

SEP Report

1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	Faculty of Engineering
Host University	University of Texas at Austin
NUS Semester and Year of Exchange (eg. AY14/15 Semester 1)	AY 15/16 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**

Out of the 6 classes I took, one was a lab class and the other 5 were academic and exam based. Lab sessions were carried out exactly the same as NUS.

Most classes took up about 4 to 5 hours each week, with additional weekly consultation times (also called "office hours") for each subject.

All the classes were very small, ranging from 30-60 students, meaning that most lessons were carried out in small seminar rooms instead of large lecture halls. The lessons were very textbook-based and in many of the classes we had no choice but to purchase the textbooks (expensive!).

Instead of giving out notes, many lecturers would hand-write their notes during class. There are no webcasts, and usually notes written during classes were not uploaded online. Hence, missing class is very troublesome (as compared to NUS where most of our syllables is web casted). Just taking a toilet break during class could lead to a big gap in our notes.

The good thing about it, however, is that lecturers are forced to go through material more slowly and more thoroughly as they are writing down everything themselves too. I find this style of teaching easier to follow compared to lecturers blasting through pre-prepared lecture notes extremely quickly. During SEP, I usually came out of class understanding everything that was taught during class (for most lecturers).

As for module mapping and registration, classes are incredibly small and seniors get priority registration. As such, getting your required modules just by bidding is nearly impossible. Luckily for us, our student coordinator managed to work her magic and got us into our classes at the last minute. Communicating with the student coordinator is a must for course registration here.

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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	Credit Hours	Module Code	Course Title	Modular Credits
CHE360	Process Control	3	CN3121	Process Dynamics and Control	4
CHE363	Separations Processes and Mass Transfer	3	CN3132	Separation Processes	4
CHE264	Chemical Engineering Process and Project Lab II	2	CN3108	Chemical Engineering Process Lab II	4
CHE348	Numerical Methods in Chemical Engineering Problem Solving	3	CN3421	Process Modeling and Numerical Simulation	4
CHE339	Introduction to Biochemical Engineering	3	CN5172	Biochemical Engineering	4
CHE355	Introduction to Polymers	3	CN4203R	Polymer Engineering	4
Total		17			24

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?

The school does not give any priority for on-campus housing to exchange students. In fact, we received an email a few weeks in advance telling us that we should source for off-campus housing as they were unlikely to have spots for us.

My roommate and I (from NUS too) shared a two-room apartment with a local student at the same university. Because we were sharing a room, rent was pretty affordable and I recommend that others

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try to do the same thing.

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 many activities organized by the school for exchange students. Most of these activities were weekend tours to nearby cities (Dallas, Houston, San Antonio). There were also many bonding sessions planned by the school to facilitate meeting other exchange students.

4. Cost of Living

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

5. Challenges

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

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The biggest challenge was adjusting to the different culture in the US. Trying to speak slower so that we could be understood was the first thing that we had to get used to.

School-wise, a big difference is that the interactions between lecturers and students were a lot more dominant in Austin. Students were constantly asking questions and seeking out the lecturers on a weekly basis, and that was something we had to get used to if we wanted to get decent scores on our tests.

6. Overall SEP Experience

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

Overall I had a great time during my exchange. I felt that it truly was a once in a lifetime experience and it is something that everybody should try.

Generally, other exchange students were a lot more friendly than my course mates. I think this is because the locals in chemical engineering are very focused on their studies and already have their pre-formed groups.

After this exchange, I found myself more open to the idea of working for a couple of years in the US (especially Austin) if I get the opportunity. The people here are extremely friendly and approachable and I feel that that is something many Singaporeans (including myself) can learn from.

7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.

Public transport in Austin is not the best. Find a place close enough to school so that you can cycle. It is easy to buy a second-hand bike and sell it off for the same price before you leave.

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As mentioned above, get a place with a kitchen and learn how to cook. Otherwise, you are going to be spending a bomb on food every week.