

SEP Report

1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	FASS/Psychology
Host University	University of Calgary
NUS Semester and Year of Exchange (eg. AY14/15 Semester 1)	AY17/18 Semester 2

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

Studying/learning culture: class size differs depending on how advanced the courses are. Generally, the more advanced classes taken by year 4 students were seminar style, whereas you can expect lecture style classes similar to those at NUS for lower level classes. Classes generally start and end on the dot and class participation is expected, although not contributing to part of your grades, in the seminar classes. Generally the psychology classes in both NUS and UofC do place emphasis on continual assessment, although the tests/examinations at UofC tend not to be cumulative. Personally, I liked that the classes were not graded on a curve, so as long as you put in effort it will be recognised and you don't have to worry about the bell curve just to pass your courses.

Advice on module registration and mapping: exchange students must provide the respective faculty department with a list of classes they intend to enrol in for approval before they are allowed to register for them. Module registration happens on a first come first serve basis, so seek for approval from UofC early. Local students have priority in their class enrolment, so it is important to plan for back up classes to take. The class quotas for Year 4 psychology classes are also strictly adhered to with no exceptions. That being said, module registration/dropping occurs until the 2nd week of school, so you might be able to enrol in the classes that were previously already full during the break. Do try to map your modules back to NUS early before the semester starts.

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
PSYC439	Psychology of Gender	3	PL4225	Psychology of Gender	5
PSYC411	Design and Analysis in Psychological Research	3	PL3261	Statistical Techniques in Psychological Research	4
PSYC451	Cognitive Development	3	PL3741	Department exchange module	4
PSYC477	Sleep and Biological	3	PL4751	Psychology exchange	5

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	Rhythms			module	
CMMB413	Human Genetics	3	LSM3991	Exchange enrichment module	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 stayed off campus while on exchange at my landlord's place that was directly across the road from a C-Train station, and it took me 10 minutes by train to get to school. While initially it felt a little isolating to be staying alone without friends, my landlord was an extremely friendly and welcoming person who made Calgary feel like home during the time I was there. My landlord only hosts international students, and whenever she knew of an event, she would always invite the international students she knew along to get them to experience life in Calgary. Rent was also extremely affordable (it was a lot cheaper than staying on campus – my rent was about CAD \$550 per month) and amenities were fully provided. If you are not able to or do not intend to stay on campus, I would strongly recommend my landlord's place, and it would definitely be nice if you could find a friend to stay with.

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?

Since I didn't stay on campus, I didn't manage to attend any of the events organized by the halls. However, the UofC student exchange office occasionally hosts excursions for exchange students. For the winter semester, I would recommend braving the cold and going for the hiking/nature trips (it's really worth it!) I also applied for the International Student Mentorship Programme that connected me with a current UofC student (my "mentor"). Over the semester, I met up with my mentor occasionally for lunch while she would also give me some travel recommendations, and I'm grateful for her helping me ease into UofC!

4. Cost of Living

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

Please list travel expenses separately.

Rent (includes utility bills): \$550 per month
Phone bills: \$65 per month

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Food: \$100 per month
Public transport: \$140 (for a compulsory concession pass)
Airfare: \$2.2k (I booked my return trip to Singapore late)
Personal expenses: \$500
Travel expenses: \$2k

I noticed that people generally go through card transactions rather than cash, so having a Canadian debit card would make transactions convenient. Generally, cooking your own meals is a lot cheaper than eating out, and Alberta's tax rates are currently at 5%, and when eating out you are generally expected to tip an additional 15%. The tax rates are different across the provinces.

5. Challenges

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

Prior to my exchange, I had never lived for an extended period of time without my family, much less overseas and alone with my landlord. I had to learn how to manage living on my own, and while having my father around for my first week in Canada to ease into this new routine helped, my landlord was also extremely willing to help whenever I had trouble with something. This made the whole experience a lot less daunting than I had expected it to be, and eventually I grew to enjoy living independently.

As an introvert, I generally find it hard to strike up conversations with strangers and I prefer being alone when I am without my friends, so it was no surprise that I started feeling rather isolated in my first few weeks. Participating in the international student welcome session, applying to be in the International Student Mentorship Programme, and having a caring landlord did make it easier for me to connect with others and make friends. I was also fortunate to share classes with one of my classmates such that we saw each other in class everyday, so we eventually became buddies. Overall, my main takeaway was learning how to step out of my comfort zone and overcome my self-consciousness to take the first step to making connections.

6. Overall SEP Experience

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

Personally, SEP was a first in many ways – the most significant of which was me living independently in a foreign country. Admittedly, it was a little tough at the beginning as I was rather jealous of my friends who went on exchange with a larger group of Singaporeans, but eventually I embraced my exchange experience and took the opportunity to interact more with the locals and better experience life in Canada. In retrospect, I am thankful for how SEP had turned out for me and the ways it made me step out of my comfort zone. SEP was a period of personal growth, made especially enjoyable by the loving warmth I was welcomed with (despite the freezing temperatures upon my arrival), and the stunning

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beauty of the Canadian natural landscape.

7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.

Calgary's winters are long and *extremely* dry, and the weather is unpredictable. It's always a good idea to check the day's weather, dress in layers, and moisturise frequently. Also, keep an open mind to new experiences so you can make the most out of your SEP!