

SEP Report

1. Student Information

Host University	University of Otago
NUS Semester and Year of Exchange (eg. AY14/15 Semester 1)	AY14/15 Semester 2

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

Studying culture is similar to NUS with contact time being spilt between lectures and tutorials. However, they operate on a hourly timetable format. It is also normal for one module to have several lectures across the week. Group projects and assignments are common too depending on the department as CA contributes a significant percentage of the final grade.

I generally enjoy the academics in Otago as it is at a slower pace for everyone to understand. The learning culture is stronger as there are more hands on activities and field trips.

Module mapping for PFM students is very complicated as Otago does not have an engineering school or a course that is related to the built environment. Consequently, only the more general modules or electives are mappable. Registration was done manually for exchange students. I had to run around the campus to seek approval from relevant departments. However, this could be done within a day and isn't too much inconvenience.

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
TOUR304	Events & Convention Management	5	PF4307	Events Management	4
BSNS108	Business Finance	5	PF3202	Project Development & Finance	4
BSNS102	Quantitative Analysis for Business	5	PF2105	Research Methods	4
EAOS111	Earth & Ocean Science	5	GE2721	Dummy Module	4

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3. 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?

Flatting culture is dominant in Otago. International students come under the management of University Flats. Every flat is unique - some are older houses that have been renovated and others are newer, purpose built normally in a complex containing 5 -9 flats. A flat is essentially a house which has 4- 6 rooms with each person allocated a room. All flats are of a good standard and well maintained. Each flat is furnished, including a basic kitchen set up. All bedrooms have a double bed, mattress, desk, chair and drawers.

For students going there for one semester, this is your best option as it is convenient. Utilities and internet is being included in the accommodation fee unlike normal flatting contracts. However, the prices are slightly expensive as compared to other options which you have to source yourself.

4. 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?

Were there any good places near your host university to go for sight-seeing/good food/etc which you would like to recommend to other students?

Dunedin is well known for its student culture. During the semester, the city will be filled with students who are out and about; especially in the Octagon. The Octagon is the city center where most bars, clubs and restaurants are located. Velvet Burger has 1 for 1 burgers every Tuesdays. Signal Hill is just north of the campus and it gives you a good view of the Otago Peninsula and the town of Dunedin. Mount Cargill, the highest point in Otago, is an hour's walk away and it takes about 2 hours to return.

Dunedin is a very strategic place in New Zealand. It is close to Queenstown and Wanaka (4hrs drive) which are beautiful towns. Queenstown is well known for its buzzing nightlife and as an adventure sports hub. The city is also 4-5hours drive from the Mackenzie Basin (Mount Cook, Lake Tekapo, Lake Pukaki). The area has spectacular landscapes and is great for stargazing. It is designated as an International Dark Sky Reserve. Te Anau, Fox Glacier, Franz Josef Glacier and the world famous Milford Sound is slightly further away (about 5 hours drive) but they are mandatory places to visit in the South Island.

Tramping is a great way to see and experience New Zealand and it is one of the past times of the Kiwis. There are many day or multiday hikes scattered around the whole country. Dunedin is close to a number of Great Walks (hiking trails that give spectacular views of the landscape). Kepler, Milford and Routeburn Tracks are located around the Southern Alps. Rakiura Track is on Stewart Island, just off the southern tip of South Island.

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I would recommend sharing a car with a few people which will make travelling much more convenient. Second hand cars can be as low as NZD\$2000. Buses are good to get between towns.

5. Cost of air fare

Please provide an estimation of how much you spent on air fare during your SEP?

SGD\$1800

6. Overall SEP Experience

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

As cliché as it sounds, exchange is indeed the best time during my University life. First off, school life is much more chill as grades do not matter as much as they do in Singapore. I got to take electives that I was interested in and was able to enjoy what I was learning rather than mug just to do well.

I got to meet and live with people with very different backgrounds which makes it interesting for me as I feel Singaporeans tend to keep to themselves. I had to learn to make friends from scratch and live harmoniously with my flatmates, splitting the chores etc. I got to make many good friends from USA, Germany, Brazil, Canada and many more; friends that made leaving really hard. House parties are also very common there

I would say New Zealand is the most beautiful country I've been to. The landscape is sculpted from a continuous process of tectonic processes and denudation to form spectacular mountain chains, lakes and volcanoes. I got to see the scenes used for the LOTR and Hobbit series in real life, which was pretty unreal.

I would spend my weekends doing tramps/hikes and there was never one that didn't fill me with amazement at how beautiful the country really is. I guess you will have to experience it yourself to understand.

8. Suggestions for future outgoing students

Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.

Don't stick with Singaporeans, be friends with people from all over the world.

Constantly push yourself out of your comfort zone so that you can experience so much more that you won't normally be able to experience at home.

Don't procrastinate, especially with taking pictures. Opportunities come and go very quickly.

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Learn to make small talk with any or everyone. It can help in ways you won't expect.