

SEP Report

1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	FASS/ Geography
Host University	Utrecht University (UU)
NUS Semester and Year of Exchange (eg. AY14/15 Semester 1)	AY15/16 Sem 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

Utrecht University (UU) has 3 campuses – De Uithof (Science Park), UCU and Drift. The Faculty of Geosciences is located on the De Uithof campus.

Each semester has 2 blocks, and the normal load for each block is 2 modules (7.5ECTS x2). This equates to 60 ECTS per sem. (*ECTS in UU = MCs in NUS) For Geosciences, there was a 1 week fall break between the 2 blocks. Per week, I either had 2 lectures, or 1 lecture accompanied by one tutorial. In some lectures, an attendance sheet was passed around for students to sign. In tutorials, some professors took attendance manually. Some modules specified that students are not allowed to skip more than 2 sessions, etc. There was no “class participation marks” as students there generally contributed to the discussion.

Workload can be quite heavy, eg. “Globalisation” from the Faculty of Geosciences required students to submit an essay every week for 5 consecutive weeks and a final group project + presentation.

As the semester 1 school term only end in end Janaury (which clashes with NUS’ schedule), an “early exit” option is available for either lesser ECTS or more individual work to be submitted online. “Early exit” allows exchange students to leave before the Christmas break.

I liked it that the module descriptions had clear instructions and expectation from the start so I could effectively plan my travel schedules. Also, classes were generally interesting and interactive. (*Professors liked to ask Asian exchange students to contribute during discussions.)

Module registration was very simple and fuss free – the department will apply for exchange students.

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
GEO3-	Globalisation	7.5	GE3741	Dummy	5

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3413					
GEO3-3021	European Integration	7.5	GE3742	Dummy	5
GEO3-3302	Transport Geography	7.5	GE3236	Transport and Communications	5
GEO2-2218	Organisation Theories	7.5	GE2741	Dummy	5

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 on campus with SSH – a public students' accommodation partnered with UU. Specifically, I stayed at Cambridgelaan, in a unit with 6 others exchange students. Amongst us, we had 2 levels with a bathroom and toilet on each level, and one kitchen. All of us had individual fully furnished rooms.

Reservation is first come first served and your department at UU has to verify that you are indeed studying at UU before you can successfully reserve a room. Rent was 455euros per month.

There is a bar at the ground floor of Cambridgelaan and it can get quite noisy on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

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?

There was an orientation session by UU for exchange students, followed by individual orientations by your department. Particularly, the Geosciences faculty had a 3D2N camp on the outskirts. Apart from that student activities were very limited and we were not exposed to them. Even so, I spent most of my free days travelling, so this hardly affected me.

4. Cost of Living

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

50euros – Bed linen
455euros/month – Accommodation (Short Stay Housing)
60euros – Bike (The Netherlands’ way of life!)
30euros/month – OV chip (NL’s version of ezlink , for travelling to other NL cities)
16euros/week – Groceries
SGD300 – AON Student Insurance for 5 months

~6500euros for 5 months excluding travels
~5000euros – travel expenses

5. Challenges

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

Being away from Singapore/family and friends can be difficult at first, but after ~2weeks, you will get used to it and things will undoubtedly get better.

The operations in NL (eg. Bank account application, registering in the city, school related) are rather inefficient, but remember that constant comparisons to Singapore’s way of life will not fasten the progress. Have an open mind and try your best to adapt.

6. Overall SEP Experience

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

Exchange is really a once in a lifetime experience. When else during your Uni life will you focus more on planning the weekends’ travel than your academics? Exchange also contributes to personal growth – “forcing” you to be more independent, to do your own accounts and live on your own. Till today I am still missing the times I had in Europe and I really cherish those moments.

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7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.

For Geography majors, there are more mappable modules if you go to Utrecht Uni in semester 2.
Live with SSH as it is very convenient to get to school. Be adventurous and be open to meet new people!