

# SEP Report

## 1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE/ ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
Host University	UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
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 conducted in a lecture-tutorial format, similar to that of NUS. However, instead of 2-hour lectures once a week which is the norm of NUS modules, 1 hour lectures conducted several times a week were more common. Classes emphasized independent learning with minimal group work components while still putting in place adequate measures should we require additional assistance, which was what I was particularly liked about the learning culture there. Also, the grades were not marked on a curve, which lifts some additional stress off students and serves as motivation for the students.

Generally, I had registered for my modules relatively early and did not encounter any problems with module registration. However, a point to note is that for modules with pre-requisites, exchange students need to apply for concession to be able to register for the module. The process for them to check if the student fulfils the pre-requisites may take some time so it is advisable that students do registration of modules earlier.

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
GEOG322	Culture and Environment in East Asia	15	GE3000	Geography Dummy Module	5
GEOG324	Critical Perspectives on Sustainable Development	15	GE3239	Environmental Sustainability	5
ANTHRO102	How Humans Evolve	15	LSM2992	LSM Dummy Module	5
BIOSCI395	Pacific Biogeography and Biodiversity	15	LSM3991	Department Exchange Module	5

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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 lived on campus in an apartment-style residence (i.e. Carlaw Park Student Village). The residence itself is pretty new, so the facilities and the apartments are also relatively clean and very adequate. It is also quite close to the City Campus (takes less than 10 minutes to walk there) and it is also convenient to walk to several supermarkets. This residence is highly recommended if students decide to opt for on-campus housing as opposed to the other apartment-style housing option (Unilodge) since the rooms and apartments are bigger and everything is newer and the laundry cost is cheaper as well.

## 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 are plenty of student interest groups in the University of Auckland, such as their student volunteer group, animal rights groups and sports clubs such as the Tramping Club. Each club or student group regularly organizes a variety of activities that students can participate in. It depends on the personal interests of the exchange student with regards to which activities should be recommended. Additionally, exchange students may also join events organized by the Singapore Students' Association (e.g. their national day celebrations) if they wish to connect with fellow Singaporean students also studying overseas.

## 4. Cost of Living

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

**Please list travel expenses separately.**

Daily living expenses during SEP = ~ \$1500 (excluding accommodation fees).

Accommodation = \$5200 for 21 weeks.

Total expenses for travelling = ~ \$2500

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## 5. Challenges

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

It is very easy to lose track of our daily spendings while on exchange and I sometimes find that I have overspent for a particular week or month. Therefore, it is important to make an effort to keep track of my expenses in a log in order to manage my funds better and not end up spending more than what I can afford.

Also, during the exchange, it was the first time I was living with people I didn't know in an apartment. It took some time for me to be used to the culture and lifestyle of my flatmates but I kept an open mind about everything and eventually I got used to and in turn cherished this experience of living with fellow students of other nationalities.

## 6. Overall SEP Experience

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

Overall, my exchange has been a meaningful and memorable experience. I have been lucky enough to have met a variety of international students, locals and other travelers throughout the 5 months I was in New Zealand. Being in a different country made me more aware and appreciative of other people's cultures and lifestyles, which is definitely interesting given that I have been so used to the lifestyle that I have in Singapore. Also, I had time after the semester as well as during the mid-semester break to explore the country, which fulfilled one of my main goals for SEP to travel around to witness the beautiful scenery and landscape that New Zealand has to offer. As a collective experience, both the time spent in my host university as an independent student as well as the time spent travelling outside of Auckland were definitely unforgettable and contributed to my SEP experience being an extremely pleasant one which I will likely remember for the rest of my life.

## 7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

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

It would be best if exchange students could keep an open mind about everything and be open to learning about and experiencing different cultures. With regards to travelling around with limited time available, I feel that it should be ideal if the students could plan ahead especially if they are travelling around by buses since bus schedules are fixed and have different timetables depending on the location.

The academic rigour of my host university is more or less similar to that of NUS. As such, it should not be too difficult for the students to get used to the classes there. However, this also means that there needs to be some effort put in throughout the semester as well as for the final exams.