



UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info available at the IO.
faculty/college	Geosciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Human Geography and Spatial Planning

destination city & country	Singapore
name university abroad	National University of Singapore
start date	08 / 08 / 2022
end date	04 / 12 / 2022

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The exchange application process at Utrecht University went smoothly. I wrote my motivation letter and filled in the other required documents and like 1-2 months later I got an email saying that I got appointed to my first choice. This was all very clear and fast.

The application process at NUS was a bit more difficult. They required a lot of documents because Singapore is a very strict country and they are very strict with who they grant access. This could be quite frustrating at some points. I do think this will be easier in the future because it looks like the Covid restrictions are gone.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

This was well organized. I had some questions about which university should be my first pick and how that could affect the odds of my other picks, but a conversation with my exchange coordinator took away all these doubts. UU would also keep you posted on different deadlines via email which was pretty useful because it can become a bit much at some point.

academic preparation

Not particularly, I did my exchange in the 4th year of my Bachelor's and all learned academic skills were useful at NUS. I do not think you would have to prepare anything in particular, unless a specific module really requires you to do so.

language preparation

None, everyone speaks perfect English in Singapore, except maybe the elderly. If you have followed classes where you are supposed to communicate and write in English, you should be fine. Also, my English improved substantially over time, but doing everything in English certainly takes some time getting used to.

finances

Singapore is expensive. I had quite a bit of money saved up so I did not always ended up doing things the cheap way. I went on trips abroad often and regularly had drinks downtown. Partying, drinking and restaurants are quite expensive. But it depends on you, the hawker markets are cheap and the food is good as well, and if you do not drink alcohol you will be a lot cheaper. I was lucky enough to get accommodation on campus which is way cheaper than staying elsewhere. Public transport is pretty cheap too. Overall you can pretty much chose how expensive it is going to be, but most things that are fun in Singapore are expensive.



STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The assignment of modules was pretty hectic. First of all, there is a really long list of available modules per semester, you get to pick between hundreds of modules. Secondly, it is almost impossible to get all of your desired modules. Initially I only got one out of five (5 modules at NUS is equal to 30ECTS at UU), after the second round I got one more. So you will have to be very flexible.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality is pretty high, the professors are all well informed but also open to different views. It took me some time getting used to following five different modules at the same time for a longer period. I prefer the half semesters in Utrecht where you only focus on two modules at the same time. The grading with the bell curve is also different than what I was used to, in reality it meant that it was difficult getting a really high grade but it was also difficult to receive a really low grade.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The support at NUS was really good. I could email or text a lot of people about different questions and they were soon to reply.

transfer of credits

This took a bit of emailing back and forth but I think it is done now.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was no orientation programme for exchangers, only for freshman. I think this still was because of Covid. However, this was no big problem. Exchangers themselves organized activities and in the first few weeks everyone is open to meet new people. I do recommend arriving in Singapore a week before the classes start so you will have a lot of time to meet new people. Everyone was really active in this week and it is also really nice to get familiar with the city.

accommodation

The accommodation process was stressful, NUS informed me only one week before my departure that I got on campus accommodation. This meant that I already booked a hostel for my first two weeks, which I unfortunately was unable to cancel. I would say that on campus accommodation is a must have because it is way cheaper and easier than staying elsewhere. NUS was at the moment of my stay rebuilding a big part of campus so I hope they will be able to guarantee more exchangers of housing in the future.

leisure & culture

There are a lot of possibilities to join sport teams or interest groups at NUS, which I really recommend doing. You get to know the local students more and it is really fun to do. There are also always other people, mostly exchangers, down to travel outside of Singapore. This was really fun and it also made the whole exchange feel quite surreal sometimes. You do not often get the chance to Malaysia for a weekend.

suggestions/tips

Wednesday night is the student night in Singapore so on this night it is the most fun to go out. Also, if you are still waiting for on campus accommodation, book something else with an option to cancel. I did not do this and this costed me a lot of money.

CONCLUSIONS



would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes I would definitely recommend NUS as an exchange destination. It is a really good university and Singapore is also a unique place to stay. I had a lot of fun here and made a lot of friends, and all this while studying. Singapore is strict and some rules do not really make sense but you get used to it. People do things differently in other parts of the world and this is also what makes an exchange so valuable.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
The heat in combination with the humidity can be a bit much for some people. It is a not a nice heat and it takes some time getting used too. If you know from yourself that you can not really handle hot weather this might not be the destination for you.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	University College Roosevelt
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Liberal Arts & Sciences

destination city & country	Singapore, Singapore
name university abroad	National University of Singapore (NUS)
start date	10 / 01 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	06 / 05 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

I thought it was a very long process. Coming from UCR my first deadline for applying to do an exchange in my fourth semester was already in December at the end of my first semester. You were required to already have an entire study plan while you had only been a university student for 4 months at that point. Writing this plan was nice for me as it forced me to think about my career at UCR already, however, it was really stressful to come up with as I had no idea yet what I wanted to focus on exactly. Many of the things I thought I would do then have changed in due course of my time at UCR. I was happy, however, that I received the help that I needed, when I needed it, from my tutor, the exchange coordinator at UCR, and the exchange coordinator from Utrecht University. Because I had multiple people to go to with my questions, I was almost guaranteed an answer within a relative short period of time.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I personally did not need much counselling or support from either UCR or UU. It was, however, clear who I needed to contact when I did have a question.

academic preparation

To go on exchange I was required to have a GPA of a 3.0 minimum. Before going on exchange it was thus important for me to maintain my GPA of above a 3.0. Additionally, there were further requirements I needed to fulfil set up by UCR. Other specific requirements from UU beside having a certain grade average I do not know.

language preparation

Singapore is an English (Singlish) speaking country. Therefore, the education is also in English. As UCR is also an English-speaking university, and having been raised bilingual, I did not need to prepare anything proving my proficiency. I am unsure about the language requirements if you come from a Dutch-speaking program.

finances

I would recommend saving up, as Singapore is a rather expensive country. Personally, I was fortunate enough to be able to make arrangements with my parents in how to finance the exchange. If you do not have this option, I'd say you need around €4-6k to live comfortably, go on trips, and enjoy the nightlife of Singapore during the semester. This is next to all the study costs, your flights, etc. For me the situation a little different however, as I studied in Singapore during all their covid restrictions.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)



Originally, I was required to follow 5 courses in order to obtain the right amount of credits. Because I had taken extra credits, however, I was allowed to only follow 4 courses during my time at NUS. I very much enjoyed all my courses, unfortunately though, all of them were online. This made coming in contact with the local students very difficult. Apart from this, it was very interesting to be able to follow courses about topics in the context of Asia as this would never be possible at home.
academic quality of education activities
Some of my courses were better than others, as is the case anywhere. In general, however, I would say that the academic quality was good. For my general Asian history course we were required to visit museums and be actively engaged with the materials through various assignments. This course has arguably taught me the most because of its interactive way of teaching.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
there might have been resources to go to if you needed counselling or support, but personally I did not need it and also was not aware where I would be able to receive this type of help. Many of my fellow exchange students complained about the lack of counselling or support when for example the Russian – Ukraine war started, or when other accidents happened on campus.
transfer of credits
I have not yet seen my grades transferred, but I am in contact with the Board of Examiners about the process of arranging the credit transfer.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
I was fortunate enough to be able to stay on campus. The campus location I was placed I (RVRC) was very social and organised a lot of events for both all students and only the exchange students. There was no welcome and orientation program organised by NUS, but RVRC did organise this.
accommodation
As mentioned, I was able to stay on campus in RVRC. This is a residential college. You had your own bedroom in a building block and shared a bathroom, a pantry, and a common lounge area. Additionally, RVRC had a meal plan. This meant that you could get breakfast Monday to Saturday and could get dinner Sunday to Friday.
leisure & culture
I personally did not really experience a ‘culture shock’ while being in Singapore. It is a very westernized city, although it has influences from Malaysia, India, and China in its society. Leisure wise, you will most likely spend most your time with other exchange students. These are namely the people that are looking to make new friends, locals are more difficult to connect with. For me, the first few months (ad especially the first few weeks) there were people texting in group chats almost every day asking people to join them doing something. Coming from UCR, I am used to a high workload. At NUS this workload was much lower, meaning I had a lot of free time. You can explore Singapore, go to the beach, or travel to neighbouring countries.
suggestions/tips
Do not stress too much. Going to Asia to study I was convinced the pressure and workload would be enormous. This was certainly not the case. Arrive before the semester starts. This way you have the time to already meet new people, explore the campus, and explore the city before classes start. Explore Singapore before you decide to travel abroad. Singapore has a lot to offer and spending a lot of time there makes it feel like a home rather than a city you are temporarily visiting. However, Singapore is very conveniently located to travel. If you can travel during or after, I highly recommend you do.



Do not be afraid to just text people. Every exchange student is looking to make new friends, and most people will tag along if you suggest something in a group chat.

CONCLUSIONS

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

100%. I certainly fell in love with Singapore and will definitely go back. Overall the people are friendly, the city is stunning, and the university campus is really nice.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

My time in Singapore, and the months traveling after, have been the best months of my life. I have made friends from many different countries and gained experiences I would not have if I would have stayed home.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Geosciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Global Sustainability Science

destination city & country	Singapore, Singapore
name university abroad	National University of Singapore
start date	03 / 01 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	09 / 06 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

This was by far the most stressful and confusing part of the exchange. In my year it was especially difficult because of all the COVID-19 entry restrictions. So, this might be different in the coming years.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Support from UU was decent, however sometimes it takes a while to receive an answer due to the large number of questions being asked. So, make sure to ask your questions well in advance to avoid receiving your answer too late.

academic preparation

This was not really necessary, as I only took free electives.

language preparation

This was not necessary, as the lingua franca in Singapore is English.

finances

I was able to live on a budget similar to what I spend in Utrecht. So, I did not need to acquire any additional finances. Also, be aware that you are able to receive a monthly compensation for your OV student subscription.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The study programme was well organized. The classes were interesting and it is clear what is expected from you.

academic quality of education activities

All classes I took were of high academic quality. The professors seemed to be genuinely interested in what they are studying and some of them are world leaders in their area of study.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I did not use this much but when I needed to, I always received a response quickly.

transfer of credits

I am currently still in the process of doing this, so I cannot comment much on this. However, I believe that usually 5 modules (4 credits each) at NUS translate to 30 ECTS at UU.



STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was no welcome programme in my year due to covid.

accommodation

Due to covid, there was less housing available, so I had to find off campus housing. At first, this seemed intimidating but, in the end, I was actually glad I got to stay off campus, as this allowed me to explore the city more.

leisure & culture

In terms of leisure and culture Singapore has so much to offer. It has an amazing variety of different cultural foods and neighbourhoods and a blend of architectural styles ranging from old peranakan shophouses to the modern marina bay sands. On top of that, there are always different events going on and it has amazing nightlife.

suggestions/tips

Try to explore (and eat) around Singapore as much as possible! It has so much more to offer than most people think. Once you are done doing that, definitely make sure to visit some of the neighbouring countries.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Definitely. It is a really great opportunity to experience what it is like studying at one of the world's top universities. At the same time, Singapore and the surrounding countries have a lot to offer aside from academics.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Try to hang out with as many different people as possible. Not just those from your own country. Making friends from all over the world as well as local friends is what makes exchange great.



faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Artificial Intelligence

destination city & country	Singapore, Singapore
how did you travel to and from your destination?	Airplane
name university abroad	National University Singapore
start date	6/1/2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	15/5/2020 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	I don't exactly remember everything about the application process since it seems like a long time ago. I remember signing up for 3 different universities, and I was allowed to continue the application for my first pick. I had to write a motivation letter about why I wanted to go abroad and why to this University. I feel like the UU did most of the work and sent all my details and the letter to the university I applied to when it was time. I remember only hearing quite a short time before the start of the exchange that I was officially accepted into the exchange program at NUS. I then had a short time to apply for a student visa, to choose which courses I would follow and to sort out my housing in Singapore.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	UU organized gatherings for students that were going to the same destinations. Multiple people that already had been on exchange at this destination were invited to answer any questions. For me this was very useful, it made me think about what I could expect going abroad to this country, academically, culturally, financially and just the exchange experience in general.
academic preparation	The only academic preparation I really had to do was research on what courses I would like to take in Singapore and how that would fit in my Bachelor study plan.
language preparation	I didn't have to do any language preparation since everyone speaks English in Singapore.
finances	There were a few financial things I had to take care of beforehand: several fees for immigration matters and several fees for staying on campus. I remember that there were several small fees for immigration matters that in total added up to under €200. The housing rent for the whole semester had to be paid at once, this was a large amount of money, around €2000. What was interesting is that for both housing and immigration I had to pay "processing fees".

(interrupted) STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
welcome & orientation programme
There were many orientation activities for exchangers. They were organised by the university but there were also some groups that did not belong to the university that organised activities for exchangers and young



people that were new in Singapore. There is also a special group at the university that organizes a lot of exchanger activities in the first month.

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The academic year at NUS did not align with the academic year at UU. I departed to Singapore midway in term 2, and the semester abroad officially ended when term 4 already started. If you are not willing to have overlap between the exchange and the courses at UU, it would mean you would miss 2 terms at UU to go on an exchange to NUS in spring.

There were many difficulties with choosing courses at NUS. Even though we applied for certain courses beforehand during the exchange application process, this did not ensure we would be accepted in these courses. In some courses there were only a several spots reserved for exchange students, and in some even none because they were widely sought after by local students. Therefore I would not advise taking courses that are your bachelor core courses at NUS, since there is no guarantee you will be able to take these. Applying for courses was a very hectic process, there were a few application rounds in the first few weeks which was very confusing to me since all the courses had already started.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality to me was similar to the quality at UU, but the pace was much slower since courses take one semester (several months) instead of one term. I feel like at NUS there are many more group activities in class than at UU. Because of COVID19 there were many uncertainties, such as whether exams would still take place or not and in what form.

transfer of credits

Somewhat every course at NUS has a worth of 4 credits, and you can take up to 5 courses per semester. 1 NUS credit equals 1.5 credits at UU. This means in one semester you can get up to 30 credits.

CORONAVIRUS CONSEQUENCES

support guidance of host university

The host university sent us a lot of emails (almost daily) with updates on the situation which I found very useful. Other than that teachers were very understanding when it came to exchangers and time differences when taking exams or classes.

support guidance of home university

I did not really have any guidance of UU.

online offer and quality of digital courses

The quality of courses at NUS was quite good. Everything moved online and the teachers tried their best to interact with the students and help them as much as possible.

suggestions/tips on digital exchange

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CONCLUSIONS

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

I recommend this university and destination because the academic culture is quite different from the culture at UU. I feel like the students at NUS are much more devoted to their studies and there is a lot of pressure to attain good grades, which causes a quite competitive atmosphere. In my opinion this is not the case at UU at all and I find it interesting to have experienced this difference. With Singapore being somewhat in the middle of South East Asia, there is many opportunity to travel around in Asia if you are interested in traveling.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Faculty of Geosciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Science and Innovation management

destination city & country	Singapore, Singapore
name university abroad	National University of Singapore
start date	02 / 08 / 2018
end date	07 / 12 / 2018

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process was really clear and easy. All the needed information can be found on the UU website and the given presentation are useful to attend.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

For unclear subjects or question I had contact with the exchange coordinator, mainly via email. I experienced no problems with this and always got the answer which I needed.

academic preparation

I didn't need to do any academic preparation.

language preparation

For my exchange period in Singapore I didn't need to do a proficiency English test. So there was no need for me to do language preparation.

finances

Singapore is an expensive country, so it is important to have enough money for exchange. While on abroad you still get DUO and you can request for an OV reimbursement, which you get also every month (about €93). Also, I saved around €5.000 to take with me. You can also apply for a scholarship, in which you get money for your period abroad. But for this you need a minimum overall grade of 7.5 or higher. Personally, I don't have this, so I didn't get a scholar ship. But with the saved money and the monthly money from the government, I had enough money to spend.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I followed four courses at the university of Singapore, these courses were Thinking like an Economist, Principles of Economics, Understanding the Changing Global Economic Landscape and Southeast Asia: A changing region. These courses were all level 1. Every course had one lecture (2 hours) per week and the first two courses had a weekly tutorial (1 hour) and the other two had a tutorial every 2 weeks (2hour). The content of the courses and the way it is presented is similar to those of the courses at the University Utrecht. None of the courses required a book, for every week the content to learn were articles and the lecture slides. Attendance at the lectures and the tutorials is of great importance, because it is part of the final grade (about 25%). Also, a grade is given for the participation in the tutorials and is part of the final grade (about 20%).

academic quality of education activities



The academic quality of the courses at the university of Singapore are of high quality. It is kind of similar to the quality of the courses at the UU. The only difference is that the workload of the level 1 courses is more than the level 1 courses at the UU.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
When have struggles or something else with a course you can attend the weekly open office hours of the lecturers. They will give you assistance and help you with your problems. Personally, I didn't need to attend these and therefore I can't say if it is really useful. Furthermore, the meetings in the first week for the exchange students to give information about all the stuff at NUS where well organized and give a lot of useful information.
transfer of credits
Not yet done.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
Before the lectures start at the University there are several activities in with you can attend. I didn't attend any of these activities because there where not relevant for me.
accommodation
The university of Singapore provides accommodation possibilities at the campus. To apply for this, you have to log in at a portal at (04:00 Dutch time) to give your preferences, it is important to log in at that time and not the next day, because otherwise there is a great possibly that you cannot chose your preference anymore or that there is no place for accommodation anymore. When done this, a couple of weeks later you will receive a message in which the final outcome is mentioned. Personally, I was placed in Tembusu College but I rejected this offer. This because a friend of mine who was going to SMU (Singapore Management University) found an apartment in the city. So, I chose to live in the city centre and not at the university campus. The costs of living in the city is more than living on campus, but not that much more. I think it was around €600 for the whole period (4 months) more. For me this was the best option and I didn't regret making this choice. But if you don't have this option, then I would recommend staying at university town at the campus. University town is the centre of the campus and mostly all students live here, also all the activities and several bars and place to eat are here. At PGP (Prince George Park) also live a lot of students, but this is about 10/15 min from university town. It takes about 45 minutes to travel from campus to the city centre.
leisure & culture
<p>Singapore is a big, modern city so there are a lot of things you can do there. From fancy rooftop bars to student bars where the prices for beer are the same as the price of the hour when you drink it. In the city there are several nice food courts in which you can buy a good and tasty meal for only 6 Singapore dollars. Furthermore, Singapore has everything what you want in a big city. Also, the position of Singapore is ideal for traveling, you can go to every country in Southeast Asia easily and for a cheap price.</p> <p>The most people living in Singapore are from China or India, but there also live a lot of Western people. Singapore is not the same as other cities in Southeast Asia and is really westernized. It is really easy to adopt to the locals and get in touch with them. Especially in the lectures where they are really interested in you where you from etc.</p>
suggestions/tips
If you want to live in the city centre, join the Facebook groups for all the exchange students (NTU/NUS/SMU) early. There you can get in touch with people to find a home.



CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend this university, because it is one of the top universities in the world. You can see this in the way the courses are given and how everything is arranged. Also, the destination is perfect if you want to live in a modern and clean city with all the facilities you want, but also want to see and travel in Asia. For me personally this was the perfect combination.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

X



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Faculty of Science (Faculteit Bètawetenschappen)
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Information Science (Informatiekunde)
destination city & country	Singapore, Singapore
name university abroad	National University of Singapore
start date	2 / 8 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	9 / 12 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The application process is not too difficult as long as you have all the required documents ready. There are a lot of steps in the application process and it is important to keep track of all the deadlines so that you don't miss them. There are clear instructions provided, so as long as you follow the steps this shouldn't be a problem.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
The International Office was always very helpful in answering questions. They also organised a pre-departure meeting where we got to ask all our questions and meet other students going to the same destination. During the meeting, there was also a student present who already went to Singapore on exchange. She shared her experiences of going abroad and gave us the opportunity to ask questions. Make sure you exchange contact details with other students so that you can create a chat group for exchanging important information.
academic preparation
I did not need any academic preparation.
language preparation
I did not need any language preparation because all my courses were taught in English. Still, I recommend learning a bit of 'Singlish' in advance as it can sometimes be quite hard to understand Singaporeans.
finances
I mostly financed my stay abroad with a loan from DUO. Besides that, I received a small compensation from DUO for public transport. Make sure you have enough money at hand as Singapore can be quite expensive at times! I highly recommend opening a bank account as soon as you get the chance. Opening an account is a bit of a hassle, but it is worth it. Paying with your debit card in shops and being able to quickly and easily transfer money to your friends using the PayLah! app makes life a lot easier.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
NUS has a wide range of modules available that you can follow. You will have to take a minimum of 3 and maximum of 5 modules in one semester. During your application, you are required to select 10 modules. You will be assigned a minimum of 3 modules, but may not get the modules you prefer. I got 3 modules assigned, but wanted to take 5. Taking 5 modules at NUS equals 30 ECTS. Fortunately, at the beginning of the semester there is an add/drop period during which you can still add extra modules or drop modules that you do not wish to take. What is different at NUS is that you have to create your own timetable. You are responsible for creating a timetable without clashes. It is quite a stressful challenge to create a fitting timetable, especially if you want to structure it in such a way that you can also travel during weekdays. A good tip is to use the website



www.nusmods.com for creating your timetable. The website is an unofficial timetable planner that allows you to plan your lectures and tutorials/labs. Unfortunately, exchange students often have to register for tutorials manually by going to the faculty office. This is not the case for every faculty, so I recommend you to check with your faculty at NUS. Tutorial slots are served on a first come, first served basis, so make sure you are on time.

academic quality of education activities

The workload at NUS is higher than in Utrecht and they expect more from students. You are expected to actively participate and pay attention during lectures and tutorials/labs, and so everyone does. Students don't play games or scroll through their social media feed during lectures like you often see in Utrecht. At NUS, everyone is paying attention. Partially, that is because you are often graded for your class participation. Every time you speak up during a lecture or tutorial, a TA will write down your name. You are then graded for your contributions. Singaporeans are generally passive students who don't speak up when they are asked to, but with this system of graded class participation in place, it is not uncommon for almost everyone to raise their hand to make a contribution. The only reason students actually speak up is that they want a good grade for their class participation. This aim for high grades is a trend that can be seen in almost all local students. They often spend a lot of their time studying and really put in a lot of effort into group projects. NUS is very focused on reflection and for every assignment you are required to write peer-reviews about your teammates. Students often mentioned being scared of the bell-curve. As an exchange student, this is not something to worry about. I passed all 5 exams with good grades, so it's not as bad as it sounds. It is really hard to fail a module in NUS, unless you really don't do anything. As long as you put in enough effort, you'll be fine. And studying doesn't necessarily have to be a chore. It can be quite interesting to learn about a topic that interests you. I recommend taking the time and effort to have a chat with your teachers. Teachers at NUS are well-respected and take their job seriously. They are often happy to get to know students on a more personal level and it can be really interesting to know more about a teacher's background and interests.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

There are a lot of people you can contact if you need counselling and support, but I did not need this.

transfer of credits

Transfer of credits is not yet arranged.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

During my semester at NUS I stayed in Tembusu College, a Residential College. They organised a Welcome Week to get to know the other students staying there. Besides that, NUS Peer Advising also offers activities during the first week, like a shopping trip, a campus tour and a trip to the major hotspots in the country. You will anyhow meet a lot of students from all over the world so I wouldn't worry too much about making friends.

accommodation

I highly recommend staying on campus as this is cheaper and more convenient. To get anywhere on campus, you can take the free NUS bus. There isn't a lot of difference between the different accommodations UTown has to offer. Most exchange students stay in UTown Residence. This is the newest and most modern accommodation in UTown, which is why many exchange students apply for it. In Residential Colleges, the majority consists of local students. They follow the University Town College Programme, a special programme focused on living and learning together. They are enrolled in a special curriculum, but these modules are not open to exchange students. Residential Colleges have a certain ethos or theme to them and they carefully select students who will fit the culture. It might just happen that you'll find yourself not quite fitting into an RC, which is sometimes the case with exchange students. All students staying in a Residential College have to subscribe to a mandatory meal plan. The meal plan is quite expensive and the food isn't exactly very good



either. You have the freedom to eat anywhere you want, but not using your meal credits is essentially throwing away your money. If you want more flexibility, I would not recommend staying in a residential college as there are plenty of places in UTown where you can get good food. Other accommodations, such as UTown Residence do not have a meal plan and therefore give you more flexibility.

leisure & culture

Singapore is a melting pot of different cultures. The majority consists of Chinese, but there are many Malays and Indians. The country is very focused on making sure that the people of all these different cultures live harmoniously together. This means that everyone is expected to follow the rules and respect one another. Singapore is a small country but has lots of attractions and places to explore. If you want to travel outside of the country, you can definitely do so during the weekends, recess week and reading week.

suggestions/tips

I recommend you to challenge yourself to not only make your exchange an extended holiday with a bit of studying in between, as most exchangers do, but to explore the local side of life, to try making Singaporean friends and make your semester abroad an intercultural learning experience, both in and outside the classroom.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes! Singapore is a great choice for going on exchange. It is an interesting country that went through a lot of developments in the past 50 years. All these developments made Singapore into the country it is today. This 'city in a garden' is clean, safe and a melting pot of different cultures. Truly Asia, but also very westernised. NUS is a highly respected university with quality education and a conducive learning environment. The university offers a wide range of modules and has a modern campus with all the amenities you could possibly wish for.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Enjoy your time abroad and make the most of it!



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Geosciences
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's x master's
name study programme	Innovation Sciences

destination city & country	Singapore, Singapore
name university abroad	National University of Singapore (NUS)
start date	05 / 08 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	01 / 12 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

I prepared for my choice of university by limiting down all the options. Different culture, Master level, safe, interesting courses, etc. It is quite a time consuming activity, so start on time... The year before, I actually wanted to apply for a study abroad, but didn't do it, because I started too late and had too many options to go, so I couldn't decide.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Overall very friendly and willing to help. We had one meeting before we went to Singapore. In this meeting a girl that went to Singapore the year before talked about her own experience, which was very nice to ask questions and get a feeling of how she experienced it. Furthermore, the counsellor for Asia was very helpful and met up with me a couple of times whenever I had questions.

academic preparation

No real academic preparation was necessary. When I got my modules, I did need to read up for some of them a bit more, because it wasn't my direct field of expertise.

language preparation

I did not have to fulfil another language test or prepare for my stay.

finances

I made a financial plan in the beginning of my stay. Because I had a mealplan with my residence, I did not have to spend more a lot more money on food (except for the times I wanted to eat something else than the mealplan food). And of course take into account that travelling will also take up some money!

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

For me as a Master's student it was a bit more complicated, because I needed master level courses for my programme in the Netherlands. I managed to follow 3 level 4 and 5 courses, which were approved by Utrecht University. However, this really depends on your study direction, as this will not account for all studies.

academic quality of education activities

In terms of quality, it can be very different. The level of the modules was pretty high (not undoable, but good overall). However, the way of grading and feedback was very strange for me. In Utrecht we are used to receive a lot of feedback on assignments and exams. In Singapore, this wasn't as obvious. For most of my modules, I only received a final grade. This means that for one module for example, I did 4 assignments and 1 exam and



only have one final grade. The feedback given was sometimes also very limited. For this particular module we only acquired general feedback for all handed in papers.

Even though the grading and feedback wasn't what I expected from the modules, the content was very interesting and satisfied my expectations.

Furthermore, there is a bell curve in the Singaporean education system, which means that students are very competitive, and sometimes rather not help you as it may decrease their own grade. The students work very hard (and until very late) to complete all assignments and finish on time.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The professors were very friendly and willing to help me. In the beginning, NUS has 2 weeks in which you can try modules (courses) without any consequence. This means you can de-register without failing the module. Herein, I wasn't awarded one of my preferred modules. After the first lecture, I talked to the professor, who was so friendly to walk me to the office to register me for his class anyways.

During the semester, all professors were very friendly to help wherever needed.

transfer of credits

I received an unofficial transcript of the grades for my modules in the end of December. In Singapore, letter grades are used to grade the modules, which means all my grades need to be transferred to the Dutch system. I haven't received my official transcript, nor heard anything from NUS or UU about it, but that will hopefully work out in the upcoming weeks.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

I arrived to Singapore a couple of days before the orientation week, which I found very nice. This opened up the opportunity to see something of the city before the period of lectures/meeting people. I also met up with some exchange students who became good friends of mine in the end. From the moment you could enter your room on campus, there were 2 weeks with orientation activities, which included a tour around campus, registration and welcome parties. In these weeks you meet a lot of new people, which is immediately a nice start for the rest of your semester.

accommodation

NUS provides housing on campus, which I found very convenient! It was nice to meet locals in a very relaxed setting. With three floors of a college (flat), you form a 'house', which consists of an all-girls, -boys and mixed floor. In the house, several house events and games are organised on a weekly or monthly basis, which is the place to meet people.

I stayed in Residential College 4, which is one of the residential colleges in Utown. In the residential colleges, more house events are organised than in for example Utown Residence or Prince George's Park (PGP). We also had a mandatory mealplan, which was obligatory for all residents. However, this also offered the opportunity to meet new people locals as well as exchangers.

leisure & culture

Singapore has a lot to offer! Go have a look around in its various neighbourhoods and explore all diverse cultures that can be found in Singapore and around. Neighbourhoods like Little India, Chinatown, Clarke Quay and the Marina Bay Sands were some of my favourites. Thereby, you can also easily take the boat to one of Singapore's islands, such as Pulau Ubin, which is perfect as a day trip.

Furthermore, prepare for some weekend trips to Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia (if you want). From Singapore, it can be very easy to travel through South East Asia, as you are close to a lot of countries. However, I liked it to also stay in Singapore for some time during the semester to explore the city and country more and more. Therefore, travelling before or after the semester for a longer period of time might be a good solution.



suggestions/tips

Enjoy your time! If possible, don't do too many courses, which makes your time as an exchange student more fun. Talk to locals, their language can be very funny. They are so sweet, cute, always came up to me with food, but were also a bit shy.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes! Definitely! I think Singapore is the ideal destination if you want to experience something else in Asia (little culture shock), but still have the luxury and safety of a western country.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Don't believe people that claim Singapore is expensive. Maybe for Asian standards it is a little bit more pricy and if you want to live luxurious, you pay for it. Therefore, I would recommend eating at hawker centres or food courts and find your own 'cheap spots'. Unfortunately, beer and alcohol in general is expensive and also forbidden on campus. So expect to spend some money on drinks. (Tip for the ladies: Wednesdays is ladies night in Singapore, which means free entrance and free drinks for girls!!)

Furthermore, I really felt like Singapore was my home base when coming back from a weekend trip, because those will be part of your exchange as well.

Also, look up some videos of the NUS life and a day in Singapore to get a better feel for the city and university. Here some examples:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cF_HeAD6UcQ&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR3RR4CFeJ0QIVvZqMWyxusKOICqB-wAGBumYkM2sPFOP2I7ehKVWcLHZwA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yU3PgVgUU9E>



UU Study Abroad Report Form

Family name:	xxx
First name:	xxx
Student number:	xxx
Faculty/college:	National University of Singapore
Level:	X <input type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Psychology

Destination city & country	Singapore, Singapore
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	National University of Singapore
Purpose of exchange	X <input type="checkbox"/> study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	26-07-2017
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	21-01-2018

Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

The application process was a bit stressful, as we had to fill in many different forms before the deadlines.

Counselling/support at home university:

The International Office organised two pre-departure meetings. These meetings were useful since we were able to ask all our questions and got to know all the other UU exchange students going to Singapore.

Academic preparation:

For me, academic preparation was not necessary.

Language preparation:

I did not have to do any language preparations. All courses were in English, although it was sometimes quite hard to understand since they speak 'Singlish'.

Finances:

We had to fill in a financial plan in which we stated how much money we thought we would spend and how we were able to finance this whole exchange semester. Singapore is very expensive compared to other Asian countries, especially alcohol. However, eating in foodcourts and public



transport are very cheap. Furthermore, Wednesday nights are Ladies Night: all ladies can get into clubs and get some free drinks.

Study/placement abroad period

Study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues):

The first few weeks were very chaotic. Lots of things had to be arranged and everything was quite unclear. But in the end, everything worked out and the semester could start. Next, we had to sign up for courses. Back home, we already chose our course preferences. However, we had to do choose our courses again in Singapore. It was very stressful to select courses. By choosing your courses you have to be careful to select courses that are still available. Furthermore, you have to meet the requirements and you can only select one language course. The first weeks you have to follow all classes since you are still not certain which courses you will follow the semester. There are multiple course registration rounds so you can drop courses and try to get into other courses. To get all study points needed for the UU, you need to do 5 courses at the NUS. It is possible to schedule your tutorials, so you can plan your weeks so you have more time to travel.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

All courses were a lot of work, so I ended up studying much harder than at the UU. I noticed that students at the NUS are way more participating and paying attention at lectures and tutorials compared with students in the Netherlands. It was also quite stressful. NUS works with a bell-curve system, so your grades depends on the grades of other students. Due to this, studying becomes a competition and studying is the main thing local students do. They literally sleep in the library and don't have time to join with leisure activities. It made me feel nervous as I thought I would not be able to pass the exams since I did not study as hard as the local students. However, I passed my exams with good grades, so don't worry about that too much. You have to find a good balance between studying and having a great time abroad, which is definitely possible. I learned to study very hard and efficient, so back at the UU I feel very relaxed.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

There are many places on campus you can approach for help. Also the teachers are very approachable and willing to help. One teacher offered her phone number to all students so they could ask for her help by preparing for the exams.

Transfer of credits:

The NUS uses a letter system, so the grades had to be transferred into numbers for the UU. I was a bit disappointed about the way my grades were transferred. The highest you can get at the NUS is an A, however this will be transferred into a 8 at the UU. This makes it hard to get very good grades. I think an A should be transferred into a higher grade since the NUS has a very high level of the courses and everyone has to study very hard to at least pass exams.

Student life

Welcome/orientation programme:

I liked the orientation programme in Singapore. It was well organised and I met many other students from all over the world. There were different activities, focussing on studying and the



university, but also to get to know the surroundings and a shopping day.

Accommodation:

I stayed at Prince Georges Park Residences. It was not where I wanted to stay and I have to admit, it was not one of the best places to stay. The room was small, the common areas dirty. However, many exchange students lived here which made it cozy and easy to meet friends and new people. It includes two foodcourts, a fitness, outside playgrounds and airconditioned lounges and studyrooms. There was also a music room, including only one little keyboard.

Leisure/culture:

Singapore is quite western compared to other Asian countries. I did not experience a culture shock. However, you will see many Chinese, but also Malays and Indians. The only thing what really shocked me were all the rules and sentences. Please be careful to not violate any rules as you have to pay a fine or even have to go in jail.

Suggestions/tips:

Do not stress to much about exams etc since you are really able to pass the exams. Find a good balance between studying, travelling and enjoying your time in Singapore. Don't visit only the touristic places or other countries, Singapore has a lot to offer and explore.

Conclusions

Would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? Please explain:

I would definitely recommend an exchange semester in Singapore!

Do you have any additional advice or comments?:

Do not get scared by all the preparations or the study pressure. It is 100% worth it!



UU Study Abroad Report Form

Family name:	xxx
First name:	xxx
Student number:	xxx
Faculty/college:	REBO
Level:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Law

Destination city & country	Singapore, Singapore
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	National University of Singapore
Purpose of exchange	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	20 July 2017
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	18 January 2018

Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

After your placement by the UU, you receive an e-mail from NUS with an application. In the application forms you also must fill in which courses you want to take. After you fill in the application and you attached the documents they need, you need to wait a while before you will receive an e-mail that you are accepted. After your acceptance letter, you can apply for housing. Make sure you will note the important dates in your agenda.

Counselling/support at home university:



Somebody from the International Office at the NUS flew to the Netherlands so that was informative. The International Office from the UU helped us as well, but it is a university-broad partner of the UU, so sometimes things can be unclear.
Academic preparation:
Not necessary.
Language preparation:
At the law faculty, they can ask for an English proficiency. I asked a professor from my faculty and he wrote a letter to the NUS that my English was on an academic level. The courses are thought in English, so it is not necessary to follow a course beforehand. However, their English is sometimes a bit hard to understand now they speak Singlish, which is a kind of English with local words. You will learn some words while you're there and they will help you when you cannot understand it.
Finances:
Singapore is expensive if you compare it to other Asian countries, but it is doable if you know where to go. Singapore has a good transport system, buy an EZ-Link card which you need to top-up when your value is below minimum (like an OV-card). Transport is not expensive at all; each ride will be around \$1.5, even if you are in the MRT for 45min. Download GRAB for a cheap taxi-ride. You can buy a SIM-card in almost every shop (do not forget to take your passport with you if you want to buy one) to stay connected. You can buy a prepaid card which you need to top-up and it is perfect if you are there for only 1 semester. Food on campus is cheap and delicious, eating in the city is sometimes a bit expensive (but very nice as well). Search for happy hours or events on Facebook etc. Partying in Singapore is expensive, but luckily there are some guestlists and promoters who can get you in for free or you need to pay at the entrance, but you get free drinks. On Wednesday it is ladies' night, which means that ladies will get in for free so make use of it! Travelling is not expensive, now you will travel in Asian countries, just make sure you're looking for cheap flights. Getting a room in Singapore outside the campus is expensive, so apply for a room at the campus.
Study/placement abroad period
Study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues):
In your application, you need to select 10 courses you want to follow, they will pick a minimum of 3 courses for you because of your VISA. It can happen that those aren't the courses you want to follow/need more, but just keep trying. In the add/drop-period, the first two weeks of the semester, you can also change courses, so you don't have to worry. At the law faculty there is a different application, because after applying at NUS itself, you will get an e-mail from the Law Faculty with a new application form and you need to select courses again. Sounds like a lot of work, but you will be fine.
Besides that, you will need to arrange your VISA which means paperwork! Sometimes a bit unclear what you need to do exactly, but they will help you as well.
If it is totally unclear what to do with your courses, visa etc, you can always ask people now you are not the only one there.
Academic quality of education/placement activities:



The academic level is good! The students at NUS are competitive with each other, and this might scare you off, but you are an exchange student, so they will help you and most exchange students turn out well! They know that you are there to make fun and learn something at the same time, so don't worry, but it is important to find a good balance between that. At the law faculty they offer intensive and 'normal' courses. The normal courses are around 10 weeks long, 3h once a week. Intensive courses are 3w, 3h 3 times a week (so 9h a week). Most of the times they will end with an essay, which is nice because you will end a course sooner than your other courses. The special thing is that they invite somebody from a good university in the US/UK to teach you which is quite special! Normal courses are interesting as well, most professors are working at big companies or are well known. For example, I had a professor who went to the US to talk to Trump about some treaties. Most courses end with a take-home exam, so you end before the exam period even starts which means more time to travel.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

NUS offers a lot of support for exchange students, they know how to help you.

Transfer of credits:

Every faculty arranges the transfer of credits differently. At the law faculty, you have a pass/fail system, so you are not as stressed as people from other faculties. I had to fill in a form during my stay with my courses, which year of the programme it is and the local credits. If you receive your transcript from the NUS, the Exam board will transfer it to ECTS.

Student life

Welcome/orientation programme:

There is a welcome and orientation programme. They organize official and unofficial events. The official events are more for exploring the city, meet local people and they even have a 'buddy system' where you can be paired up with a local and he/she can guide you and you will do things together. The unofficial events are more for partying, travelling etc. There are also a few Facebook sites with events as well and we had some group chats with PGP'ers and by that way people share events and invite you. Make sure you go to these events, now it is the perfect opportunity to meet people.

Accommodation:

The application for your accommodation starts a few days after your acceptance letter from NUS itself. You will get a few choices, do not be disappointed if it is not what you wanted, because it is likely that most international students will stay at the same accommodation. I slept in a room in Prince George's Park Residence (PGP) without A/C, but with a basin. The rooms aren't that new, but everything is in it. You are next to the MRT and the internal NUS bus stop is right in front of the building. There is a gym, supermarket and 2 food courts. By bus it does not take that long to go to your faculty, the library or U-town (they have a swimming pool etc. over there), it will be around 5-10min. So, really good location and because the whole accommodation was full of internationals, you were always nearby your friends and otherwise it was only a short ride!

Leisure/culture:

Singapore is an amazing city with a lot of different cultures. You can feel that when you go into neighbourhoods such as Little India, Arab Street and Chinatown. The food is amazing as well. You



will experience different cultural days which is a nice way to learn some more about the culture. You will never get bored in the weekends, now there are a lot of parties. Drink with your friends on 'The Bridge' at Clarke Quay, enjoy the view at 1-Altitude (the highest bar in the world) or go clubbing at one of the many clubs at Clarke Quay. It is easy to travel to other countries; you will have a few weeks/weekends off to study, but exchange students travel during that time and I would recommend doing that. I joined a yoga-club and got to know a few locals, who even invited me at their home to enjoy a typical dinner. It was a great opportunity to learn some more about their culture and had an amazing evening. Shopping in Singapore is great, now they have almost every shop you can imagine and there are a few sales weeks. They even have cheap shopping malls, most of the time in the local neighbourhoods, and factory outlets so it doesn't need to be expensive all the time.

Suggestions/tips:

Singapore is an amazing location, do not be afraid of their study culture and enjoy your time!

Conclusions

Would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? Please explain:

YES! The NUS is a well-known university, the classes are really interesting and way different than at the UU. Besides that, Singapore is just an amazing location. The city is beautiful and cosy, partying is the best, the food is maybe even better, and Singapore is a great country to travel from. It feels western, but you can feel and see the different cultures in the city. Explore those cultures now it is a great way to get in touch with local people. So just go, it was the best decision I made ever. Singapore is amazing, the people that I met even more and only because the NUS made it so easy to meet those people.

Do you have any additional advice or comments?:

Be sure to respect the law

Contact details Student Services / International Office

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+31-(0)30-253 7000

exchange@qdesk.uu.nl (information) / verslagen.internationaloffice@uu.nl (report)

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