

SEP Report

1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	Engineering/ Environmental Engineering
Host University	Tallinn University of Technology
NUS Semester and Year of Exchange (e.g. AY14/15 Semester 1)	AY15/16 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

1. Studying & Learning Culture at TUT

- Most of the modules I have taken were at the Masters' level hence the class sizes were usually below 20. My classes have wide ethnic diversity. Besides Estonians, there were Nigerians, Chinese, Indians, Pakistanis, French and Spanish students. Estonians have a more reserved culture hence class participation is encouraged but not widely practiced.
- The overall grading include exams and group project work. Marks were also given for participation in class excursions. As part of the Environmental Engineering master degree curriculum, we visited Tallinn (the Estonian capital) Port where we see how they practice sustainability in everyday business (especially in the oil and gas industry). We also visited the largest paper product recycling plant in Tallinn. Last but not least, we visited Siemens communication and networking manufacturing plant in Tallinn as well.
- The module name Eco-Design has an interesting grading system which allows student to be exempted from examination and project work if the student organise a class excursion. He/she will be graded based on how well the excursion was organised and the learning value of the trip. This is a refreshing option compared to the conventional grading system in Singapore. Exchange student can organise excursions as well and should be able to do so without much difficulty since most Estonians in Tallinn (especially those in medium/large companies) are proficient in English.

2. Difference in Mathematical Rigour

One of the major differences is the level of Mathematical rigour in education. The Estonian

SEP Report

system focus more on concept and understanding and places less emphasis on the repeated practice of Mathematical formula. Questions involving Mathematics are simple and straight forward. However, an industrial problem is always given to students to showcase how Mathematics can be applied in the “real world”. Whether this likable is up to individual student’s personal opinion.

3. Advice on module registration and module mapping

TUT offers a wide range of modules that can be easily mapped as GEM or breadth modules at NUS. Interesting breadth modules includes Physical Education where students just have to attend 20 sessions of the sports of their choice (e.g. table tennis, volleyball, gym, aerobics, and badminton). As a major in Environmental Engineering, I took all four of my technical electives in Estonia. This plan suits me since it prevents me from the stressful situation of juggling design project, FYP and technical electives all in the same semester (usually year 4 semester 1).

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
EKE8260	Environmental Management Systems	6	ESE560 2	Environmental Management Systems	4
EKV8320	Theory and Equipment of Sludge and Waste Treatment	4	ESE520 5	Sludge and Solid Waste Management	4
EKE8250	Environmental Policy	6	TE4	Dummy TE	4
EKE8230	Eco-Design	6	TE4	Dummy TE	4

2. Accommodation

What kind of accommodation did you stay in during your exchange (e.g. on campus / off campus)?

Would you recommend this accommodation to future outgoing students?

Do you have any other suggestions?

I stayed on the on-campus hostel called the Academic Hostel. The facilities are new and the room is well-furnished. Pillow, blanket, bed linen, kitchen utensils, pots and pans are all provided (many of which are left over from previous batches of occupants). There is also a weekly cleaning and changing of bed linen. The cost is about 120 euros a month.

SEP Report

There is a cheaper on-campus accommodation and exchange students can apply for a place to stay either online (first they have to register themselves in the system) or head down to their office at Raja 4D. The cheapest option is about 65 euro a month and the average is about 85 euros a month. The difference is that no pillow, blanket, bed linen will be provided and there is also no weekly room cleaning service. Depends on your luck, the kitchen may or may not be equipped and located at the same level of your room. You can inform the lady handling the accommodation application your preference for roommate (from which nationality). The Academic Hostel is right beside the university but is about 20 minutes bus ride from the city centre.

Despite the Academic Hostel being the more expensive option, it is where most ESN (European Student exchange Network) students are staying and hence it is the most happening place to stay. There is always some parties, card games, movie nights etc. every single night.

The third option is to look for a private apartment. This is mostly done by renting a whole house together with at least two other students. This is also a very cheap option and the monthly rental per person can be around 60 euros with utilities bill included. These apartments can be fully furnished which can save students a lot of trouble and money. The location can also be a lot better than the Academic Hostel. The down side for staying at private apartment is that the interaction with other exchange student will be reduced greatly.

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?

ESN organises some of the best trips I ever went. Definitely do not miss out on the ESN Finland trip. It was a very budget conscious trip to experience the Arctic climate. There were reindeer rides, husky sledding, tobogganing (sliding down a snow hill in a plastic container) and I tasted my first bowl of reindeer meat. The visit to Santa Claus village was pretty magical. Their national park is a winter wonderland and is really worth a visit.

SEP Report

ESN St. Petersburg trip is also a must go. The Hermitage Museum is the second largest museum in Europe (right after the Louvre in Paris). Even if you are not a museum person, do visit the museum to understand more about Russia's culture. Their customs are exotic and their children grow up listening to a whole different range of fairy tales which we are not familiar with. The night life scene is St. Petersburg is also vibrant and should not be missed. If loud music is not your thing, pubs and restaurants open till late.

During Spring and Summer, ESN organises a whole range of interesting activities like visiting old abandoned sunken Soviet prisons, dive trips of the coast of their biggest Island (Sareemma), dungeon walks etc. Best to go with your new found friends.

4. Cost of Living

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

The actual stay in Estonia costs about SGD6,000 (including accommodation, groceries, winter clothes and occasional eat-outs at restaurants. On average, I ate out at a restaurant about twice a week. Most the time, I cooked my own food or eat in school which is relatively cheaper, per meal in school is about 4 Euros).

My travel expenses amounted to about SGD 11,000 (Nordic countries are the most expensive, a 6 days trip to Sweden costs me SGD1,200)

5. Challenges

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

There were no challenging issues.

6. Overall SEP Experience

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

SEP Report

My 6 months' overseas stay opened my perspective about life and I met people from across the globe. The most interesting thing is to hear how each and every one of their cultures differ and despite all the differences, we are also very similar. The Americans I met were vocal about their freedom, rights and showed me what freedom means to them. The Germans I met showed me what German efficiency means and also demonstrated that they treat cooking of schnitzel very seriously. The French expanded my vocabulary in the description of wines and types of cheese (those that did not make me puke). The Nigerians showed me the diverse culture in their country (they have hundreds of dialects and the diversity matches India) and their passion for their country's development and progression out of the third world. Everyone brought a little bit of their home with them and were glad to share it, we had some of the most diverse home-cooked dinners, amongst them; Swedish, German, Slovakian, Italian and of course Singaporean.

7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.

It is nice to meet Singaporeans from another faculty when you are overseas, but you can absolutely meet them back home as well. Hence, DO NOT stick together. DO interact with locals and other exchange students.