

SEP Report

1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	ENGINEERING/CHEMICAL
Host University	PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
NUS Semester and Year of Exchange (eg. AY14/15 Semester 1)	AY 15/16 SEM 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

Rigour of chemical engineering courses vary according to professor. Some take the pace more slowly, and are willing to not complete certain sections of the syllabus if students on the whole need more time to understand the previous sections. Others can be strict, and some can teach concepts that are very closely associated with real-life applications, to a degree higher than most junior level chemical engineering courses.

Class timeslots are usually a fixed slot, regardless of the day on which it is held (e.g. MWF 1220-110pm; or Tu Th 415-530pm, in 50 minute, 1h 15 min or 2h 30 min slots)

Exchange students typically have lower priority in registering for the courses. PSU provides a form for exchange students to register for the courses with, but usually the students only get very few of the courses at the beginning. In addition to space constraints, the system also does not recognize the exchange student as having completed the PSU pre-reqs for courses, even if the equivalents at NUS have been completed already. To rectify the problem, please contact the relevant department administrative staff and professors early, even before going for the exchange. Following that, work closely with the staff on the ground when at PSU.

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.)

OVERSEAS COURSE CODE	OVERSEAS COURSE TITLE	OVERSEAS CREDITS	NUS MODULE CODE	NUS MODULE CREDITS	NUS COURSE TITLE
CH E 450	PROCESS DYNAMICS AND CONTROL	3.0	CN3121	4	PROCESS DYNAMICS AND CONTROL
EGEE 441	ELECTROCHEMICAL ENGINEERING FUNDAMENTALS	3.0	CN4xxx	4	Dummy Technical Elective

SEP Report

CH E 410	MASS TRANSFER OPERATIONS	3.0	CN313 2	4	SEPARATION PROCESSES
CH E 480W	CHEMICAL ENGINEERING LABORATORY	3.0	CN310 8	4	CHEMICAL ENGINEERING LAB II
COMM 180	SURVEY OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS	3.0	UXX 2XXX	4	USP HSS INQUIRY TIER
COMM 205	GENDER, DIVERSITY AND THE MEDIA	3.0	UXX 2XXX	4	USP HSS INQUIRY TIER

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?

Residential Hall. I stayed at West Halls: great food, beautiful hall compounds, and closely located to many of the main classroom buildings. West Is The Best!

Pricey accommodation and compulsory meal plan for students who live on campus.

Alternatives are booking a long-term Airbnb (more convenient option) or renting a sublet from students. Spring semester students have an easier time finding a subletter as Fall students typically have to sign year-long contracts.

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?

Good international student orientation at the beginning which allows international students (exchange/full-time students) to come together to bond and forge friendships.

Loads of activities on-campus. Activities held at the student recreation center every weekend.

PSU also allows exchange students (J-1 visa) to work on campus. I did that, working at the campus dining

SEP Report

halls. A friend of mine worked as a librarian.

4. Cost of Living

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

Please list travel expenses separately.

Accommodation + Meal Plan + Health insurance = USD 5281. All other expenses, such as personal allowance and books depend on the student. Including these, I spent USD 6243.

Note on health insurance: the school-recommended Aetna health insurance is comprehensive but significantly costly. Look for ISO Student Health Insurance instead.

5. Challenges

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

Living alone, being responsible for one's own affairs in the entirety. Overcame through trial, error and exercising a sense of ownership.

People all spoke English so there was much opportunity for dialogue and cultural exchange.

6. Overall SEP Experience

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

I find the freedom to pursue just about anything while overseas without the obligation to maintain a certain academic standard the greatest draw of SEP! The highlights of my experience were the extensive travels to different places, cultural exchange with Americans and international students, as well as my part-time on-campus work experience! My American friend once told me that only 40% of US citizens own a passport, and I can see why – the North American continent is brimming with cities that celebrate their vibrance and heritage! And being in the continent for an extended period of time really allowed me to space out my travels to many different US and Canadian cities. One thing I loved about the US was the national parks – I visited the Great Smoky Mountains with some of my Singaporean friends at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill... an item on the bucket list checked! Furthermore, I had plenty of opportunities for great conversations with the locals as the medium of communication is English! I got to forge really close friendships with my project group mates over the semester, and I would be ready to take them around Singapore the next time they come to our country! Unlike most of my peers, I also spent the semester working at the campus dining halls, and it was a great professional experience too!

To end off, I felt that being on SEP without academic obligations gave me plenty of space to develop as an individual, be it in the form of pursuing new, novel experiences, quiet time for reflection and forward

SEP Report

planning or devoting more time and energy to certain activities that can be often neglected (for me, it was time spent with loved ones, friends, and leisure reading – small things that actually matter a lot) And in totality, it was indeed a semester very well-spent 😊

7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.

Think ahead on what you'd like to do on exchange, and don't let any fears inhibit you! Positivity is always a choice in spite of all the uncertainty in a foreign environment, and take that step forward!