consider renting private accommodation. Talk to host university to explore recommended and trusted options.

Check the location of your room

There might be different campuses and hostels located across the city – make sure you know where you’re staying before signing on.

Read the terms and conditions

Before you commit to any accommodation (private or university), please read and clarify your doubts about the terms and conditions before you sign on the rental agreement.
What to Expect at Your Destination

ACADEMIC CULTURE – SENIORS’ TIPS

Self-directed Learning
• It’s still possible to fail classes while on exchange

Course registration and attendance
• Registration of modules will be mentioned during point of offer or during orientation
• Check how you can verify your enrollment to classes
• Map extra modules as contingency plan
• Attendance to classes are expected

Examination
• Examination dates might only be made known half-way through the term
• Examination registration could be done separately
• You are expected to turn up for the official examination during the specific date
Different academic culture

- Lecturers expect a 2-way conversation, and students are not afraid to speak up during classes
- You are expected to learn independently, do your own readings and not just rely on lecture notes
- Schools might conduct an oral exam instead
- Class size can be from as small as 5 to 50 students

Secure modules and keep track of school work

- Map extra modules – the module list can vary from year to year, or change when the semester starts
- Check if you might need to email the lecturer or just turn up in classes to secure the module, in addition to/in lieu of registering online
- Some classes require you to be at the classroom on a first-come-first-serve basis, to secure the module
- Modules might be cancelled unexpectedly
What to Expect at Your Destination

LIFESTYLE

• Punctuality is a norm and if you are late, you are supposed to have a better reason than just “I lost track of time”

• Locals are generally helpful but might not take the initiative to make small talk so be thick-skinned, smile and start a conversation

• Pace of life is slower, a weekend spent with a long brunch or just chilling out is not unusual

• Walking and cycling culture is very strong

• Partner universities usually have lots of sports activities from the beginner’s to advanced level so don’t miss the opportunity to exercise and make friends!

• Spend time making local friend but remember to stay in touch with family back home
Safety should be the priority in all that you do.

Assess the risk of what you are about to do and try to minimize and even avoid unnecessary risk.

If confronted, give up your valuables and do not resist as your safety is the most important.

Ask locals about any dangerous areas or locations that should be avoided.

Check for nearest fire exit and ensure that your dormitory has valid fire extinguisher.
In the event of an attack, adopt the following:

**SAFETY: “RUN, HIDE, TELL”**

**RUN (if escape is possible)**
1. Consider the safest route
2. Move quickly and quietly
3. Stay out of view of the attackers
4. Insist others leave with you
5. Leave your belongings behind

**HIDE (if escape is not possible)**
1. Find cover from gunfire and stay out of sight
2. Lock yourself in, but do not get trapped
3. If you are unable to lock the doors/entrances, place objects such as tables or cupboards behind the doors or entrances to prevent access of attackers
4. Move away from doors
5. Be very quiet and switch your phone to silent mode

**TELL**
- Provide details about the attackers (Total number of attackers, Equipment or weapons being carried, Look of the attackers, Location of attackers (where they are now and moving towards))
- If it is safe to do so, stop others from going towards danger areas
- Follow the police’s instructions and do not make any sudden movements

Adapted from “Advisory in the aftermath of Paris and London attacks”, circulated by the Singapore Police Force
What to Expect at Your Destination

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT...

- Climate and time difference
- Exchange rate and cost of living
- Regional map and local transportation
- Cultural similarities and differences
- Health and safety
- Meet and greet services
- Living and studying at host university
- Expectation and academic assessment at host university
- Activities for exchange students at host university
Settling In

Stay Connected

• Call home immediately when you reach your exchange destination

• Find out the economical and reliable telco which you can buy prepaid SIM card with data plan; or explore data plan with Singapore telco before you depart

• Update your local calling number in NUS Education Records System

• Alert your family members when you are exiting or entering a country on tours!
Settling In

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR HOST COUNTRY

• Create a travel manifesto outlining three goals and skills that you want to develop while you are away.

• Become a “regular” (but not at a touristy spot). Have a coffee and read the paper at the same cafe or have an evening drink at the same bar at the same time every day for a week. Be open to speaking with other regulars.

• Ask a local person to name what they think is the most beautiful building in the city/town. Ask them to describe it and explain why they find it so beautiful. Go to that building and experience its beauty for yourself.

• What are some local games played in your host country? Ask the locals to teach/play these games with you. If you do not know the rules, ask for clarification.

Adapted from University of Edinburgh’s Third Space
Settling In

MITIGATING CULTURE SHOCK

- Recognize feelings of surprise, disorientation, confusion, etc. is normal and okay
  1. Honeymoon phase
  2. Negotiation phase
  3. Adaption phase
- Talk to friends or a counselor
- Keep in regular contact with friends and family back home
- Join university and community activities
Settling In

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR SEMESTER

• Don’t just stick to Singaporeans! Make an effort to meet different people and be open-minded about differences.

• Even while having fun, make sure you are aware of any important academic dates and not miss any deadlines!

• Take note of your exam dates. If your semester overseas overlaps with the new NUS semester, start making arrangements for early exam or alternative assessments. If neither is possible, apply for an extension of your leave of absence from NUS.

• Activate the email account given by your host university to receive important notices and announcements.

• Check both host university and NUS email frequently.

• Always stay in touch with your family and friends back home.

• If a problem arises, try to resolve it. However, if you are unable to, ask for help.
EXPECTED CONDUCT

- Respect others and behave respectably too.
- You are representing yourself, your school and your country.
- **Obey laws and regulations of host country, host university, Singapore and NUS.**
- Read rules and regulations at host university and ensure that you do not violate them. (e.g. rules on plagiarism and cheating)
- Do not be pressured into anything. Just because everyone is doing it, doesn’t make it right. Be comfortable being your own person.
- Usage of drugs overseas might be legal but not in Singapore!

*Anti-drugs campaign by Singapore’s Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB)*

Hotline for Central Narcotics Bureau: 1800-325-6666 | Website: www.cnb.gov.sg
Settling In

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT...

• Climate and time difference
• Exchange rate and cost of living
• Regional map and local transportation
• Cultural similarities and differences
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• Living and studying at host university
• Expectation and academic assessment at host university
• Activities for exchange students at host university
USEFUL CONTACTS

Make your own list of emergency contacts

1. Embassies/ High Commissions: www.mfa.gov.sg
2. Local emergencies numbers
3. Host universities’ emergency numbers and counselling hotlines
4. Credit card and bank telephone numbers
5. Insurance hotlines
6. NUS Emergency contact: +65 6874 1616 (24 hours)
BEFORE LEAVING YOUR HOST UNIVERSITY

- Complete ex-matriculation process at host university
- **Check procedures for closing bank accounts/moving out** ahead of time to ensure that you are not inconvenienced/loose your deposit upon departure
- Follow NUS’ deadlines for CORS module bidding and application for on-campus housing
- Prepare and submit your SEP report and do the SEP survey
THINGS TO WHEN YOU RETURN

1. Submit your SEP report

2. Join the Welcome Back Session (to accumulate point for the Outstanding NUS Exchangers Award)

3. Complete the SEP Evaluation Survey

4. Join the Peer Advising Programme
   - Advising Programme seeks to build a community of Peer Advisors (PAs) consisting of students who have been on SEP and are keen to contribute.
   - Link up with our Peer Advising Leaders (PALs) to find out more:
     - peeradvising@nus.edu.sg
     - http://tinyurl.com/peeradvisingNUS
     - @NUSPeerAdvisors

5. Help out at SEP outreach activities and help your juniors prepare for their SEP journey ahead
TAKE PART IN THE OUTSTANDING NUS EXCHANGER AWARD
Take part in The ONE Award

- Represent NUS at your exchange university’s exchange fair/information session
- Join the NUS SEP Ambassador Training before leaving (compulsory)
- Join the Welcome Back Session upon return (compulsory)
- Participate in exchange events and activities upon return
- Collect your card at the SEP Ambassador Training and start accumulating points to be awarded the Outstanding NUS Exchanger Award
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WELCOME TO YOUR BIG ADVENTURE!
THE WORLD IS YOUR OYSTER – GO OUT THERE AND OWN IT!