

# SEP Report

## 1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	School of Design and Environment/ Project & Facilities Management
Host University	Texas A&M 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

I really enjoyed the academic environment and system at Texas A&M University – my host exchange university. As an exchange student, I was only able to register for class after all the full-time students had finished their course registration. However, my academic advisor was very nice, dedicated and helpful in instructing me step by step on how to sign up for my classes. And in the end, I managed to enroll in 5 courses that I had already succeeded in mapping. Therefore, I found no difficulty in module registration and mapping.

Both the professors and the students there are very open. Professors always welcome new ideas from students; and the students are never afraid to express their opinions. Hence, the atmosphere of the classroom is always friendly and enjoyable. The workload for each course is manageable; and most of the final papers are multiple choice questions. Like NUS, they also offer one lecture and one to two tutorials for each module. The thing I like most about the academics at my host university is the friendly environment it creates, making me feel that there is not a stark distance between the professor and the student. There is nothing I particularly dislike about my host university's academic system.

All the staff here are very helpful. They offer me detailed instructions from scratch: on how to register for classes, purchase my dining plan, rent a mailbox, etc through the exchange students conference. And they are extremely responsive, which I really appreciated during my first few days at a whole new place.

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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
COSC364	Construction Safety I	1	PF4204	Safety, Health and Environmental Management	4
COSC475	Construction Planning	3	PF3101	Project Scheduling and Control	4
COSC461	Building Information Modelling Systems	3	PF4206	Building Information Modelling	4
COSC253	Construction Methods and Materials I	3	PF2303	Materials Technology	4
JAPN101	Beginning Japanese	4	LAJ1201	Japanese I	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 in Moses Hall in the campus of Texas A&M University, and I really enjoyed the living experience here. I had an American roommate; therefore, I got the chance to know more about this country's culture as well as Texan traditions and history. We exchanged information about each other's culture and learnt a lot. I would definitely recommend that exchange students stay on-campus. Through this experience, we can interact more with the local people and make social life on campus really fun.

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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 a variety of clubs and organizations at my host university that I was really interested in. I was not a member of any club, but I participated in a number of events organized by these clubs. Japanese clubs and AIESEC are highly recommended.

## 4. Cost of Living

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

I spent a total of 7000USD during my SEP journey. This sum was for accommodation fees, dining plan fees, insurance, personal living expenses and travelling fees within the States.  
The tickets I bought for the round trip from home to the States and back cost 1100USD in total. It could be cheaper if you purchase them earlier. I waited until I got my visa approved and bought the tickets; therefore, it was not very cheap. You can try studentuniverse.com or kayak.com to find the cheapest flights for your SEP trip.

## 5. Challenges

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

As my host university was very large, I really had difficulty finding my way around at first. I also found communicating with Americans a little bit challenging as they spoke English fluently and in an American accent (whereas I am an international student). Sometimes I felt very far away from home. I do not usually encounter this problem in Singapore because it is close to my hometown – Vietnam. The States are a 20-hour flight away from Vietnam- therefore, once in a while I felt homesick. American food was not very easy to eat. They mostly had burgers, fries, pizza and pasta, which I did not really enjoy eating. After 3 weeks, I became more familiar with the school campus. My friends in the host university and my roommate helped me out a lot. From that time onwards, I became more open and willing to really enjoy my exchange journey.

## 6. Overall SEP Experience

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

Honestly speaking, I put in a lot of effort for this exchange journey, but everything was worth it. After 6 months in the United States of America, I did change in a positive way. Personally speaking, I became more confident and open-minded. Many lessons were learnt, and there was a cultural exchange. I have been to a lot of places, met a lot of people and made a lot of new friends. I really appreciate those who helped me literally from scratch. Things were not fun and easy all the time, but I would not trade anything for this opportunity ever. Thanks to NUS and my host university, I had this once-in-a-lifetime experience and I truly treasured every moment of it.

## 7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

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

My only suggestion is not to be afraid whenever you encounter problems or difficulties in a new place. Everyone will definitely find it hard to adapt during the first few days. But after you begin to get more familiar with the place and culture, things will be absolutely enjoyable and fun. There are a lot of things to explore and a lot of places to discover. So don't waste this rare experience!