

# SEP Report

## 1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	Chemical Engineering
Host University	Tokyo Institute of Technology
NUS Semester and Year of Exchange (eg. AY14/15 Semester 1)	AY 15/16 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

The learning environment at Tokyo Tech is structured in such a way to focus more on research. When students reach year 4 in bachelors or become masters students, they will join a laboratory where they'll spend the bulk of their time doing research and studying. They do take classes as we would in NUS but the emphasis is really a lot on their research work which makes them very highly specialized in whatever their project theme is as most of the time is spent in the lab. The classes here are conducted the same way you would expect in NUS except that the class size is way smaller. There are no large lecture theatres, and so classes are all conducted in the classroom and hence might be more conducive if you prefer a classroom setting. The classes are conducted in English (or rather classes exchange students are allowed to take), so not to worry if you do not know Japanese. However, the explanation in English might not be as comprehensive as you would like as for the Japanese professors, English may not be their preferred medium of teaching.

What I did not like so much was that the semester is a bit too short, more time to learn the subject would be preferred. In fact I find NUS' semester too short as well but I digress.

For module registration, exchange students have to use a form to register for modules. There is a web system but only for regular students. Basically you just fill in the form and get the approval of each lecturer of the course you want to register for. Finally you get your academic advisor's approval and you submit the form to the exchange division. The period is about 3 weeks so there's plenty of time. You can check out the courses you want to take on their OCW system, or at the orientation a course booklet is given to you as well. As for advice on module mapping, for chemical engineering students it is pretty easy to map. The bulk of the courses available here is mappable to Technical electives, whether named or dummy TEs, so there's quite a lot of flexibility.

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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
EEE.D401	Fundamentals of Electronics Materials	2	CN4216	Electronic Materials Science	4
NCL.N401	Basic Nuclear Physics	2	CN4XXX	Dummy TE	4
NCL.N402	Neutron Transport Theory	2	CN4XXX	Dummy TE	4
NCL.N405	Nuclear Reactor Thermal-hydraulics	2	CN4XXX	Dummy TE	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?**

Accommodation is off campus, it's two stations away from Shibuya. Everyone gets a personal room, with their own personal toilet. It is half hour away from school by train, and you can get a commuter pass as well which makes travel to school pretty cheap. The accommodation is pretty cheap as well by Tokyo standards. It's easily half the cost compared to getting accommodation by yourself outside. Also, hunting for a room by yourself is pretty tough if you do not know the language. Finding it online and outside of Japan pretty much always means you will get higher prices as those are catered to foreigners who do not have the advantage of knowledge of the language or the area. While the room may be old, and the common kitchen is quite dirty, it is pretty comfortable. Compared to trying to find a room in a place where you do not know the language or the area, the school provided dorm is easily a great choice. The only down side is that if you want to meet Japanese people, the dorm is exclusively for foreign students so if that is what you would prefer, maybe getting a share house might be better though pricier. I would recommend it to future outgoing students, but there is only one catch: the accommodation is only available to students under the ACAP program. The more popular YSEP program dorm is elsewhere, not sure about the conditions of that dorm but the Tokyo Tech dorms are pretty much all old. I've heard that the one I stayed in is considered one of the best already but there's no evidence to back this claim up. Your mileage may vary.

## 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?**

I was under the ACAP program, which unlike the YSEP program, is very free and easy. There are no compulsory activities that you have to do so you really got to take the initiative to look for your own activities. There are plenty of activities available if one is willing, such as joining a club. The dorm also

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organizes some cultural activities that you can sign up and attend for free so its entirely up to one's initiative. You don't even have to join a circle (club) in your own school, you can join those from another school as well. My german neighbour, joined a flash mob circle from another university. I wasn't interested in dancing so I didn't join. The point is, you can do anything so long as you have the initiative. Under the program, I joined a lab, and I mostly participated in the activities of the lab, such as baseball and softball tournament, drinking parties and watching fireworks. I can't say I have any recommendations as it all depends on personal interests, but what I can say is that taking the initiative will get you activities. Knowing Japanese helps as well as most Japanese students don't speak English well. Alternatively, Waseda University does have a ton of circles that are catered towards international students (Japanese not required) and there's nothing stopping one from joining if so desired. If one prefers the more compulsory and guided approach, then I would recommend the YSEP program. They have compulsory activities and courses they must take.

## 4. Cost of Living

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

**Please list travel expenses separately.**

For regular living, I spend about 80k-90k yen a month. Includes rent, food, transport, laundry and what not. If you get a JASSO scholarship which is 80k a month it's very affordable. However, I cook a lot. Most of my dinners are cooked so that's where the cost savings are. Eating out is 3 times more expensive than cooking. If you exclusively eat out be prepared to spend over a 100k yen a month. Learn to cook.

For travelling, the bulk of travel expenses would be transportation. Cheap accommodation can be found pretty easily. I've spent about 80k plus travelling, but I can't say I've travelled a lot. I did not go to far away places like Kyushu.

## 5. Challenges

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

The biggest challenge I faced was that I forgot to recharge my traveler sim and it expired. I was dataless for a while. I overcame it by searching online for telcos that accept payment by visa debit card. Most telcos accept Japanese credit cards only but some do accept visa debit card. I found one of those and got a phone.

## 6. Overall SEP Experience

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

It was an eye opening experience, getting to interact with locals, learning more about the culture and the language. Not just learning more about local culture, but living in a dorm I also got to meet many

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people from other countries and learn more about their country as well. I could say my horizons were broadened from the program. It was also a valuable lesson in learning to be independent, such as managing your own meals and finances and daily necessities. I've also learned a lot about how to be responsible and to manage my own life. Lastly, it was also a fun experience to travel, be it alone or with friends and just soak in the sights I would not normally see in Singapore.

## 7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

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

Don't be afraid to go to places where no one else is going. I've read some stuff on NUSwhispers where people choose a place just because they know a lot of people going. Travelling alone can be fun too, also you don't have to consider about the many other people in the large group, and you get to meet new people. Above all, you get to learn how to be independent.