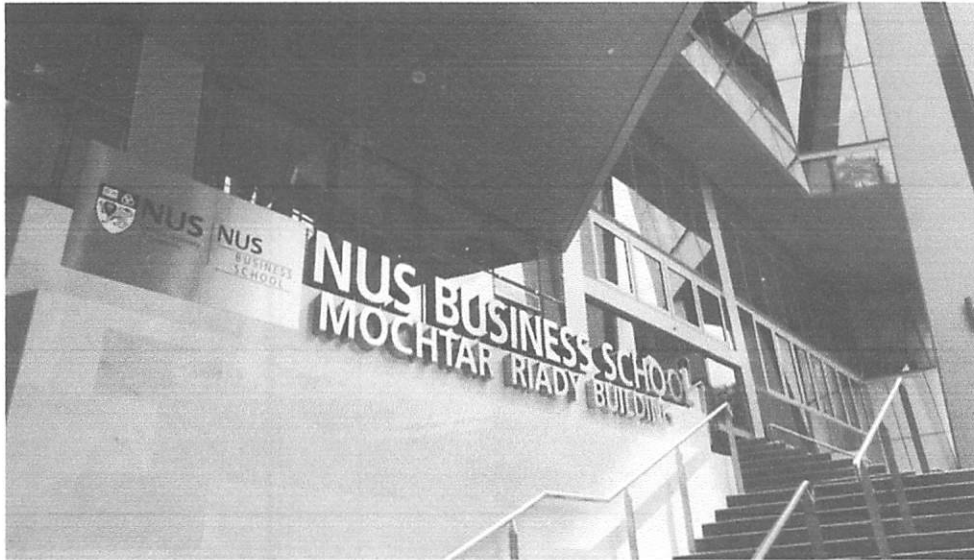


Experience Report of my semester abroad at the National University of Singapore



Host University: National University of Singapore

Home University: University of Cologne

Degree: Business Administration, Bachelor of Science

Country: Singapore

Name of the exchange program: STAB

Exchange semester: Fall

Academic year: 3

Completed courses (undergraduate):

- Options and futures
- Corporate Finance
- Macroeconomic and International economics
- Management and Organization

Introduction

Retrospectively, it was a great opportunity and awesome experience to study in a city like Singapore. In this one semester, I got to know a lot about new cultures while I was travelling in Asia and also through the great racial diversity of Singapore. It was more than just fun to learn about the differences between cultures and to be inspired by them. Throughout the semester, I have made a lot of new friends from all over the globe.

Preparation for the semester abroad

I've always been interested in studying abroad so when I heard about the exchange program offered in our university, I quickly did my research on it and decided I would apply and choose NUS (National University of Singapore) as the University of the Exchange Program. NUS have a great reputation and ranking among all the universities in the world, it also provides huge varieties of modules for their Business School. It also has the benefits of location that it's easy to travel to other South East Asian countries

In order to make this happen, there are a few things needed to be done. First, I have to hit the minimum requirement of English proficiency to make me qualified for applying to study in NUS (at least B2-). Therefore, I took the business English class in my home university to get an English language certificate and used it later for the exchange program application. Second, an application letter is needed for the application thus I wrote down the reasons and the course details in the letter and submitted it together with my English proficiency certificate, my academic results, a CV and a proof of identity as a student. I received my acceptance letter from the ZIB 2 months after my submission. I was very excited and grateful for this so I quickly did the necessary actions for my accommodation, visa and various fees.

Accommodation

NUS provide various types of accommodation on their campus, each student gets the chance to choose their wishes accommodation, fill it into the form, submit and hope they get what they filled in. I think this is a fair and justified system to let everyone have their fair chance and still have room to stay during the study. I didn't get the one I wanted but I'm happy with what I've been provided. I got to stay in a single room at Prince George's Park Residence; this is one of the cheapest dormitories in NUS. It's close to the MRT (Mass Rapid Transit) station, within walking distance to Business Faculty, and well facilitated.

There's also a lot of other exchange students there together with some locals, it was a well-mixed of people and I really enjoyed my time there despite the fact that the building is old and not really modern. Other facilities like gym, laundry room, common area, study rooms, soccer field, basketball court and tennis courts are commonly used by students. It's a well-designed residence that not only lets students rest but also bond together and encourages each other.

How to get there and my first impression of Singapore

It was easy for me to go to Singapore, first I took a train from Cologne to Frankfurt and from there I took a direct flight from Frankfurt Airport, Germany to Changi Airport, Singapore. It was a 12-hour flight but my heart was filled with excitement that the distance seems short to me. The first impression of Singapore can only be described in two words, HOT and HUMID. It was so different to the weather I experienced in Germany but I learned to cope with it after being there for a while. From the airport to the campus was a 40-minute ride by taxi, on my way to campus, I saw a lot of flowers and other vegetation. Everything seemed to be clean and well organized, just as what I heard from people who had been to Singapore.

Singapore is very westernized and you don't really feel that you are in an Asian country from the first impression. Almost everyone speaks English and you can always find European products everywhere. When I arrived on campus I had to check into the accommodation, which was well organized. I got the transponder and internet cable from a friendly officer who then showed me my room later. Initially, it took me a while to get used to the new environment but after the first 3 weeks I had settled down.

The University and studies/courses

The National University of Singapore is located just outside of the city center, it takes approximately 40-minute to go to the city center by MRT. On the campus, free air-conditioned shuttle bus service is provided for destinations within campus area. It saves time and allows people to avoid sweating too much in this weather.

The Business Faculty is made of two separate buildings. One is rather old and dark, the other one is very fancy and made of glass so that it is very bright and nice inside, it also looks modern.

I took 4 business modules for that semester as it is considered common for an exchange student. The minimum requirement is to take 3 modules and the maximum is 5 modules.

I've included some brief description as stated below,

- Options and futures

This module provides an overview of financial derivatives and how to apply them to business and trade. One Basic finance module is needed as a requirement to enroll for this module. It contains 2 group assignments, 2 tests and 1 presentation as coursework. The lecturer for this module very kind, I had the impression that he really wanted us to understand and absorb every detail of the derivative trade.

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- Corporate Finance

This was the hardest module among the 4 modules in this semester. It has more coursework than the other modules, 4 group tutorial assignments, 1 group case study, 1 presentation and 2 tests were done during the semester. It's important not to miss a class as the pace of this module was fast and the schedule was packed. The lecture has high expectation in the student in terms of contribution.

- Macro and International Economics

This was my favorite module out of the 4 modules I had, it has one lecture class and one tutorial meeting once a week. It gives a brief overview of macroeconomic and international economics. A lot of examples and news were showed during class; it helps the student to understand how to implement the principles into real life economy. 4 tutorial assignments, 1 presentation, 1 midterm test and 1 final exam were conducted for the semester.

- Management and Organization

In this module, we were taught how to organize and manage in a business environment. It was interesting and very helpful. Lecturer was a kind and confident lady who put in a lot of effort in preparing every lecture and tutorial. This module contains a 15 pages report, a presentation, a final essay and exercise pool online as assignments.

Cost of living

The living expenses are highly depending on the individual. It's cheap to just live on campus, stay in the dormitory, dine in the subsidized canteen and make use of the facilities but to have a life out of campus requires money. Singapore is one of the most expensive countries in the world, minimal rental is around 500€ to stay in accommodation outside of campus, the price is more or less the same to dine in a restaurant, but the price of grocery is slightly higher as most of the goods are imported. However, Singapore's public transport system is cheap and advanced; one can basically go to any corner of Singapore by public transport.

Here are the average expenses for a student per month:

Housing: 350 euro

Food: 300-400 euro

Public transport: 30-50 euro

Travelling

As Singapore is located in the central of South East Asia, there are many chances for students to travel before or after the semester; some of the exchange student made use of the 2 weeks holiday to travel during the semester. One was the week before the midterms, it's called the "recess week", and another week was the "reading week" at the end of the semester before the finals. Some students also travelled on weekends or public holidays. As mentioned, Singapore is located in the center of South East Asia, to travel to the neighbor countries takes only a little time, it's worth doing a short trip to countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand.