

My Experience at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore

1. Program of Study

Most business classes at NTU are offered in 3 hour blocks, and so I spent a lot of time on their course registration portal “STARS” to optimize my schedule for traveling. I highly recommend this, as I was able to get 3 of my classes on Monday and 1 on Tuesday morning. I also intentionally selected courses with no final exams (that fall within the exam period) so that I could be done with my term after the second week of November, rather than early December. Doing so gave me three extra weeks of travelling, and it was pretty simple, as most business classes do not have official exams (but just final tests that happen during the last week of classes). While I was not the biggest fan of some of my courses, I would not change them if it meant being able to keep the same schedule.

Class Name	Comments	Evaluations
ET5212 Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (3 hours per week)	I found this class to be the lightest in terms of workload and difficulty. There is a final test (no exam), but the rest of the course format is great as it's all group work based on a business idea that you have. I would definitely recommend it!	Group Memos + Presentations – 40% Final Quiz – 30% Participation – 20% Group Report – 10%
BU5604 Leadership in Organization (3 hours per week)	Interesting leadership theories and applications, I liked the structure, however the prof for this course is extremely demanding. There's a good balance between individual assignments and group work, but the assignments are very time consuming. The latter half of the course had more remote sessions which was good for traveling. The demands of this course makes it feel like a lot more than 3 hours a week.	Participation – 10% Group Assignment – 30% Individual Assignments – 50%
BU5401 Management Decision Tools (3 hours per week)	This course is very excel and math heavy, so if numbers are not your strong suit I would not recommend it. The prof makes it very easy to keep up with the weekly content, but it the midterm and final test are quite challenging. The course covers all of the content covered in Business Analytics during the first third of the course, and then delves into more specialized and challenging courses such	Midterm Test- 30% Final Test - 40% Participation - 15% Weekly Quizzes - 15%

	as simulations and queuing theory. The class sessions would always only last an hour and a half which was a welcome break and the workload is manageable, but it can be challenging to do well.	
BC3411 Lean Operations & Analytics (3 hours per week)	This course is pretty technical and theory heavy, but there is quite a lot of group work and I like the course format and hands-on activities we did. Some of the concepts of Operations Management were present in this course, but I would say it is way more specialized and in-depth. I would recommend it only if it fits your schedule, there may be easier courses you could take.	Midterm - 20% Group Cases - 20% Group Project - 40% Participation - 20%

2. Academic Timetable

Semester Schedule for Semester 1 (Fall)

Semester Length	Aug 5	Dec 6
Orientation Week	Aug 5	Aug 9
Teaching weeks	Aug 12	Nov 15
Add/Drop Period	Aug 8	Aug 23
Recess Week	Sep 30	Oct 4
Revision Week	Nov 18	Nov 22
Exams	Nov 25	Dec 6

3. Arrival Procedures

The GEM Trailblazer team was great at communicating with requirements about arrival procedures, and they always got back to me promptly as well. It was also nice as they hosted a couple of events throughout the semester to help exchange students socialize and experience the cultural aspects of studying abroad as well. The orientation activities were a good way to meet people as well, and they hosted a Singapore Tour which I greatly enjoyed as well. My hall also was very social, and hosted quite a few events throughout the semester to socialize.

When you arrive, make sure to check the office hours so that you are not left without a place to stay the first night. In my case the office closed at 5.45PM, so if your flight lands any later than 5PM, I would recommend just booking accommodation for the first night, as depending on traffic, you may not make it on time. I unfortunately arrived 30 minutes after their office hours, so I did not have access to my room on the first night. I was extremely exhausted from the long journey from Canada, and dragging around my luggage was a horrible experience as the campus is massive and extremely hilly in some places (this was before I figured out the shuttle system as

well). Thankfully, some locals showed us where we could keep our luggage overnight, and I ended up exploring the campus and camping out in one of the shared lounges as I did not want to pay for a Grab (Uber equivalent) and a hotel at the last minute.

You will need to bring or buy things like bedsheets, a pillow case, hangers, clothing pins, toiletries, and cleaning supplies. I ended up bringing some of these things from Canada, and bought the rest from a supermarket located on campus called Prime.

4. Budget

Item	Cost	Notes:
Flight Ticket	\$1099 CAD	I bought a one-way ticket as I wanted to remain flexible in my travelling plans. I ended up flying back from India.
On-campus meals	\$15/day \$1600 for 4 months	I budgeted an average of \$15/day for eating on campus. On most days my first meal would be lunch, which saved some money here and there. On average, most meals on campus cost around \$5 to \$6.
Groceries	\$20/week \$320 for 4 months	This includes late night 7/11 runs for snacks and drinks, or supplies you need for your dorm.
Leisure	\$100/month \$400 for 4 months	This includes fun activities in the city, eating out in the city which can be really expensive, etc.
Residence	\$429/month \$1716	I was allocated to a double room with A/C at \$400/month. The cost includes the administrative fees on top of rent. Note that A/C would be an extra expense should you choose to use it.
Local transit	\$80/month \$320 for 4 months	You can tap your credit or debit card on the MRT and buses so there is no need to purchase a new card or reload it.
Travelling	\$4000	Depends on how much you plan to travel, I travelled quite a bit.

*All amounts mentioned above unless otherwise specified are in SGD

While almost everything can be paid for with Visa or Mastercards, especially in the city, on campus, a lot of the canteens only accept local payment methods such as cash. I would recommend having at least \$2000 in cash so that you can comfortably pay for food on campus.

5. Application Procedures

Once you are accepted, there will be many deadlines and tasks to complete so it's important to keep track of all the dates.

The visa application is through the portal which is super convenient as you do not have to go to a visa office for Singapore and it's pretty straightforward. They do say they need 5-10 working days to review and approve, but I recommend you apply for it ASAP. If your passport requires a visa to enter Singapore, it can be the case that they will take much longer to process the application. Once they approve your application, you will receive the IPA letter which you can use to enter Singapore. Then during the first or second week of school, you will have to make a student pass appointment with the immigration officer at NTU to get your full pass. If your passport does not require a visa to enter (such as the Canadian one) you could just enter as a tourist which is what I did. I was forced to enter as a tourist as I got a new passport right before coming to Singapore and so I had to submit my application again, and they did not end up approving it and sending my my IPA letter before I had booked my flight, so I entered as a tourist and had to follow up with the school a couple times before they sent me my IPA. It all worked out in the end though, as I received my IPA before the date of the physical Student Pass appointment (the second half of the application). I also did find it to be much cheaper than visas for some other countries. For the application, they will ask you to upload a scanned picture of your passport, and you need hard a hard copy of a headshot for your immigration appointment once you're in Singapore, but there are booths on campus or in the mall nearby that you could have them taken and printed (for much cheaper than Staples).

Applying for on-campus housing was very easy, and they ask you for your preference for your room. They seem to allocate housing on a luck basis (unless you have specific accommodation requirements), so while I expressed my preference for a single room, I was still placed in a double. You are not able to indicate your preference for having A/C however. I did seem to find that almost all exchange students were allocated a room in the halls which is honestly a must-have when looking at the transit times and cost of living in Singapore.

I found course registration and approval to be a bit tedious. Before your exchange, you are required to submit and rank 10 courses that you submit for approval to both Telfer and NTU. Then, the school randomly allocated 4 to 5 of these courses based on your rankings, however, it is important to note that during this initial process, there is no way to indicate a preference for the time or section for the course. The "Add-Drop period" falls during the first two weeks of the term, and that is when you can apply to other classes and try to switch into other sections to create a timetable that suits your needs. This happens on an application called "STARS," and there are quite a few details you will need to keep in mind when navigating this portal. I was on the portal until the last day of the Add-Drop period before I ended up with my ideal schedule, so while it takes time and planning, it's definitely possible.

6. Housing Details

I was allocated to a double room with A/C in Hall 8. This room cost \$400 (SGD) per month, and including some administrative fees summed up to a total housing bill of S\$1,715.57 for the whole semester (4 months). After converting the amount and completing the payment through their partner organization, my housing bill was \$1,862.25 CAD. The good thing is that if you decide to check-out of residence earlier than the last day you will get refunded that amount, which is perfect for me as none of my courses had final exams, and I planned to leave as soon as the final teaching week was done to travel.

While I was allocated a room with A/C, you still have to load money onto the app to use it, and so I did not end up using it past the first \$10 I had loaded. While the ceiling fans are usually quite powerful, mine was not situated above my bed, so I did end up having a lot of uncomfortable nights. However, you could look into buying a small desk fan to help with that. The room itself was pretty small to be sharing with another individual, so get used to having almost no personal space if you are paired up with someone. Since you are sharing the actual room with someone and since they will probably be the first and last person you interact with everyday, make efforts to get along with them. It's also important to note that while there is wifi throughout shared spaces on campus, it does not extend to the rooms, and so, I decided to purchase a router for my room and split the cost with my roommate.

All halls also have washers and dryers, and each cycle lasting 30 mins costs \$1 each. However, the machines only accept the new series of \$1 coins, so make sure you hold on to any that make their way to you as the canteens can be stingy with giving them out. Each floor also has shared "pantries" but they have minimal amenities (one microwave, hotplate and sink) and no fridges. While you could buy a mini fridge for your room and declare it, I did not think it was worth the cost and hassle for one semester, and ended up buying almost all of my meals at the canteens.

My hall also had a small gym (although you are able to use other ones on campus as well), and a bus stop nearby to use campus shuttles and buses that go into town. For food options, every hall cluster has a canteen but I often found myself walking to other canteens close by to have cuisines better suited to my taste.

7. Comments and Recommendations

NTU is a great university and I have absolutely no regrets in choosing Singapore as my location for exchange! It's very highly ranked globally, and the campus is massive, however it is kind of removed from the city centre, so it is quite the trek to make your way downtown. With being a highly ranked school, there is the caveat that the academics here can get quite rigorous so just be aware of the type of classes you choose to take. I would definitely stress keeping up with the weekly requirements for each class so that you don't fall behind, as each of the courses are quite

demanding. I found most of the local students to be pretty reserved and focused on school (which makes sense as the academics are rigorous here) and mostly befriended other students on exchange. However, that is not to say that they are unfriendly, or that they won't help you where they can. Be warned, it is extremely humid here so pack well, but on the other hand they blast the indoors with A/C and make it freezing, so there's almost no winning in that sense.

8. My Experience Overall

My experience here in Singapore has been amazing, and I'm truly so glad that I chose to come here for my exchange. I have made some really good friends here, and it was honestly such a welcome change of pace for my undergrad. It was really amazing to experience Singaporean culture and lifestyle, and of course try the blend of all the amazing cuisines present here. Everyone is accepted here, and Singapore is also very accommodating of dietary restrictions., Singapore is truly a melting pot of cultures and is extremely modern with world-class infrastructure, and is honestly truly unique. I will honestly really miss how safe it is here... I can leave my valuable personal belongings on a table to reserve it and come back knowing it will remain untouched. It is also very central to other destinations, and during my semester, I was able to make time to travel to Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and the Philippines. After completing my studies, my travel itinerary included Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Japan, and India. I absolutely loved travelling to all these different parts of Asia, and Singapore is honestly the perfect hub to travel from (not to mention the massive airport could be a city in itself)!