# SEP Report

| Faculty/Major | FASS/Economics |
|---|---|
| Host University | Stockholm University |
| 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**

All my Economics modules only had lectures, with no tutorials. They were either conducted twice a week with each lecture being 2 hours long, or once a week with each lecture being 3 hours long.

What I liked most about the academics at my host University is that they provide students with past year papers to refer to, with answers included. I find that it helped to put the minds of exchange students at ease because it allowed us to know what kind of questions to expect and how to prepare for them. I also enjoyed the content taught. The content was interesting, with references made to Sweden itself whenever applicable. I like the grading system in my host university, which takes off the stress off students and students are encouraged to just focus on their own grades. What was really great which I noticed in my host university was that every student was keen on learning and driven to learn more. This spirit is not really seen in NUS, probably due to the grading system and the learning culture we have which is different from that of Stockholm.

What I disliked about the academics at my host university was the way lectures were conducted. It was pretty dry at times due to the lack of engagement with the students. If I were to compare NUS with my host university, I would say that NUS lectures are more engaging in that they encourage students to think a lot and lectures are more interesting. Hence, I was quite disappointed with the lectures in my host university. Also, while it was good that the examinations were made to be very similar to past year papers, I think it does not force the student to think deeper as answers can be easily regurgitated from the lecture notes.

Module registration and module mapping were relatively easy because the administrators in Stockholm University were helpful and I feel that they are okay with any changes just as long as you inform them. I did face problems with my module mapping though, and my advice from that experience is that if you are doing your module mapping during the summer holidays (i.e. you are going on exchange in semester 1), it will be better to correspond with the administrator early because module mapping involves perhaps two or more people and they like going on long holidays during this season.

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**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 |
| EC2303 | Intermediate Development Economics | 7.5 | EC3371 | Development Economics 1 | 4 |
| EC2206 | Financial Economics | 7.5 | EC3333 | Financial Economics | 4 |
| EC2102 | Labour Market Economics | 7.5 | EC3361 | Labour Economics | 4 |
| EC2106 | Public Economics | 7.5 | EC3351 | Public Finance | 4 |
| | | | EC3741 | Dummy code | 4 |

## 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 off campus. The accommodation I stayed in was a studio apartment, where I stayed with my friend. The name of my accommodation is Idun. I really like how everything was relatively clean and that the amentities in the building were sufficient. We had our own kitchen so it was very convenient. The accommodation is also centrally located near city, with many important buses/ train lines situated nearby. Hence I would recommend this accommodation to others as this is the best accommodation offered should convenience be your top priority. However, if you are looking for more interaction with neighbours over convenience, this accommodation will not be suitable for you.

## 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?**

The activities conducted during the orientation week in Stockholm university introduced me to the school and the city. What was useful to me during that week was the orientation day (an informative session where they introduced exchange students to the various administrative stuff in the university), the IKEA trip (because the IKEA stores in Stockholm are quite far from the city), and the fika session (fika being teabreak, where exchange students are invited to chill on the large field to

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interact with other students over a cup of coffee/tea and snacks) – a less intimidating way of knowing new people if you don't like parties.

Also, join a buddy programme! There's one where they'll pair you up with a local student, and one where they'll group a few exchange students together with local students based on your language interests. I went for the group one and one of my best friends made on exchange was the local student from my group. It was a positive experience because not only was I able to gain new friends, it also provided a good way to find out more about Stockholm when the local student introduced local food and events to us.

There was also a cooking session organized near the church of Engelbrekt for exchange students to learn how to cook Swedish food. It is organized monthly. I think I learnt about this event at one of the booths during Orientation Day. It's really fun and you get to meet new people!

## 4. Cost of Living

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

I spent around 8000 on living expenses in Sweden, accommodation and my flight to Sweden. I spent around another 8000 on traveling.

## 5. Challenges

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

Homesickness/loneliness: This is a phase everyone would go through, and the duration of it depends on the individual. It took me very long to overcome this, and it did not help that I did not have any friends whom I could hang out regularly other than my Singaporean friend. I came with the expectation that it would be easy to find friends and I would not feel lonely here. However, I came to realise that the number of friends you have would largely depend on the type of accommodation you get. I hardly saw my neighbours; everyone was usually behind closed doors. Even as a person who likes being alone at times, this was too much to bear for me. There was not much I could do to gain more friends other than to wait for school activities to happen, so I tried to initiate a meal outing with my new friends. Apart from that, I had to learn to accept my circumstances and learn to appreciate being alone. I also probably became distracted by work and travel. Rather than solutions, I would say the process helped me overcome the loneliness I felt. The process made me enjoy solitude at a greater level.

Language/ confidence/ being Asian: Regardless of how good one's command of English is, based on the experiences of my friends and I, there is a general consensus that we still feel somewhat afraid of fumbling over our words when conversing with foreign students. Despite being praised for being good in English by our European friends, we are somewhat less confident when conversing in English overseas because of the stereotype that Asians have a poor command of English. To overcome this, I made sure to speak slower and told myself to be more confident. Eventually, I could speak with

confidence with my foreign friends. My biggest take away was that you do not have to care about what others think about you, just do your thing well. While there's the stereotype present for Asians, it wouldn't have mattered if I didn't care about how I appeared to others. This realization and implementation worked in helping me overcome this issue.

## 6. Overall SEP Experience

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

My exchange experience was a really rewarding one. I gained new insights and did stuff I never taught I would have dared to do. Being alone overseas really made me more independent and adventurous. Studying in a foreign institution was a refreshing experience, and it was interesting to see how Sweden's education system is different from Singapore. I felt welcomed in Sweden, which soon felt like a second home to me. I was exposed to a culture very different from my own, and being in Europe, I had the opportunity to travel around Europe. I really enjoyed learning about the history and culture of Sweden and the other European countries. Being in Europe in 2015 when there were increasing concerns over the immigration issue allowed me to gain an insider's perspective on the issue. All these new knowledge I have gained allowed me to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of what we have in Singapore.

## 7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

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

Cherish the time you have overseas. It is common to feel lazy to explore the area when you first reach the country as you would feel that there is a lot of time left. However, time flies by very fast so it will be good if you try to explore the area as early as possible. This also helps you to adapt to the country faster.

While studying is important, I think the main objective of SEP should be to go out there and learn about other cultures, as well as to do things you have not done before. With the opportunity present to you, do not just study; explore the world and be adventurous! Of course, always ensure that you are safe while engaging in any activity.