

# Singapore Management University

2019-2020

<b>PREPARATION</b>
exchange application process
It was very clear what information was needed
counselling & support at Utrecht University
My study advisors were really supporting with all my questions, even over email they responded very quickly
academic preparation
There was not really any specific academic preparation needed
language preparation
None since my bachelor is in English
finances
I had to save a lot of money beforehand, since Singapore is very expensive

<b>STUDY ABROAD PERIOD</b>
study programme (content and organisational issues)
The courses I followed were very interesting and more based upon real-life, which was very nice. For the courses we needed to conduct interviews with managers at companies, and I even wrote a business report for an existing company. This made the courses a little more practical than theoretical, which was a nice change for once. SMU works with a Bidding System, of which you need to be aware. Because of this system, I was not able to follow four courses, which I initially wanted. A lot of other exchange students I met had the same problem. It might be useful to look into the bidding statistics of the previous years of the courses you want to follow, to place a good bet.
academic quality of education activities
Good
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
This was also good, they sent emails before departing with clear instructions of what you needed to prepare beforehand and also during the exchange they were very informative over email. However, after my exchange period I quickly lost access to my email account while I still needed to receive some documents. The help of the International Office and professors was not very good with this problem.
transfer of credits
I have not yet received any transfer of credits, but they stated that they will send this in Februari

<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>
welcome & orientation programme
Was nice, SMU had a lot of information they shared on the first day
accommodation

Very little accomodation was given through SMU so I used an agency, which was a very nice place but very expensive
leisure & culture
You can easily take trips to the rest of Asia from Singapore, which was very nice. Also, the culture of Singapore is nice as they really love shopping and eating. You have food courts on almost every corner, serving really delicious food
suggestions/tips
Try to live as close to the university as possible, since this will save a lot of travel time every time you go to uni and it is close in the city center

<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes, the city is easy to adjust to for the time you are studying abroad and the university is good
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Do not use Singapore Housing Company as an agency as they keep adding costs that have to be paid, making you have to pay even more than they already asked.

<b>PREPARATION</b>
exchange application process
The application process itself is easy and straightforward. In fact, only basic documents (passport, transcripts, etc) are required. It is very important to read carefully all the information provided regularly by email and to make sure to complete all the tasks within the deadlines. The only concern I have is that t may take a bit of time before receiving the official confirmation from SMU and the relative Acceptance Letter.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Utrecht University has been very helpful in the first stages of my application process. First of all, the meetings organized have been very useful, because I had the opportunity to speak with students who went on exchange in Singapore before me. They shared with me their experiences and clarified some doubts I had. Moreover, the members of the staff of the International Exchange Office have always been available and open to answer all my questions, both by email and telephone. For instance, when I needed some documents urgently, they provided them to me within a small amount of time.
academic preparation
I had to choose 4 courses fitting my study programme; so, I first made a preliminary study plan which was approved by UU. However, getting the courses at SMU is relatively hard, because it is based on a bidding system. Because of it, my preliminary plan had to be completely changed. Exchange students are indeed allocated 100 SG\$ and they have to split them into the classes they want to take. Moreover, some courses have pre-requisites: in this case, you have to email individually the teacher with your transcripts.
language preparation
As my Bachelor degree is in English, I did not have to take any exam. However, I had to provide a document signed by a UU staff member to certify it.
finances
Life in Singapore is expensive in terms of housing and European (i.e. imported) food. However, it is relatively cheap regarding local food, transportation and leisure. I would recommend you to book your flight as early as

possible.

## STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

### study programme (content and organisational issues)

As my bachelor is in Economics and Business Economics, I chose 2 classes from the School of Economics and 2 classes from the School of Business. While the classes of the School of Business last 3 hours and 15 minutes and take place only once a week, the ones of the School of Economics take place twice a week and have a length of 1 hour and 45 minutes. So, tutorial and lectures are merged.

Usually classes contain around 45 students, who are asked to have a sign with their names. In fact, attendance and class participation is very important at SMU, and teachers usually call students out to answer questions.

A lot of importance is given also to group projects, such as reports, presentations, facilitations and group-homeworks; each course I followed had at least one. Those projects are very useful to exchange ideas with local and international students, as they help to have a better perspective on the world. However, they require a lot of time to spend and sometimes group meetings of different subjects may be overlapping.

### academic quality of education activities

Overall, the quality of the classes I have taken was high and can be compared to the standards of UU. The teachers were coming from different countries and had very good academic backgrounds. Because of this, teachers always try to give more broad insights on the topics explained, mainly focusing on a "real world perspective". The material was deeply analysed in class, where we did a lot of practice by solving exercises.

### counselling & support at receiving university abroad

SMU is very efficient to help exchange students to cope with all kind of problems. In the first weeks, meetings are organized to answer to the most common questions. Subsequently, students can contact staff members via email or by telephone. Moreover, students can show up in the Student Hub office, where local students and proper staff members are available during week days.

In terms of education systems, teachers have always been open to support students and clarify their doubts; this was done both in office hours and in booked appointments.

### transfer of credits

## STUDENT LIFE

### welcome & orientation programme

SMU is really concerned about welcoming exchange students and integrating them into its academic environment. Because of it, the University organises a lot of events in the first weeks of the academic year, in order to help international students to meet each others. The University offers also optional programmes such as the Buddy Programme and the Host Programmes, to help students to get into contact with the Singaporean culture.

### accommodation

I stayed in the Residence provided by SMU. It is called [Dwell@Selegie](#) and it is a big building hosting a lot of exchange students. Despite the building is very simple, it contains all the things you may need (e.g. kitchen, laundry, study room, chilling room, etc). Moreover, it has an optimal location, as it is in the city centre and only 10 minutes walking distance from SMU. I was sharing the room with other 2 girls and I was paying about 500€/month.

### leisure & culture

There are a lot of outdoor activities organized by the clubs of SMU, which are managed by students. Those are usually free of charge and take place in the surroundings of the university.

Beside the events organised by the University itself, there are plenty of events organized in Singapore. In fact, every day of the week there is something to do, for all the tastes. It could be an open door concert, an exhibition in a museum, a sport tournament or a cultural/religious celebration...
suggestions/tips
Travel as much as you can! After staying in Singapore for the first weeks to discover the city itself, it is very nice to discover the nearby countries. Taking the plane or the bus to reach them is in fact very fast and cheap. Besides weekend trips, I would suggest you to plan a "big trip" in the Recess week, which takes place after the Midterms.

<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would definitely recommend both Singapore and SMU as destination for an exchange. In fact, it has been very important for me to get in touch with all the cultures that are living together in Singapore. Moreover, working with so many international students and experiencing a different teaching system has been useful from an academic perspective. It is also important to mention that Singapore is very safe, well organized and the majority of people speak English.
do you have any additional advice or comments?

## 2018-2019

<b>PREPARATION</b>
exchange application process
After I was selected for the Singapore Management University (SMU) by the University of Utrecht, the application process at SMU begun. Their application process is very clear, and the steps you have to follow are well described. They also update you regularly about the process.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Apart from the study abroad presentation I did not need any counselling for UU
academic preparation
Apart from choosing courses, I did not need to prepare myself academically. The process of choosing courses in Singapore is quite timeconsuming; you have to bid on courses with e-dollars, and only the highest bidders can follow the course. This means that you cannot just sign up and follow all the courses that you want to do.
language preparation
Because Economics & Business Economics is a fully English taught program, there is no need for any language preparation
finances
Before I signed up for the Singapore Management University, I knew that Singapore is very expensive. I took this into consideration when making my financial plan. The prices for rent are way higher than in Utrecht; I shared a condo with 6 persons and I shared a room with one other person and I still paid double of what I pay in Utrecht.

## STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I went on exchange the first semester of my third year. Because I already follow a minor, and I did my exchange on top of my bachelor I did not have to follow third year courses. Instead of that I choose some finance courses to expand my finance knowledge.

academic quality of education activities

The quality of education was comparable to the quality in Utrecht, but the way of teaching was different. In Singapore we learned more about how to apply theory in practice. For almost every course that I followed, I had to prepare professional pitches etc.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Counselling & support at the university in Singapore was great. Professors responded fast, and there were special helpdesks. There is a medical centre where you can go if you have health problems and also a swimmingpool, gym, IT helpdesk and two libraries.

transfer of credits

For each course that you take in Singapore you get 7,5 ECTS. Grades will take around three months to arrive in Utrecht.

## STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

One week before classes started we had an introduction week, where several activities were organized. There was, for example, a tour through Singapore and an activities fair. Some of the activities are compulsory and others weren't. These activities were very helpful for getting to know your fellow students.

accommodation

It was not very hard to arrange accommodation. All the exchange students that go to SMU were put in a Facebook group, through which you can come into contact with fellow students and arrange accommodation with a studenthousing agency. Accommodation was very expensive; I paid around 660 euro for a shared room in a shared condo.

leisure & culture

Singapore is a very multicultural country with mostly Chinese, Malay and Indian inhabitants. This makes Singapore, in my opinion, a very interesting city. Because so many nationalities live in one country, there is great food from everyone from the world.

Going out in Singapore is very expensive. For most of the clubs you pay high entrance fees, and drinks are expensive too. Only on Wednesdays (Ladiesnight), ladies get some free drinks or free entrance.

suggestions/tips

Save enough money! Living in Singapore is expensive as well as leisure activities.

## CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would definitely recommend SMU as your exchange destination. The university is very well organized and courses are well thought. On top of that Singapore is a very pleasant city to live in since it is a really modern city. On top of that it is also quite a western city for an Asian city. Apart from that, you can travel very easily from Singapore to surrounding countries.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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## 2017-2018

<b>preparation</b>
exchange/placement application process
The exchange process was quite time-consuming. We had to submit a top 3 of destinations which had our preference. After that, we had to submit a financial plan, a study plan and a motivation letter why the university should choose you. When I got selected for SMU, which was my second choice, I had to apply for the university there. The application for SMU was very straightforward and clear. The communication with SMU was very easy and everything was handled correctly.
counselling/support at home university
The support from my home university was very helpful. I made an appointment at the international office and everything was explained to me very clearly. They also send me many reminders for important dates for my application.
academic preparation
For academic preparation, I only had to register myself for courses which fitted into my bachelor programme. Registration for courses in Singapore is highly competitive. They have a bidding system where everyone gets 100 credits to divide over the courses you want. So you have to divide your credits wisely to get all the preferred courses.
language preparation
The spoken language at SMU is English. As we are following an international programme in English as well, there were no requirements for us to fulfil.  However, if you are following a non-English speaking programme, you have to do a TOEFL test in advance to show your English is at an adequate level.
finances
As we had to write a financial plan during our application, I knew Singapore would be a really expensive place to live. As I was living in a condo with 4 other international students, we still paid like twice the rent of what I pay in Utrecht. Furthermore, the overall standard of living is a lot more expensive than we are used to here.
<b>study/placement abroad period</b>
study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)
I was going on exchange in my first semester of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> year. Therefore, I had to follow level 3 courses to fulfil the requirement. In the beginning, it was pretty hard to distinguish which courses are level 3 courses and which are not. With some help from the student advisor here in Utrecht, I found 4 level courses, which is actually

more than necessary.
academic quality of education/placement activities
The level of education was quite comparable to the level of education here. However, the courses were far more related to real world problems. We did not discuss a lot of theory, but mainly focused on how we can use the theory to solve those real world problems.
counselling/support at host institution/organisation
It was very easy to contact the university. If you would e-mail one of the profs, you would get a response the same day. The university had all facilities present at the universities itself e.g. medical clinic, swimming pool, library, sport centre.
transfer of credits
For each course you will get 7.5 ECTS. I followed 4 courses to get my 30 ECTS for one semester. It will take 3 months before the grades are send to UU.
<b>student life</b>
welcome/orientation programme
SMU recommended that you would arrive 2 weeks before the start of the semester so you had enough time to discover Singapore for a bit. One week before the semester, we had a mandatory introduction week to get to know your fellow students. This was very helpful and many people I met there were my friends during the semester.
accommodation
Accommodation is very expensive compared to the Netherlands. I was staying in a condo with 4 other international students. The rent was around 600 euros.
leisure/culture
There is not a lot of cultural highlights as you would expect in Asia. Most of the city is very modern and very futuristic.  Going out in Singapore is very expensive, which makes it a bit unattractive to go out every week. However, food is quite cheap if you go to food centres where you can get a meal for around 2 euros.
suggestions/tips
<b>conclusions</b>
would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain
Yes, I would really recommend SMU as your exchange destination. Singapore is a very modern city which makes you adjust very quickly. It is the perfect location to travel around and make trips to several countries in Asia.

Furthermore, the university was very well-organized. All the facilities were there and the quality of education was present.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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<b>preparation</b>
exchange/placement application process
It is not as hard as it may look like. Indeed, you have a lot of documents to send, but it is not hard. It is rather challenging.
counselling/support at home university
UU was friendly and helpful at any request i had regarding any issues.
academic preparation
The knowledge and skills you gain in the 1st and 2nd years are more than enough to begin your exchange.
language preparation
English is widely spoken in Singapore
finances
I would not say Singapore is extremely expensive as an exchange destination. The only two things are exceptionally expensive — housing and alcohol (and tobacco). The rest is super cheap. You can easily get full for a whole day with 7 euro meal. Therefore it makes all the expenses more/less the same as you would stay in Utrecht.
<b>study/placement abroad period</b>
study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)
I enjoyed the wide range of classes to pick. Make sure you pick the right level course for your USE record. Also, if you're like paper work more, you can pick classes with no exams at all! (hint, that would make more time for you to travel)

academic quality of education/placement activities

It is exceptionally high. The quality is shown by every prof. (Singaporeans call tutors «prof»).

counselling/support at host institution/organisation

Organisation is focused on making everyone happy and comfortable

transfer of credits

### student life

welcome/orientation programme

It was so much fun! We had tours all around Singapore, tried local dishes and studied a bit of Singlish

accommodation

It is a hard one. Expect to pay 700-800 euros a month for a shared apartment. I would advise to check Singapore Housing student agency.

leisure/culture

It is amazing. You have Kuala Lumpur 50mins flying time away from you. You have Sentosa. You have different cultural hoods.

suggestions/tips

Save money for travels. It is a must! We have visited 10+ countries and it is something that you would remember.

### conclusions

would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain

If you want to go to cosmopolitan city of Asia and ready to take any kind of challenges - it is an option for you.

do you have any additional advice or comments?