

SEP Report

1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	FASS/Political Science
Host University	Jagiellonian University
NUS Semester and Year of Exchange (eg. AY14/15 Semester 1)	AY15/16 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

Classes in Jagiellonian University (UJ) are conducted in lecture/seminar style without separation of lectures or tutorials. The classes are rather small (less than 50 students, some courses have only 15) so the interaction with the professors is sufficient and effective for learning as classes are more engaging. Classes are relaxed and interesting. You get to listen to different perspectives from all over the world as the class mostly consists of ERASMUS students (exchange students) from Europe and some from the Americas etc.

At UJ, assessment methods for the courses I took include exams, writing papers and presentations. I liked the modes of assessments which include only presentations and a final paper as it gives me the freedom to write about something I am interested in and present on a topic I am interested in without having to sit for the standardised exams.

Generally for FASS students, module mapping for UJ should not be a problem, UJ offers a wide range of courses, majority of them focusing on Europe. An advice would be, to be flexible with your options and map more modules than required at the very beginning. This is because the modules at UJ may be removed or the timing of the lecture may be changed at the very last minute due to unforeseen circumstances. The UJ USOS system is easy to use, you just need to add and drop modules. However, one important point is to link your modules after registering (instructions will be provided in emails and on the USOS web) if not you will be deregistered from the modules after a certain point during the semester.

There is nothing I disliked about the academics at UJ. I really enjoyed studying in a different environment and having the opportunity to listen to perspectives from all over the world.

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
IPHSS-					

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MISH/PL-EU	Poland and the European Union	6	PS33IR		4 MCs
IPHSS-MISH/NI	Nationalism and Identity	6	PS32CP		4 MCs
WZ-ER.012	Media and War in 21 st Century	4	PS2256	Politics on Screen	2.67MCs
WH.IH.U D.2015.8.2.8	Sexual Politics Around the World	4	PS3237	Women and Politics	2.67 MCs
WSM-INP-SDM-28	Communism, Post-communism and Democratization	4	PS31CP		2.67 MCs
MISH/iph ss/H/2	The Holocaust and its Cultural Meaning II	6	EU3000		4 MCs

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?

During the entire semester, I stayed in Piast dormitory (you have to write in to request for a place in the school dorms after getting accepted into UJ), which is around 20 minutes away from the Main Town Square of Krakow where most lessons are conducted. It is very convenient to go for classes because I only needed to take the tram from a tram stop which is a 10 minute walk away from the dormitory. Washing machines are provided, each use costs SGD1 (you need to book a slot at the administration counter) and you need to bring your own washing powder/liquid (you can buy at the supermarkets nearby the dorm or in the city centre). There is a balcony to dry your clothes in your own room or you can dry your clothes at the balcony in the room where the washing machine is.

I would recommend staying in the school dorms for exchange even though facilities at the dorm are limited. You will have to buy your own fridge or hope that your flatmates have a fridge so you could share the fridge with them. There is only a shared kitchen with an oven and stove, the room only has a bed, shelves, a table, a chair, and cupboard. You will have to get your own kettle and household necessities.

Despite the lack of facilities, I would still recommend staying at the school dorms, as this is the cheapest option for exchange students going to UJ (around 120SGD per month). It is a shared room with another roommate, and you will have two other flatmates sharing the toilet and hallway with you. You can choose to stay with a fellow Singaporean/NUS student if you wish to, but I do not recommend that because there will be other exchange students in the dorm too, it is nice to mingle around and make new friends. I chose to be randomly allocated to a roommate, I got a Polish roommate and made new friends in the kitchen which is shared by around 20-30 people.

The best thing about staying in the dorm is that you get to meet people from all over the world. You can go to room parties, talk to people when you make your meals, go out together in town or even just hang out at the dorm café (more like a bar/club, at the ground level) to watch soccer or party.

You don't live the most luxurious life in the dorm, but it will be the most fulfilling one.

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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?

Before school starts, there will be orientation week organized by the ERASMUS committee. They have a lot of activities like City Game, Pub Crawl, Tram parties, beer tasting and what not. All you need to do is to go to the ERASMUS office in school (Collegium Novum) to sign up for the events that you are interested to join beforehand and then simply have fun afterwards! You will need to pay for the events but I would say that it is worth it to party and make new friends from all over the world!

During the school term, there will be many different parties organized. There will at least be a party every other week, all you need to do is to buy the tickets at the ERASMUS office. There are organised trips for students to travel together to different parts of Poland or Europe, you can sign up for those trips too!

The events and trips are great events to hang out with friends and meet new people, even though some events are rather boring, there are some like the Project X Party which is a must-go!

4. Cost of Living

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

Excluding travel expenses, I would estimate spending around 3500SGD over a period of 4 months.

Accommodation in dormitory - ~ 375PLN per month

Transport - ~180PLN for one semester (4 months) in Krakow if you get the student semester pass

Telecommunication - ~20PLN per month for 6GB data usage by PLAY

Typical lunch (a burger or a set meal for students) can cost between 8PLN to 20++PLN, depending on what you eat.

Generally cost of living in Krakow is a little lower than that of Singapore, if you cook almost everyday like how I did, you could save a lot of money from eating out as groceries are pretty cheap. All in all, it depends on how you save your money for only the necessities and it depends on what you are willing to spend on.

5. Challenges

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

There are not many challenges that I faced during my SEP adventure, but I would say that they are small

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problems that could be solved.

One of it would be the language barrier in Poland, as normal Poles do not speak good English, especially for the older generation. However, with Google translate, facial/body expressions with sign language, the message will definitely get through. We just have to be patient with people who are not that well-versed with English, even some of my fellow exchange students from some parts of Europe have this difficulty with English too, so when I talk to them, I talk slower or explain my message using more simple words if they do not get what I am saying.

Another problem would be the lack of facilities in the dormitory, even though I could have bought my own fridge (it is really irritating to not have a fridge during summer) or kettle, I decided to make some Polish friends in the dormitory so I need not waste money for things that I only need for four months in Krakow. I shared my Polish roommate's kettle and I shared my Polish kitchen-buddy's fridge in his flat. Making friends is the bestest solution, sharing is caring! Of course, you cannot take things for granted, share your things with your friends (old or new) too!

Getting lost is a norm too, just don't be afraid to ask for directions from the locals or you can always consult Googlemaps.

There is no challenge big enough to bring you down! We have to either find a way or make one.

6. Overall SEP Experience

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

Going for exchange at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, is the best decision that I have made in NUS, the experiences that I gained from this adventure to Poland and the parts of Europe is that rewarding. Making friends from all over Europe/the Americas, experiencing the true local Polish lifestyle when I hang out with my Polish friends, living the European culture with parties and more parties with fellow exchange students, learning about how different Europeans see the world in class and conversations with strangers I meet on my travels, I feel like I have never learnt so much in a single semester in NUS until I embarked on my exchange journey.

It is not only about academics, it is learning about life, the world and its people. You see, feel and listen to how people live in another part of the world, experience a different culture, learn about their histories and at the same time, you share yours too. This is what exchange is all about, having a reciprocal relationship with the people you meet and the places you visit. I am just grateful for this great opportunity to learn about the wonders of this world on this amazing adventure.

7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.

Be brave and step out of your comfort zone.

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Explore new places, meet new people and understand how people live in another place with a different culture and different everything! When you close the door to comfort, you open the door to surprises. It is most fulfilling to talk to strangers, make a close friend from one of the “angmoh” countries, learn about people, experience things that you cannot experience back home. You will realize that you only broaden your horizons by throwing yourself out there, do what you want to do, and don’t come back to Singapore with any regret.

I would say that going for SEP is the best thing that you can get out of NUS, it is extremely satisfying to explore the wonders of this world, if you dare to. We always have a choice to make a difference.

Last but not least, play hard, but study hard too. It is not that difficult on exchange! 😊