

SEP Report

1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	Engineering/Mechanical Engineering
Host University	Purdue 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

I was impressed by the learning culture at Purdue and USA in general, because they place heavy emphasis on collaboration amongst classmates, which makes learning a very enriching journey. Most classes aren't scored on a bell curve and thus promotes students to collaborate their work and improve together instead of being very competitive. The professors are very flexible in their way of teaching as well. Classes focus more on knowing the fundamentals well instead of solving complex problems, which I find is the case in many NUS modules. This reflects well in the exams as well, when the questions test your understanding of the basics of the course instead of your ability to solve tough questions, which is why students tend to find the exams easy to score if they have a solid fundamental base.

The best aspect of studying in the states was that other students and professors always go out of their way to make sure you're doing okay. I was fortunate enough to make really good local friends in my classes who made sure I got accustomed to new system and also included me in their study groups to make sure I was fine. Don't be shy of asking your tutors/friends for help as they would be glad to help you out.

The only advice for module registration and mapping is to start your process early. Most classes at Purdue are offered on a first come, first serve basis. Not only do you have to get your modules mapped, you also need to make sure that your academic advisor at Purdue approves you for taking those courses. Whether or not you get enrolled into those classes will then depend on timetable clashes and class vacancies. Best way to avoid panicking at the end would be to decide on which modules you want to map and get them mapped as soon as possible.

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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
ME 274	Dynamics	3	ME 3112	Mechanics of Machines	4
ME 270	Atomistic Material Science	3	ME3661	Technical Elective	4
ME 315	Heat and Mass Transfer	4	ME3122	Heat Transfer	4
ME 365	Control Systems I	3	ME2142	Feedback Control Systems	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?

I stayed at Earhart Hall (dorm) on campus. I would definitely recommend staying in dorms for NUS students because dorms are the best way of getting to know more people. I had a roommate, who was from Chicago and was a senior at Purdue. He was a very warm and friendly guy who took me around Chicago numerous times and also opened his home for me when I had a few days to kill in Chicago before I flew back. Dorms also have various activities like those in halls at NUS, be it sports or performing arts, which get you in touch with people with similar interests. The rooms aren't that expensive and it saves you the hassle of looking for apartments, finding people to share it with, cooking food everyday etc. etc. The dining court has a buffet system and was quite nutritious and delicious. Definitely saves you a lot of time cooking food and is convenient.

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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?

There were heaps of activities organized by MIX (Multinational International Exchange) which is an organization which brings together all the exchange students that have gone to Purdue. I attended most of the events organized by this group which include taking all exchange students on a skiing trip, NBA games, visiting local families and home cooked dinners with them. I would also recommend playing Intra Mural sports, which is open to all students. This organization also conducts orientation for the students so that they are used to the campus. My facilitator went out of her way and conducted a walking tour of the campus in the snow to make sure that we familiarized ourselves with the campus before classes started. Most of the events conducted by this organization take place a week before classes start. The frequency of events decreases as classes begin however, the we used to keep in touch and used to hangout quite often over dinner/coffee.

Also, try to join a club at the university as you will meet lots of local people through that club. It will help you know the country better, make new friends and keep you busy thus making your time worthwhile. There are heaps of clubs, societies and sports teams for students to try out. Even if you are new to that activity, it will be an opportunity for you to try something new.

4. Cost of Living

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

Please list travel expenses separately.

My expenses:

Accommodation (Double Room): \$2500 (Price for each dorm on campus is different, so this might differ from person to person)

Meal Plan (Unlimited meals/week): \$2200

Books/Academic resources: \$400 (I had to purchase a certain device for my class which was pretty expensive. On an average, the cost for books might be about \$250.

Phone: \$40/month

Average Monthly cost: \$400-\$500

Travel: \$1000 (Greyhound busses are extremely cheap but tend to be late so book them accordingly).

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5. Challenges

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

I didn't really face any tough challenges over the course of 6 months, however the cold weather might be something that most people are not used to and might be a cause of bother. At the coldest time of the semester, the temperature used to go down to a -25 degrees and even colder taking into account, the wind chill factor. The best way to get used to this is to wear multiple layers to keep you warm and to buy proper boots to walk in the snow.

6. Overall SEP Experience

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

My exchange semester has been the best semester so far. I came to Singapore on a scholarship, alone, when I was 14 and had to deal with studying in a new place all by myself. That is why, I was not very nervous before heading to the States as I had already had a similar experience before. I was thus looking to make the most out of it. Being an athlete, America is arguably the best place for a sports fan irrespective of which sport you follow. I joined the Purdue Tennis team and that was possibly the best decision I made. Some of the best friends I made over the semester are from the tennis team. A few of my friends and I formed a team and won the Intramural tennis tournament at Purdue. Over the course of my 6 months there, I got hooked to following some sports which I had never watched before. Making local friends played a big role in that. Friends took me out to watch NBA, NCAA (Basketball) games with them. I also became a big fan of the Chicago Cubs (Baseball) and tried to catch a few games at the stadium in Chicago. The super bowl (American Football) weekend was probably the best of the lot even though I barely understood what was going on in the match. I feel, that my interest in sports not only helped me make some really good friends, but also enjoy my time in America.

7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

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Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.

My suggestion to the outgoing exchange students is that don't be scared of venturing out. Many friends of mine had been apprehensive in interacting with local friends, but I feel that the best way to get accustomed to a new place is to make friends who will not only guide you through the process but also make your problems seem easy. Take the initiative of getting to know more people outside the group of friends that you already knew from Singapore, be it local or other exchange students. Sticking to the people from Singapore that you already know, beats a major purpose of going on exchange which is about cultural exposure.

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' (e.g. 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**' (e.g. 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.