

SEP Report

1. Student Information

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|---|--|
| Faculty/Major | FASS/ Social Work |
| Host University | University of Queensland (UQ), Australia |
| 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

I love the learning culture in UQ. Lectures and tutorials allowed students to engage in discussions and ask any sorts of questions, without being judged or criticized. Learning was fun as it was a two-way conversation between the lecturers/tutors and the students. For those who prefer to contact their tutors via email, it was also a pleasant experience, especially for my tutor in CRIM1000, as she replied almost immediately.

The Social Sciences and Humanities (SSAH) library is always almost full during reading week (so if you want to get a spot, come early during reading week) while the best spots are always taken during normal school days. Many students frequent the library because it is a conducive place to study and finding your book is very easy with helpful and friendly staff. I thought the self-dispensing book machine that they have in this library is also very convenient. Also, there is this place called The Hive where it contains pods for students to have a short nap during breaks!

For most of my mods, it was heavy CAs (MSTU3001 had weekly film reviews of about 300 words) but I love that! It might be tiring but it certainly forces me to revise and keep up with the modules that I was reading; clarifying anything that needs clarification with my tutors. On hindsight, this made me more interested in the modules that I was reading. It also reduces the weightage on finals therefore you do not have to study so hard for finals! Generally, the modules I took were easy to score, so a pass is definitely more than achievable.

UQ was also big on class participation and group assignments/presentations- $\frac{3}{4}$ of the mods I took had a group component – nevertheless, presentations for the lower levels were less demanding (as presenters were reading from their scripts) while my MSTU3001 demanded more critical analysis of our assignment. Similarly, the class participation segment was not that demanding either as I think the main purpose is to ensure that students engage in the topic of discussion so that it stimulates the students' interest in the subject.

Module mapping was a bummer because there were many core modules for my major that I was interested in but they were not available for exchange students. Even if they were available, it could not be read during the semester that I was on exchange. Hence, I recommend that future exchangers should not only check if the modules can be mapped over but if they can even be read by exchange students and during the semester that one is on exchange. Also, I wanted to map over some breadths

SEP Report

but could not get the approvals from the specific departments from NUS fast enough (before the module registration closes) despite having sent the forms very much in advance.

Lastly, one should also take note that UQ has another campus around 30 mins bus ride from the main St Lucia campus, hence one should not register for modules that are in both of these campuses back to back.

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 |
| MSTU3001 | Contemporary Korean Film and TV Drama Review | | TS27xx | Level 2000 Elective Dummy Code | 4MCs |
| SWSP2001 | Identity and Difference in Social Work Practice | | SW3xxx | Level 3000 Elective Dummy Code | 4MCs |
| SOCY1030 | Sociology of Health and Illness | | SC27xx | Level 2000 Elective Dummy Code | 4MCs |
| CRIM1000 | Introduction to Criminology | | SC27xx | Level 2000 Elective Dummy Code | 4MCs |
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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 in an off-campus accommodation, a shared house with 3 other housemates, as it is definitely very much cheaper from those on campus (in St Lucia). It was a 20 minute walk from campus but it was a manageable one since the cool winter/spring weather allowed for a comfortable stroll. Nevertheless, many students do cycle to school too. My place was also 1 bus stop away from the St Lucia campus, but transport is expensive (AUD 1.64 for a one way trip, on student concession).

I found my accommodation via facebook and was blessed to find out that my housemates were Singaporean UQ students. As such, Singlish was very much used in the house while Asian dishes were also cooked for meals. I recommend exchangers to look for off-campus accommodation, possibly in St Lucia and within walking distance from UQ so that one does not have to spend on transport.

It is also very common for students to find a temporary accommodation before they come to Australia and then look for a permanent one once they have reached and do various house checks. It is recommended that students do checkout their accommodations before settling down because the pictures and descriptions online may not be as true as it seems to be. Some of the friends I made in UQ

SEP Report

did tell me about their negative experiences when they failed to check their accommodations before they moved in. That being said, I did not do the house checks. Fortunately for me, the shared house was beautiful while my housemates were welcoming.

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?

YES! The University of Queensland Singapore Students' Society (UQSSS) organized many trips; to Moreton Island, Springbrooks National Park (which I joined) and more. I strongly recommend joining their facebook group and signing up for their events. However, spots do fill up fast so first come first serve! Most of them are UQ students so you could also do some interviewing on how they are managing being international students. They can also be the reason for your next visit to Queensland in the future!

There is also a closed exchangers facebook group for fellow exchangers from all over the world, like yourself, who would be coming to UQ. Some do ask for a travel companion while others suggests for study groups. If you want to make some exchange friends, this would be one of the platforms for you to do so ☺. The admin for the group also do organize get-togethers and trips for you to attend. Similarly, spots do run out fast, so make sure you check the group regularly so that you would not be disappointed! Other than that, you can check out STA travels at UQ itself if you want a packaged travel.

Also, checkout for deals on groupon Australia as many atimes, they have deals for short trips and amazing experiences around Australia or even in nearby Gold Coast. Whale watching is a must when you head down to Gold Coast in the time of the year that I was there (September to November).

4. Cost of Living

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

Please list travel expenses separately.

All in AUD (unless otherwise stated)
Internet per month: 15
Electricity per month: ~30-40
Groceries per month: 40-50
Rent per week: 145
Transport in Queensland: ~150
Return flight (SG-BNE, BNE-SG): ~ SGD 1,300
Australian Visa: ~ SGD 700

5. Challenges

SEP Report

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

After being offered a spot for SEP, I was very much left alone in the process of settling all the documents and administrative matters. As there was only one spot for my faculty in my host university, it was tough managing the matters on hand by myself and not having a fellow exchanger to lean on for support or even as a travel companion. Fortunately, I came across the SEP report of the previous exchanger to UQ on IRO's website. I managed to contact her via Facebook and that was how most of my queries were answered. She was very helpful and understanding of my situation and goes all out to help me with my administrative matters. Thus, I do hope that the SEP reports continue to be accessible to future exchangers in case they are also stuck in a situation like me. Nevertheless, it will always be nice to have at least 2 people going to the same host university.

6. Overall SEP Experience

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

Exchange to me was truly about embracing all that comes my way; the culture, the environment, the people. Being far away from home, it allows me to live independently and gives me great freedom to make my own choices and create my own journey. Preparing for SEP was very tiring and cumbersome but I assure future exchangers that it will all pay off in the end. I am ever so grateful for the friends that I've made along the way, who also helped me to settle down and taught me life lessons. I was that traveller, the student, the cook. You will learn to pick yourself up when you fall, clean up after yourself and pat your own back when you succeed. Everyone wants to travel while on exchange but it is up to oneself to divide one's own time for travelling, studying, and even doing household chores. I'd like to think that I have become more responsible for myself and my own decisions after I've gone on exchange. More than just seeing the world, I discovered that different side in me as I begin to unearth my true intentions of going on exchange. Each exchanger's experience is different as we try to meet our different needs. However, it all begins by taking a chance. As such, I strongly recommend for students to go on exchange and not let this opportunity slip by.

7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.

Avoid taxis as much as possible, if there is a need, use Uber as taxis are really expensive. Similarly, eating out (even in school) is not particularly cheap, hence, one would be better off making one's own lunches and dinners.