

# SEP Report

## 1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	FASS / GLOBAL STUDIES
Host University	UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
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

The host university provided a very engaging style of education, and attempt to relate to our daily lives. In particular, I loved the seminars being conducted there as unlike the ones in NUS (with the exception of Yale-NUS), they were strict on the number of students in the class, allowing greater opportunities for participation. Although I understand the constraints placed upon the university due to the large number of students and inavailability of professors, the large class size for seminar classes were less appealing. Other modules include fieldwork such as attending the local court for sociology of law, or exploring philosophy within a contemporary classic fiction, "Lord of the Rings." This diversity was extremely appealing as it gave me many options to choose my modules to read for the semester.

One thing I like about the classes was that it allows for people of different age groups to share the same class. I had a class with a lady of 50-60 year old, and it provided a very different perspective on the module, allowing me to get a great viewpoint of it.

According to talks with my other friends from SEP at University of Waterloo, the classes for arts and social sciences are enjoyable, but classes for sciences and engineering are extremely heavy on memorisation, and does not provide a good education overall.

For module registration, the professors and administrative staff are very responsive, and will provide syllabi for the courses upon request. However, the local students are prioritised in module registration, thus it may be difficult to get more popular modules, especially if they are seminars with only 12 vacancies. Therefore, I would advise having backup modules to prevent panicking during the module registration process. For module mapping, it was very smooth primarily due to my major, that allows me to take modules from various departments. The modules were also coded 1-to-1, with the MCs being the same as the NUS side, allowing 21MCs to be transferred smoothly. However, for FASS students in general, it can be difficult as some of the majors do not even offer 5 modules for the semester. The student will need to take some modules under Unrestricted Electives.

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.)

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Host University			NUS Equivalent		
Module code	Course title	ECTS Credit	Module code	Course title	Modular credit
PHIL207J	Philosophy and J.R.R Tolkien	0.50	PH2741	Department Exchange Module	4
PHIL251	Metaphysics and Epistemology	0.50	PH2742	Department Exchange Module	4
PSCI463	Rights and Public Policy	0.50	PS4751	Department Exchange Module	5
HIST304	Heresy: Late Medieval Europe	0.50	EU3742	Department Exchange Module	4
SOC370	Sociology of Law	0.50	SC3215	Law and Society	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 with 4 other friends from FASS in Cedarbrae, which I know that some of the current batch of students are staying at as well. We will recommend the accommodation due to its low cost and direct bus route to school. Additionally, there are quite a few accommodation around that area and allows the Singaporean exchange students to be together. For our case, there was a total of 17 Singaporeans staying within the estate. It will be even better in the fall term as the students would be able to comfortably walk to school in 20minutes. The only issue with the location is that there is only one bus, which has a waiting time of 45minutes on Sunday. The bus app for the city of Waterloo is however very accurate and allows us to even wait in the house till it almost arrived, so as to avoid the cold winter.

## 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 a lot of CCAs available for joining. I took up badminton and magic club, but there is a wide variety of CCAs, including anime appreciation club, air rifle combat club, and console fighting game club. Besides these, the school organises events such as a rest week during midterms, which provided free massages, coffee and even virtual reality games stations.

There were also outings organised by the arts and social science club towards Niagara Falls and also Maple Syrup Festival. Besides these activities, some other groups also have skiing trips at discounted rates. All these activities allow a genuine experience of Canada with the locals.

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## 4. Cost of Living

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

**Please list travel expenses separately.**

I spent a total of about \$800 a month while on SEP. The costs were low due to a low rental cost of \$360 including utility. Additionally, the school fees include the concession pass for bus transport, further cutting down on the cost. I also cooked for the entire house almost every day, and there is a low cost Asian supermarket, along with Walmart, which saved our cost. The return trip air tickets cost about \$2000 in total.

For travel expenses, I spent about \$2000 for travels during the semester, and \$4000 for post exchange travels.

## 5. Challenges

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

One challenge was trying to make more local friends as that was my personal goal during the SEP. However, it was extremely difficult in UW due to not sharing the same classes with people, as well as the lack of time after classes. Unlike NUS which ends lectures 25 minutes in advance, UW ends the classes 5 minutes in advance, and people may have to rush across different buildings to get to class in time. Thus, few are able to stay to chat.

However, I managed to overcome it due to a friendly local, Auntie Verlisa, who has also come to Singapore and spoke with many of the SEP coordinators in the various universities to find out how she can help more. She has kindly hosted many of us, and I also go to her church and attend small group with her, allowing me to know more members of the community.

## 6. Overall SEP Experience

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

It was a lovely experience, both academically and culturally, and I am truly glad I decided to go to Canada for the exchange despite the steep costs that could have occurred. It was a great opportunity to experience the lifestyle of being in a small town, as well as living in the winter, such as having to drive more carefully on the road, and checking the weather forecast on a daily basis. Moreover, it was great to be able to experience the vast nature, including clear skies and snowy mountains.

I feel really blessed that I could make many friends, both Singaporean and Canadian, who have been through the semester with me. Even today, we stay in contact and have meet-ups, and for me, these connections are the true rewards of the SEP.

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## 7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

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

Contact Auntie Verlisa as she will help everyone to settle in very well! This includes the items that we and previous batches have left behind such as pillows, bolsters, water filters, and other daily items. She will also kindly drive to pick us up from the bus stop while we are new to city, and has even drove 1.5hours to Toronto to pick some of us up from the airport.

Additionally, try to request for the list of fellow students so as to share an accommodation together, cutting down on cost and also ensuring support for one another in the foreign area.

Finally... Beware of Geese! They are devil incarnates!