

# SEP Report

## 1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	ENGINEERING/CHEMICAL
Host University	THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE
NUS Semester and Year of Exchange (eg. AY14/15 Semester 1)	AY15/16 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

Lectures at UniAdelaide were pretty similar to NUS ones but the lecturers expect more self-reading on our own initiative so it was common to see students frequenting the library for research. There was a particular lecturer Dr. Ken Davey, who had a knack for remembering faces and asking unexpected questions during lectures and made our lecture experience very memorable. In NUS where lectures are more often than not, a monologue, his lectures were very much like a discussion and kept most of the students awake. I did not like the tutorials conducted in UniAdelaide though, as the tutorials were like a Q&A session with the tutors and lecturers. Students only attended the tutorials only if they have questions. Moreover, the tutorial questions used were intended for graded submission so essentially, everyone had help with the graded assignments and got similar scores. The downside of such system was that there was not sufficient practice, especially in engineering calculations where practice questions were necessary to prepare you for tests and examinations. I felt that I was not prepared enough for the final examination as much as I was glad that the workload was much lower than that of NUS. Learning experience was also much more relaxed since we did not have to cram content like what we usually do in NUS.

As for module registration, it was straightforward as there was no bidding involved. All I had to do was to click 'Enroll' in the module I was interested to take and if the class had sufficient slots, I was automatically enrolled. However, unlike NUS that has plenty of tutorial slots that cater to different timings, UniAdelaide only has one fixed tutorial per week, which made our timetable very inflexible. However considering that we could only take four modules for each semester, we had plenty of time to do other things in the city.

CHEM ENG 3036 Unit Operations Laboratory was made unavailable for exchange students as the university only allowed local students to take that module. My friend and I did not manage to get a mapping agreement from UniAdelaide while in Singapore so it was actually a risk to fly to Australia and decide. Fortunately, we appealed to the professor in charge, stating that the module was vital for us to graduate in time in 2017 as it was a pre-requisite for many modules we had to take in our future semesters in NUS and he agreed. The other modules were rather straightforward in terms of mapping. Nevertheless Australia is never a popular choice as students can only do four modules if clearing modular credits is their main concern.

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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
CHEM ENG 3031	Process Control & Instrumentation	3	CN3121	Process Dynamics and Control	4
CHEM ENG 3033	Separation Processes	3	CN3132	Separation Process	4
CHEM ENG 3036	Unit Operations Laboratory	3	CN3108	Chemical Engineering Process Laboratory II	4
CHEM ENG 4048	Biofuels, Biomass & Wastes	3	EX4002	Exchange Technical Elective	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?**

UniAdelaide is a campus within the city, much like what SMU is like in Singapore. However the university does arrange student based accommodation around the city, and the most convenient one being Urbanest, which was my housing during my stay in Adelaide. It was a 10-15min walk to school and 5min walk to the city's main shopping district, Rundle Mall. The housing was a six person apartment with a shared kitchen and every room had a private toilet so overall it was very comfortable. The only thing I disliked about Urbanest was the pricing, AUD\$590 every fortnightly. On top of that, we had to pay our own laundry, AUD\$4 per wash and AUD\$1 per dryer use. Wifi use was also limited at 15GB and in Singapore where most of us have unlimited Wifi, we did not realize how much data we actually use on a daily basis and it was quite a pain to scrimp and save data. They do have desktops at Level 1 reception and are often occupied by people who Skype a lot since Skype consumes a lot of data. Nonetheless, utility bills were included and maintenance services were efficient, and these were the things that we had to settle and pay if we went for private housing. Almost every night, Urbanest has an event at their lobby and they are usually occupied by the party-goers, who happen to be the non-Asians most of the time. I believe part of our rental goes to these event planning, regardless we attend. Overall accommodation in Australia was expensive and Urbanest cost me AUD\$6700.

I would recommend Urbanest for any student who wants the convenience and likes leaving house at 12.50pm for a 1pm lesson for example. However for anyone who prefers to devote their money to travelling and other expenses, I would suggest The Village, which is out of the city centre and a bus ride away from school. Bus rides are not as efficient as Singapore transport so it can take quite a while to get around.

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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?**

Most CCA in UniAdelaide only open shop during semester 1 and I went in semester 2 of their academic year (NUS semester 1) and not many choices were made available to me. I was interested in hiphop dance however the club only recruits members during the first semester but the alumni was kind enough to organize weekly free dance lessons. Being the second semester, there were not much opportunities to get to know local students so I joined Japanese Language And Cultural Society (JLACS) with their weekly Japanese lessons. It was there that I got to know more local Australians and from time to time, native Japanese students who go Australia for exchange drop by so it was pretty cool to have people from different countries congregate together.

ESN Adelaide also plans weekly events for exchange students so I kept a lookout for their events too. Some events were rather costly such as the shark cage viewing and one highlight event was kayaking with dolphins which was worthwhile for the price and I got to interact with students from other foreign countries.

## 4. Cost of Living

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

**Please list travel expenses separately.**

Urbanest accommodation - \$6700  
Accumulated monthly expenses - ~\$3000

Travel expenses:

Great Ocean Road and Melbourne - \$1300

Gold Coast and Brisbane - \$2200

Tasmania - \$850

Sydney - \$500

## 5. Challenges

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

As most engineering students apply for Industrial Attachment (IA) internship during their third year, companies usually contact students for interview during the semester prior to the internship semester. I had intended to do IA the semester upon returning to Singapore and did my application while I was in Australia. There were two rounds of selection of companies and interview periods and I did not manage to secure any IA placing for both rounds. On the other hand, my counterparts in Singapore all secured a place in a company and it appeared to me that companies had preferred to interview students face-to-face rather than conducting a phone or Skype interview. I did not think my grades and resume were any

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inferior to my peers in Singapore, therefore I felt I was disadvantaged being overseas and my friend who went UniAdelaide with me was in the same predicament. It was a challenge having to email several companies on my own accord and awaiting replies instead of applying through NUS main portal and most of them did not get back to me. Furthermore it was actually common that students who go for SEP do not get the opportunity to do IA and I was initially mentally prepared not to do IA before embarking on SEP. I had thought that IA should be a bonus rather than an entitlement, which is unfortunately a common mindset among engineering students. Yet I never expected the competition to be so stiff and difficult to secure a placing. Nevertheless I told myself that there was no place I would rather be in at that point of time and would have still chosen to go on exchange. Ultimately I had to get over my own expectations and move on with life. Unexpectedly when I finally figured things out, an offer from ExxonMobil came and being one of the top petroleum companies chemical engineers dream to go to, I accepted immediately.

## 6. Overall SEP Experience

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

Everyone has different goals for their exchange; it can be meeting new friends, experiencing a different culture or simply travelling. For my case, I wanted to seek and understand myself better. It was through living with friends of different personalities where friction among my neighbors were inevitably present yet learning how to adapt and get along while understanding our differences. From differences can we gain a better insight of ourselves and what we are as individuals. More often than not, we always prefer to stay in our comfort zones and feeling so comfortable being ourselves, however only being out of our comfort zones do we learn more about ourselves. I had known that I was an introvert but I forced myself to join a club (JLACS) where I knew no one and learnt how to socialize and interact with people from different backgrounds and made new friends. Through interaction, I observed and understood how I behaved and grew to become better at small talks, which is a predominant skill in future workplaces. I learnt that no one can help you grow as much except yourself and so one of the most important things I took away from this exchange was the skill of learning to be comfortable in uncomfortable situations. There was also a period when I travelled alone and the experience of being in a sea of foreignness was nothing I ever felt. I spent more time observing and reading people in my surroundings and of course, introspecting and eventually appreciating what I had and did not have in Singapore and also the peace that comes with true solitude. As the idea of solitude is usually associated with loneliness, it is natural for people to shun being alone. Many of us have friends or family around us most of the time and never learnt to be comfortable and hence incapable of solitude. I was glad that travelling made me more adventurous and felt like I accomplished more and started believing strongly in my ability to achieve things. Overall I do not boast of making many new friends in Australia but I have certainly become more confident and gained a stronger individualistic sense of who I am.

## 7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

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

The first day you arrive in the country, open a bank account first followed by a new phone line. The telecom service provider usually requires an open bank account to register.

Try to pick up some dishes from your friends or parents before embarking SEP. It will save you a lot of money as meals cost average AUD\$7-\$8.