

# SEP Report

## 1. Student Information

<b>Faculty/Major</b>	<b>ENGINEERING/ ELECTRICAL</b>
<b>Host University</b>	<b>UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA</b>
<b>NUS Semester and Year of Exchange (eg. AY14/15 Semester 1)</b>	<b>AY16/17 SEMESTER 2</b>

## 2. Study at Host University

Please provide information on the academics at your host university:

- **Studying or learning culture at your host university. How were classes conducted?**
- **What did you like most or dislike most about the academics at your host University?**
- **Advice on module registration and module mapping**

In University of Alberta, the classes were conducted in a similar way as compared to NUS, where there were lectures and lab sessions. The lab sessions for engineering modules were very similar. For the modules that I had taken, there were three sessions of lectures per week for each module. Each session lasted for an hour. For higher level modules, there were two sessions each week of 80 minutes per session. There was no tutorial session like in NUS. Professors would upload related tutorial questions but would not allocate a particular sessions to go through the questions. However, the professors would give out assignments questions that need to be submitted on a regular basis. These assignments were graded and included in the final grade.

The thing that I like about the academics in this university was that the professors taught at their own time and did not rush over the contents of the module. I needed to copy notes from the whiteboard in class. Some professors did not provide Powerpoint slides for the content. I still prefer to have tutorial sessions where tutor would go through some difficult questions in class. This would help to ensure that some difficult concepts are clarified.

Before I went for exchange, I tried to choose a partner university which allowed me to map a lot of modules according to previous mapping examples. This was because I was unsure of which modules would be offered in the particular semester that I would be going. In fact, some of the modules were cancelled last-minute and thus I needed to find some other modules to map back to NUS. Luckily, I was able to map five modules in the end. The module registration process was a bit tedious. I had to send my transcript to the module coordinator at the host university and tell them that I had fulfill the pre-requisite of the modules that I wanted to register for. Then, they would register the modules manually on their systems. There were different module coordinators to contact if the modules were from different faculties.

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Please list the courses that you took during SEP. (Please take note that the list of modules available to exchange students at the host university are subject to change. This table merely serves as reference.)

Host University			NUS Equivalent		
Module code	Course title	ECTS Credit	Module code	Course title	Modular credit
ENG M 310	ENGINEERING ECONOMY	3.0	EE3031	INNOVATION AND ENTERPRISE I	4
ECE 360	CONTROL SYSTEM I	3.8	EE4302	ADVANCED CONTROL SYSTEMS	4
ECE 456	INTRODUCTION TO NANO-ELECTRONICS	3.0	EE4431	NANO-DEVICE ENGINEERING	4
ECON 341	MONEY AND BANKING	3.0	EC3332	MONEY AND BANKING I	4
ECON 467	ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE POLICY	3.0	EC3384	RESOURCE & ENERGY ECONOMICS I	4

## 2. Accommodation

**What kind of accommodation did you stay in during your exchange (eg. on campus / off campus)?**

**Would you recommend this accommodation to future outgoing students?**

**Do you have any other suggestions?**

I chose to stay on campus during exchange. There was a residential portal which could be logged in to apply for on-campus accommodation. There were several accommodation choices for exchange students in particular. The room that I stayed in was a 4-bedded-room unit. It was handed over in a good condition. It was within walking distance to school and thus very convenient for me who needed to attend school everyday. The nearest grocery store was 15-minute walk away from my room. It was also reachable by public bus. However, the kitchen utensils were not provided in the unit, not even a plate. My housemates and I needed to buy them and discard them in the end of the semester.

I think that on-campus accommodation was a great place to know other exchange students. Many exchange students stayed on-campus. It was a great way to learn to interact with people from different countries with different cultural backgrounds. It was generally more expensive than off-campus accommodation. However, it was difficult to find off-campus accommodation that was near school and cheap. In fact, most off-campus accommodation were on lease on a 8-month contract. I would still recommend on-campus accommodation, especially when you have never been to the place and not know anyone there.

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## 3. Activities during SEP

**Were there any activities organized by school/student group/external organizations at your host university which you would like to recommend to other students?**

There were many co-curricular activities in the university. They were very interesting as they included some activities that could never be conducted in Singapore such as skiing and snow-shoeing. Some club and societies were free for participation whereas some needed a registration or member fee. I participated in The Outdoor Club where the club would organise outdoor activities every week and these activities were open for sign-ups. The details for sign-ups were distributed through emails and slots were allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. The trips were normally conducted during weekends and they were inexpensive. This was a great opportunity to visit the national parks in Canada, especially since I did not have a car there. University of Alberta is located near the Rocky Mountains, so it did not take very long to travel from the city to the national parks.

## 4. Cost of Living

**Please provide an estimation of how much money you spent during your SEP?**

**Please list travel expenses separately.**

I did not spend a lot in school as I cooked myself. The raw materials were cheap and fresh, hence it was a wiser choice to prepare my meals on my own. The food at food stalls or restaurants were much more expensive than that in Singapore.

For the outdoor trips that I joined as part of the activities of The Outdoor Club, they were on average CAD 75. This included a two-night stay at the hostel and a meal prepared by the outdoor club members. A separate fee for oil and gas was paid to the driver. This depended on the destination of the trip.

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## 5. Challenges

**Did you face any challenging issues during your SEP stint? How did you overcome it/them?**

I faced challenges at the start of SEP. I was not familiar with the place and thus did not know how to get to the school, where to buy grocery or where to buy food. Moreover, I went during winter. The university is located in the northern part of the Alberta province and thus the winter was extremely cold. It was very difficult to find my way in the snow. Luckily, the university conducted a Peer Advising Program. I signed up for it and was attached to a peer from the university. She helped me to get familiar with the place and introduced Canadian culture to me. This was important to me as I had not been to Canada before and thus knew nothing about the place.

Besides that, the weather was too cold for someone who had stayed in Singapore for many years. In mid-February, the temperature at night went below  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Even with the heater, the room was still cold and the cold was unbearable. It lasted for around a week but it was normal after that.

## 6. Overall SEP Experience

**Please write one paragraph about your exchange experience and attach some photos that represent your exchange experience.**

It was a precious opportunity to go abroad and study at another university for a short period of time. This had allowed me to understand the differences in academics and expectations in school. I had also learnt to step out of my comfort zones and do something that I would never been able to do in Singapore. I was also able to immerse myself in a different culture and learn to understand and accept differences between people from different countries. Besides that, I also knew better what I wanted to achieve and obtain from my whole university education. All in all, the exchange experience was an invaluable and memorable one.

## 7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

**Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.**

I think it is good to choose somewhere that you have never been before and learn to overcome the challenges that you face. This helps you to understand yourself better and develop your skills to adapt to a new environment. Exchange program would be a fruitful one if you have a willing heart to learn and are brave enough to accept and learn from your own mistakes.