

SEP Report

1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	Arts and Social Sciences / Psychology
Host University	University of Canterbury
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

My learning experience at the University of Canterbury (UC) was comparable to that of NUS. I took four Psychology courses at UC, all of which consisted of lectures. Lectures often run twice a week for one hour each time. Three courses had weekly tutorial sessions as well. Overall, my study experience at UC has been an enjoyable and manageable one thanks to reduced course content compared to what I am used to at NUS, as well as an emphasis on concepts and ideas.

I liked the open learning culture that UC offers; UC students tend to be more vocal and forthcoming when raising questions in classes. They are also more responsive to questions and ideas posed to them by lecturers and tutors. There appears to be less emphasis on letter grades among the general student population and so academic competition is perceptibly lower than in NUS, but I find that UC students are generally a driven lot and often come across as passionate about their field of study.

Thankfully I did not encounter much difficulty in the enrolment process at UC. I managed to enroll in all courses I had intended to sit for during my time there. However, the number psychology courses offered to international students appear limited at best, so I would still recommend having two or three 'back-up' modules in hand, just in case the courses one initially intended to enroll for become unavailable during the 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
PSYC209	Sensation and Perception	0.1250	PL3243	Sensation and Perception	4
PSYC211	Personality	0.1250	PL3241	Personality and Individual Differences	4
PSYC336	Industrial and Organisational Psychology	0.1250	PL3239	Industrial and Organisational Psychology	4

SEP Report

PSYC346	Judgment and Decision Making	0.1250	PL377X	Dummy Code (Psychology)	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 stayed on campus at UC Accommodation (UCA), which is the main accommodation provider for many international students at UC.

Personally I had an enjoyable stay at UCA; I enjoyed a truly international experience because I got to mingle and make friends with people from various countries (Kiwis included!). UC and UCA tend to receive a lot of American exchange students so do be prepared to experience a bit of the USA and its culture too!

Do make friends by attending house parties (which occur almost every night right through about the middle of the semester); it will help you find travelling buddies to tour Middle-earth with during the long mid-semester break! Social drinking is common, so do be prepared to drink a little but be aware of your own limits of course! Having said that, my experience was that if you decline to drink and settle for something else (like tea), most people will still gladly enjoy your company too.

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?

UC has a reputable Tramping Club. If hiking is your thing (and it should be, New Zealand is all about taking walks and taking in the beauty of the country!), I highly recommend signing up for this club because it offers hiking and camping gear for rent at very reasonable rates. I remember paying just about 20NZD to rent a sleeping bag from the club for 2 weeks, instead of resorting to buy one for 100NZD or so at the shops.

I definitely recommend going on at least one or two of New Zealand's Great Walks; these are trails within New Zealand's many National Parks managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC) which can range from day hikes to multi-day journeys. It is best to walk these trails with a group of friends; remember to book the huts along the trails for overnight stays in advance!

4. Cost of Living

SEP Report

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

Please list travel expenses separately.

I spent a total of about NZD 12000 (approximately SGD 11000) during my time in New Zealand -

Accommodation at UCA cost NZD 5300 for the semester,

Student Insurance (which is compulsory coverage for international students) cost NZD 295,

Food and Groceries cost about NZD 300 each month,

A monthly mobile phone data plan cost NZD 20 each month,

A two-week road trip around the South Island cost about NZD 1400,

A one-week road trip up the North Island cost about NZD 800,

A four-day road trip down to the Otago region cost about NZD 300

A two-day trip to Arthurs' Pass by train and back by bus cost about NZD 250

A day-long ski trip cost just under NZD 100

My flight to New Zealand and back cost about NZD 1300

Miscellaneous expenditure on clothes, laundry, the occasional bus transport and souvenirs cost about NZD 600.

5. Challenges

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

There was the initial realisation and sense of being distant from friends and family back in Singapore, left virtually alone to settle down in a different environment. But the trepidation and anxiety that came with that dissipated with time as I made friends with my fellow flat mates (who were all very warm and friendly towards the only non-American in the flat) and other students through house parties and UC's international orientation programme. I also joined the local Christian community for weekly meet-ups at a local family's home nearby; the sense of community and warm welcome I experienced through these various channels dispelled the fear of being alone that I may initially have had. Kiwis (and Americans too) are a very warm and inviting bunch!

6. Overall SEP Experience

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

New Zealand has been an absolute dream come true for me; I have always wanted to experience this gem of a country tucked away in the corner of the world, blessed with stunning landscapes and a quality of life that would make even those living in the most developed of countries envious. The friends and connections I have made with people from around the world has been an invaluable opportunity as well and I hope these ties will last for the time to come. I am thankful that NUS has made this opportunity

SEP Report

possible for me through its partnership with UC and I hope that this partnership continues to thrive, to allow more students from NUS to experience the beauty and unique experiences that UC and New Zealand have to offer. I can safely say my time in New Zealand has been a truly breathtaking and memorable one, and I will dearly miss the university and the country. :)

7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.

Find a group of friends (local, Singaporeans and international students alike) to meet up with regularly; a sense of community definitely makes exchange all the more meaningful.

Be careful on New Zealand roads; it's generally quite safe to get around by car but do be extra careful at roundabouts, one-way bridges (especially common in the far south of the country where all the pretty sights are) and of course freight trucks.

Learning to cook in New Zealand is an absolute must if you wish to save money for your travels! Eating out can be pricey but groceries tend to be relatively cheaper than what we would be used to in Singapore. If you haven't already learnt to cook, I highly recommend using this opportunity abroad to bring out the chef in you. :)