

SEP Report

1. Student Information

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

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

As with NUS, classes at McGill University were conducted mainly through lectures and tutorials, or seminars for some modules. The learning culture, as many would expect, is a highly interactive and participatory one. As I have observed, many students often voice their thoughts or opinions in classes and lectures or tutorials are seldom a one-way street where the professor is the only person delivering the content. For some of my lectures, the professors also encouraged students to ask questions at any point during the lecture itself, which was something I have observed to be very different from lectures in NUS.

The modules that were offered at my host university was quite different from the modules offered by NUS. This gave me the opportunity to explore some subjects that I am interested in, such as anthropology. The modules that I took also varied a lot in terms of teaching style and the scope of content. For instance, one of my Psychology modules required us to have discussions in small groups (2 to 4 people) for every class and the professor went around to listen to our ideas and to further engage us, if necessary.

One thing that I thought was particularly intriguing about the learning culture at McGill was how students often actively took their questions to Facebook groups. These Facebook groups are usually created ahead or around the start of the semester and students would have to actively search for them and request to join the group if they are taking the module during that semester. Beyond exchanging ideas and thoughts for every time someone asks a question in the group, some students would even share their personal study notes before a test or exam, so as to ease everyone's stress. This is something that I think would never happen in NUS, so I found it really admirable how the students in McGill share so readily and don't expect anything in return so long as their notes benefit others. Being in these small communities also provided a lot of support throughout my learning journey in the different modules.

McGill's module registration takes place very early ahead of the coming semester and is done on a first come, first served basis. I was unaware of this and only registered my modules on the second day, and thus I did not manage to secure any modules under my major (Psychology). Although there is a waiting list for the modules, the chances of securing a module through a waiting list is not that high. Because I was still unable to secure any modules through the waiting list, I had to email the Psychology department regarding my situation. The administrator at the department was very helpful and I was eventually offered 3 Psychology modules that were less popular with the students. However, different departments across the university manage their modules independently, so this method of approaching

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the department might not always work. It is thus most important to first find out about the module registration system and the important dates.

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
PSYC328	Health Psychology	3	PL3242	Health Psychology	4
PSYC406	Psychological Tests	3	PL4201	Psychometrics and Psychological Testing	5
PSYC413	Cognitive Development	3	PL4751	Psychology Exchange Module	5
EDPE300	Educational Psychology	3	PL3741	Department Exchange Module	4
ANTH203	Human Evolution	3	SC2218	Anthropology and Human Condition	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 during my exchange at McGill. One of the main reasons for this was that campus accommodation was expected to be rather difficult to secure, given that it is a downtown campus and housing on campus is limited. As such, I opted for off-campus housing and stayed at an apartment that was recommended by seniors who previously went to McGill, or other schools in Montréal for exchange.

The apartment, along with another apartment in the same building, was rented out by a Malaysian-Singaporean family who has been hosting Singaporean exchangers in Montréal for many years. I found a lot of comfort in staying at their apartment because there was hardly any communication barriers and they were able to provide us with very helpful advice with settling down in the city (e.g., where can we find Asian supermarkets, where can we find some of the best food in Montréal, how do we prepare for winter, etc.). The apartment was also furnished with everything that we needed.

Another plus-point is that apartment is only a 15-minute walk away from McGill University and is located in a great place, with Chinatown right around the corner and places of interest (e.g., Old Montréal) just a few streets away. Because of its high accessibility, I did not find myself having to take the bus or train much, except when I was exploring other parts of the city, and until winter came. I hardly experienced any issues when I lived at the apartment, so I would definitely recommend this accommodation to future outgoing students.

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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?

During the exam period, McGill's Counselling Services have provided a list of activities, such as therapy dogs and yoga, to help students to de-stress. Although I have only been to one event, I found these initiatives highly beneficial for students and the turn-out was great as well.

4. Cost of Living

**Please provide an estimation of how much money you spent during your SEP?
Please list travel expenses separately.**

Rent: SGD2750 (SGD550/month)
Living expenses: ~SGD5000
Travel expenses: ~SGD4000

5. Challenges

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

One issue, which was not particularly challenging, was learning how to cope with the different living habits of my housemates. I only knew one of my housemates prior to my exchange and I was largely unacquainted with the other two housemates.

6. Overall SEP Experience

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

My exchange experience was everything that I had imagined, from taking road trips, to immersing myself in a vastly different culture, to experiencing the curriculum of an esteemed university, and to meeting people from all over the world. Beyond these experiences, I was also able to find growth as an individual in the time that I lived thousands of miles away from the comfort of home. For one, I had become more independent and more at ease with stepping out of my comfort zone to try new things and to meet new people. I also became more responsible for myself as I learnt to manage my own expenditures, handle my own bills, my own grocery shopping, as well as my own problems whenever they came up. In many ways, having been gone for months to such a faraway place has also helped me

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to grow to appreciate NUS and Singapore more, and to take things for granted less than before. In all, this was really a once-in-a-lifetime experience and if given the chance, I would definitely do this all over again.

7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.

Be open-minded and don't inhibit yourself! Being on exchange gives you the opportunity to try all the things you've always wanted to try but never had the chance to do so. Although it can be daunting to do so in a non-Asian country, try reaching out and making friends with the other students in your class. Most of them will be friendly and some might even offer to show you around the school/city if you would like.