

SEP Report

1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	SDE / Project & Facilities Management
Host University	Seoul National University
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

Classes were different from those in NUS as they do not have a Lecture-Tutorial System, instead they had all lessons in seminar styled classes in various sizes.

The studying culture in SNU is similar to NUS, being Asian universities, they are well known to be high intensive, stressed filled courses. The main issue is that the selection of courses in English is limited to a small number, greatly restricting my choices of modules to take. This compounded the problem of the stringent mapping procedure back in NUS.

Module planning could not be done early before the semester as they only released their semester's schedule only a few weeks before the first day of school. And their consistency of modules offered varied a lot because the modules my seniors took the previous year in the very same semester were not offered again in English during my semester. Thus modules which I successfully gotten approval for mapping in my department failed because the supposed module was not available. It kind of boiled down to luck whether your planned modules are going to appear in your semester.

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
4013.20 3A	Architectural Environmental System	3	PF3302	Energy Management	4
401.661	Advanced Building Construction Technology	3	PF3101	Project Scheduling & Control	4
251.339	Insurance & Risk Management	3	PF3204	Project Risk Management	4
M0000. 000700	Health and Social Welfare : An international perspective	3	SW3207	Social Work in Medical Settings	4
208.228 A	Population Change and the Geography of Mobility	3	GE3237	Geographies of Migration	4

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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 live outside of SNU's campus because I did not manage to get the ballot of on-campus accommodation. I managed to get an accommodation with a few friends in Nokdu Street, which is an area 5-10mins bus ride from SNU.

My accommodation was quite comfortable as it was a small house the size of a very small 3 room flat, but it was enough for the 4 of us as there were 3 bedrooms, 2 toilets, a small kitchen and a common space. It was minimally furnished with a common room table and 4 chairs, enough for all of us. But there was only 2 beds, my friends had to buy mattresses to sleep on. We all had to buy pillows and blankets as it was not provided by the landlord. The kitchen is minimally equipped with some pots and cutleries but there were no condiments, we had to get some on our own as we cooked occasionally. In the first 2 weeks, it was really hot in Seoul and the house did not have any air condition or fans, so we had to find some cheap 2nd hand fans so that we could sleep without perspiring at night. Luckily, or not, the weather became cooler after those 2 weeks. At least there was floor heater installed to keep us warm in winter. The landlord also provided us a washing machine after 1 month of our stay, it was nice because we no longer need to carry all our laundry to the nearby Laundromat every week and pay for cleaning, although it cost us about \$3 each when we share the wash load.

The greatest downside to private accommodation would be cost. The rent was about S\$2000 for 4 months of rent per person, including a S\$1200 deposit which was returned to us when we moved out. On-campus accommodation was about S\$500 for 4 months per person and they did not need to pay a big deposit in Korean Won.

The type and condition of private accommodation greatly varies and it would depend on your resourcefulness or luck in getting something decent or well equipped, although I think most should be at least decent. I think staying in a private house greatly bonded the house as we literally lived together and it was a nice experience in itself. Despite the extra cost of staying outside SNU, I did not regret staying in a private house off-campus because of the friendship I acquired with the other Singaporeans living in the house.

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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?

SNU has an international students 'mingle group' called SNU Buddy. It is one of their many student groups (CCA) and this particular one specializes in foreign student interactions. They organized about 8 official events over the semester with countless more unofficial ones which was self organized by the various group leaders leading their own 'OG'. SNU buddy organizes a great variety of activities for exchange students, ranging from sports day to hiking, temple stay and even white water rafting. The actual activities vary from semester to semester.

Most of the foreign students and locals are very friendly and they are willing to interact with you if you are not too shy. I did join some of their activities when I am free and did not have any plans of my own. Although I did not become close friends with any of them because I was closer to my Singaporean housemates, I saw that some of the international students and the Koreans bonded well and become quite close due to all the activities they participated in. I think for SEP, one can only have enough time to bond well with either other Singaporeans on SEP or the international students, each group has their pros and cons and its up to the individual to decide how best what they would want to get out of SEP.

4. Cost of Living

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

Please list travel expenses separately.

Student D2 Visa (Single Entry) – S\$76
Alien Registration Card (IC for foreigners in Korea) – S\$40
Round Trip Air Tickets (SG-Seoul) – S\$809
Accommodation – S\$2000
Food – S\$2000
Transport (including trips out of Seoul) – S\$920
Travel (trips around South Korea only) – S\$120
Air tickets & Accommodation for Japan Trip – S\$438
Shopping – S\$1000
Entertainment – S\$360
Other living expenses – S\$340
TOTAL – S\$8103

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5. Challenges

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

The difference in language is the biggest challenge in SEP. Most locals do not understand much English unless they are students, but even so, their English standard varied greatly. It was difficult to communicate with shopkeepers, food vendors etc but I knew some Korean beforehand so it was not as difficult as some of my friends who knew zero Korean. Its very useful to know a friend (local/foreign) in Korea who knows both Korean and English decently well.

6. Overall SEP Experience

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

Exchange was an unforgettable once in a lifetime experience. I was very happy that I managed to go for exchange. The sense of adventure, unfamiliarity, freedom, joy and uncertainty was certainly a unique concoction of emotions that is impossible to replicate. Every one's experience would be different due to the different activities present, unpredictable weather, friends met, unforeseen good and bad circumstances etc. Every moment spent at SEP in Seoul was a wonderful memory that would be with me throughout my life. It was also beautiful to experience different seasons such as autumn and winter and to observe the scenic changes as time passed. The food was also one of a kind, other than the typical Korean food that Singaporeans know, Korea has those of course but with better taste and they also have their unique fusion food which is available everywhere to savour. I would encourage everyone who is considering to go for exchange to just leap out of your comfort zone and experience what the world has to offer.

7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.

-Try not to bring too much luggage there as coming back is hassle and inconvenience due to baggage weight limits.

-Do consider opening a ShinHan Bank account for ease of payment to various things in Korea. SNU will have a bank booth/talk during their orientation.

-Plan a bucket list of things to do , eat and see. Even if you did not plan one before hand, its not too late to plan one even when you're already there.

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- Bring at least 1 travel adapter. An extension plug would be very useful as well.
- Make the most out of school food, it is cheap and refillable, will save a lot of money this way
- Change most of your money in Singapore, the exchange rates there are not as good because only banks change money there unlike over here, we have our hordes of private money changers competing for profits. I lost several hundred dollars due to bad exchange rates and bad timing. Monitor forex graphs for the rates.