

SEP Report

1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	Industrial & Systems Engineering; Business (Administration)
Host University	Clarkson University
NUS Semester and Year of Exchange (e.g. AY14/15 Semester 1)	AY 15/16 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

Clarkson University is a relatively small college, with approximately 4,000 students in total. As such, class sizes, especially those for seniors (Year 4) and juniors (Year 3), are relatively small, with approximately 20 students in the class. Classes for freshmen (Year 1) and sophomores (Year 2) are generally larger, with approximately 100 students.

Classes are compulsory, and there is no differentiation between lectures and tutorials. Lecturers may choose to cover presentation slides (as in a lecture) or go through exercises or problem sets (as in a tutorial), at their discretion. Additional help, if required, is available through a peer tutoring program where students who have previously taken the course will go through the material and assist in concepts that may be more difficult.

The key benefit from the small class sizes is that the professors and lecturers are able to tailor the course to suit the needs of the students attending the classes. They avail themselves for consultations at fixed timeslots through each week, and are very willing to schedule alternatives should you be unable to make it or have urgent issues. Their email response times are typically less than half a day, even during the weekends. The icing on top of the cake comes in the form of professors emailing directly to clarify questions that they feel they did not answer fully in class. In addition, they care deeply about the students and have often informally checked with me if I am adapting fine to life in the USA.

Unfortunately, some of the courses I have taken require weekly submissions, which collectively count towards the final grade of the course. Combined with the relatively high requirements of passing (approximately 60%), this means that there is very little room for managing your own time and the pace of the course has indirectly been set by the lecturer.

Module mapping differs by faculty, but I have not encountered any problems with Business (Administration) and Industrial & Systems Engineering modules.

Module registration should be done with the form that arrives together with the college's acceptance letter. A list of available modules for the following semester are available in their PeopleSoft portal, which may be accessed without any log-in. However, it is important to note that students should be prepared to have several courses listed as back-up in the event that some courses close due to low sign-up rates or may simply not be offered during that semester.

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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
EC151	Principles of Macroeconomics	3	BSP2001	Macro and International Economics	4
EE264	Introduction to Digital Design	3	EE2020	Digital Fundamentals	4
FN468	Financial Markets & Institutions	3	FIN3103	Financial Markets	4
FN467	International Finance	3	FIN3120	Topics in Finance	4
EM361	Supply Chain Environmental Management	3	IE3XXXX	Exchange Elective (Category C)	4
EM480	Project Management	3	IE4240	Project Management	4

2. Accommodation

What kind of accommodation did you stay in during your exchange (e.g. on campus / off campus)?

Would you recommend this accommodation to future outgoing students?

Do you have any other suggestions?

Accommodation on campus is compulsory, barring very few exceptions. Having applied to participate in their International Village program, I was housed with a local student and another international student. In addition, as part of the programme, the building I lived in (located in Woodstock Village) had a high percentage of international students, with whom I was able to network and make friends. Under this programme, additional budget has also been allocated by the school for bonding activities, which are organized by the residential advisors.

The apartment I lived in had electric stoves (with metal coils), an oven, and a refrigerator. Utensils, pots, pans, and other equipment can be borrowed from the school, which organizes a programme called *Lending Cupboard*, and returned at the end of the semester. In addition, the school has also organized a programme to collect items that students purchased for the semester's stay but are unwilling to bring back with them (e.g. blankets, pillow cases, and bedsheets).

While travelling to school is a convenient ten-minute walk, travelling to the supermarkets or the nearest village is often difficult without a car. In winter, the travel to the nearest supermarket can take up to 40 minutes on foot. In addition, Uber is illegal in New York state (except New York City). As such, students might wish to enlist the local students for help.

Facilities, such as the swimming pool, gym, indoor soccer field, and basketball courts, are available on campus and free for all students with a valid student pass. There are also eateries and cafeterias on campus that operate till the late evenings. Food delivery services are also provided for selected fast food outlets, such as Dominos and the local Asian food restaurant, until midnight.

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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?

During the spring semester, the school organized a one-day trip to Ottawa, Canada for the Winterlude event. The month-long event features ice sculptures and other winter activities.

In addition, the International Student Organization organizes trips to the nearest bowling alleys, movie nights, and skiing trips, at heavily discounted prices. These are available to all international and exchange students, and are often very popular. Checking the organization out, and signing up for these activities early is encouraged. In addition, in exchange for doing volunteer work with the organization, it partially reimburses the travel and accommodation costs for your Spring break trips.

There are a plethora of other clubs and societies that students can consider joining. Most of them are fairly informal and do not require full attendance or prior experience.

4. Cost of Living

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

Please list travel expenses separately.

Accommodation:	USD 4,400
Food & Groceries:	USD 3,000
Textbooks:	USD 1,000

Travel expenses vary significantly with city and mode of transport, and are not listed.

5. Challenges

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

In winter, travelling on foot to the village for meals and groceries is extremely difficult. However, most local students have cars and are willing to assist in providing transportation. Whenever I had the opportunity to visit the supermarket, I tried to buy as much as I would possibly need in the following few weeks. This reduced the need for frequent trips.

Using a foreign credit or debit card can be expensive due to transaction costs and poor exchange rates offered. I opened a student checking account with a local bank to reduce such costs. These accounts are tailored for students and impose no fees for withdrawing at local ATMs. They are, however, non-interest bearing. In order to close the bank account, I simply withdrew all the remaining money (it will automatically close after three months of inactivity if it contains less than a set amount of money, and will mail a cheque for the balance, if any).

6. Overall SEP Experience

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

Clarkson University, I'll miss you. Thanks for the great people here: friends, professors, and all the support staff working silently and thanklessly in the background. My entire life has been a race; I've been zooming from from one place to another, rushing to get through each semester, and always chasing the next achievement. I really appreciated the change in pace here; everything slowed down, giving me much-needed rest, a pause... A break. Here, I got my first experience with snow, hail, wild deer, gophers, skunks, pollen allergy, skiing, live ice hockey, fraternity party, small town life, and amazing bagels. I don't know when I'll be back, but I think that I'll definitely be here some day and looking back at all the good times. 'Til then, Golden Knights!

7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.

If going in the spring semester, be prepared for the extreme cold; during the coldest period in winter, temperatures reached negative 40 degrees Celcius. Anti-histamines are also extremely helpful for potential allergies to the pollen in the spring, as well as those whose respiratory system are unable to adapt to the humidity.

8. Report Submission

Please submit your report (including photos*) at <https://share.nus.edu.sg/goabroad/Lists/SEPReport/AllItems.aspx>. Please note that you can only upload one document. As such, please **zip your report and photos into one file** and name the file in this format 'Host University_Full Name' (eg. Waseda University_Tan Mei Ling).

*Photo submission:

- 1 image of you with host university landmarks in the background
- 2 images of you with your exchange friends or local students
- Submit the photos in JPEG format. Good quality photos between 2MB and 5MB are preferred.
- Please name all photos in this format 'Host University_Full Name_Caption' (eg. Waseda University_Tan Mei Ling_Visit to Mt Fuji with exchange friends).

Kindly note that we may share your report on the NUS/IRO website and relevant information at SEP information sessions and/or in publicity collaterals.