

SEP Report

1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	Science/Statistics and Economics
Host University	Vilnius University
NUS Semester and Year of Exchange (e.g. AY14/15 Semester 1)	AY15/16 Semester 2 (Spring Semester)

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?

Depending on the modules you take and the lecturer whom is teaching, class sizes can vary from 5-10 for exchange (ERASMUS) students to as big as 50 students. This is because lessons are conducted in English and local students can choose to take their modules in either Lithuanian or English. The former is more popular among locals, hence the smaller class size. However, some courses are only offered in English. Learning is pretty much “own time own target” with lecture notes usually being disseminated online after the lectures. Some lecturers do not go through all the content and you need to read and learn by yourself. Furthermore, lessons here encourage more interaction and students are welcome to speak up and raise questions during lessons without being too disruptive.

What did you like most or dislike most about the academics at your host University?

I like the smaller class size which encouraged more interaction between students and the lecturers. In particular, one of the modules that I took (Financial Calculations), the lecturer work out step-by-step examples with us and went around to make sure all of us got the right steps and answers before moving on. Another aspect that I enjoyed is the methods of assessment where there is a project or assignment which focused on real-world applications. It is also worth mentioning that students are assessed independently and not on a bell curve. Hence, there can be a lot of teamwork going on. However, some lecturers can be quite demanding. For instance, some lecturers were not clear in their explanations and questions since English is not their first language. It can take some time to get used to it and understand them. Fortunately, this only applied to a handful of lecturers and most lecturers are open and friendly.

Advice on module registration and module mapping.

Module registration is done by obtaining signatures from the respective lecturers and faculty coordinators upon arrival (Week 0 – 1). It can be quite a hassle to travel around and one might miss the briefing time slots. I highly recommend prospective SEP students to be clear of the modules they want to take and have a number of back-up modules as they do make many last minutes changes and cancellation of modules. Module mapping was difficult for me since there were many unforeseeable changes to the initial modules that I wanted to read. I advise future SEP students to prepare beforehand and try to map modules to dummy modules which are more likely to be accepted. Finally, there are more arts modules to map than science modules so I suggest science students to have some back up UEs in case core modules are cancelled in the last minute.

SEP Report

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 changes. This table merely serves as reference.)

Host University			NUS Equivalent		
Module code	Course title	ECTS Credits	Module code	Course title	Modular credit(s)
9046	Artificial Intelligence	5	ST4991	Exchange Enrichment Module	4
10040	Behavioral and Experimental Economics	5	AX1731	FASS Dummy Module	4
9048	Data Mining	6	ST4240	Data Mining	4
10316	Financial Calculations	5	MA3269	Mathematical Finance I	4
10294	Financial Markets and Investments	5	ST3991	Exchange Enrichment Module	4
9273	International Economics	5	EC3342	International Trade	4
9001	Survival Lithuanian	2	LAX1721	Department Exchange Module	2

2. Accommodation

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

I stayed in the dormitory provided by the school in Saulėtekio al. 39 (S39), which is an ERASMUS block. The accommodation is more “happening” since they are all exchange students. However, there are no local students living in the same block. The facilities are slightly run-down especially on my level but it is pretty livable and I cannot complain much since accommodation is fully paid for by the school. However, the atmosphere at S39 is much more vibrant compared to other blocks.

Would you recommend this accommodation to future outgoing students?

Do you have any other suggestions?

Other accommodation choices are Olandų and Didlaukio, which have slightly better facilities and free Wifi (Eduroam). However, there are also more quiet and less “happening”. Other options include renting an apartment/flat which is not that expensive but you might miss out on the chance of mingling and knowing more people.

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?

Orientation week and the various activities organised by the ERASMUS people. We are also assigned to a Lithuanian mentor but he/she may not be from Vilnius and they might not be very familiar with the area in Vilnius or around your faculties. Other than that, there will be a Facebook page where events and activities will be shared among the ERASMUS community. Another website managed by the tourism board is <http://www.vilnius-events.lt/en/> where events happening around Vilnius are posted.

SEP Report

4. Cost of Living

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

Approx. S\$6000 for a comfortable life, including occasional eating out, entertainment, 3-4 short trips (weekend getaways) and initial settling down cost.

Please list travel expenses separately.

Travel expenses vary accordingly.

5. Challenges

Did you face any challenging issues during your SEP stint?

Some of the challenges include language barrier, getting used to new environment and weather conditions.

How did you overcome it/them?

We had week-long lessons on Survival Lithuanian which helped us a little when we are interacting with locals whom do not understand English. As for weather, I have learnt to check the weather forecast before heading out and to make sure I carry sufficient clothings with me since weather in Lithuania is very unpredictable. As for food and environment, it is good to distract yourself by joining your new friends in discovering new food/places and to cook your own meals occasionally. However, you will get used to it by 1-2 months time.

6. Overall SEP Experience

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

It is definitely the most enjoyable part of my life thus far and a very humbling experience for me to be able to go to an Eastern European country for exchange. I learnt to be more independent, more adaptive to different circumstances and to also plan for unforeseen circumstances. Even though it was a bit difficult to get used to initially, I found a way to overcome it through mingling with new friends and also being more open and understanding towards others. I also learnt a few words in many new languages and appreciate other cultures as I met people from diverse background across the world and shared with each other our travelling experiences. Through the various small talks and mingling sessions, I also appreciate what we have in Singapore while getting used to the small inconveniences overseas. It had also enriched me and opened my mindset towards new opportunities.

7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.

Be prepared for an experience of your lifetime. Always plan and prepare for the worse. Have an open mind, make new international friends and enjoy your exchange to the fullest!

SEP Report