

Vic OE Evaluation Form

PLEASE TYPE THIS EVALUATION FORM & EMAIL IT TO VIC OE AS A WORD DOCUMENT

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	Bachelor of Engineering
Major(s)	Network Engineering
Exchange Institution	National University of Singapore
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Trimester 1 2015

B: Finances

Please detail your basic costs in New Zealand dollars. This will help future students plan their own budgets. (Enter your number rounded to the nearest dollar.)

Books	\$0
Accommodation	\$2,170
Return Airfare	\$2,300
Local Transportation	Around \$2 per trip
Meals	\$5 per meal
Visa	\$90
Health & Insurance	\$500
Personal Spending	\$50 per week
Communications (phone, etc.)	\$10 per month
Other fees (specify)	-
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	Overseas ATM fees: \$7.50 per withdrawal and 2% of the amount withdrawn.

How did your financial expenses compare to what you originally expected to spend?

The expenses were about the same as I expected.

By what means did you maintain your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, foreign bank account, travelers checks, etc)?

I used my debit card. I would not recommend it since there is a lot of hidden fees when it is used overseas. A lot of places only accept cash, so I had to withdraw money quite a bit. I would suggest looking into a Cash Passport since it allows for multiple currencies to be loaded onto it.

What financial advice would you give students attending the same university as you?

Download a budgeting app to ensure that you aren't overspending. Also, don't bother to buy bottled water since there are many water dispensers/coolers around university.

What was the average cost of a can of coke or coffee in your host country?

Around \$1 for a can of coke. I'm not too sure about coffee since I didn't purchase any.

C: Visas & Insurance **Please note this information is recommended by VUW students & current at the time of their exchange. For all up-to-date visa information you must check with the embassy/consulate of your host university.*

Did you have to apply for a visa? If so, was it difficult? What was the process, how long did it take and how much did it cost?

Yes, I had to apply for a Student Pass. You have to wait for the email from NUS to get your SOLAR (Student's Pass OnLine Application & Registration) number. You then have to apply for the Student Pass online and initially pay \$30 for the processing fee. Once it has been approved, you must pay a further \$60. During registration at NUS, you hand in the paperwork and they scan your thumb for the pass. A few days later they will issue you the actual pass.

Do you have any advice for future students when applying for visas to your host country?

The background for the Student Pass photo must be completely white or else they will reject it. I had to retake the photo at the registration site.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance? Or a particular insurance they recommended? If Yes, what was it and how much did it cost?

Yes they did. It was part of the mandatory miscellaneous fees which cost around \$90.

What insurance company did you use and would you recommend it to future students?

ASB. I would recommend it to students who have the same bank.

D: Academics at Host University

Which courses did you take while on exchange? Please rate the difficulty of each course (1-5, 1 = Very Easy & 5 = Extremely Difficult) and leave any comments you may have.

Course Title	Language of Instruction	VUW course equivalent or elective	VUW points/credits value	Rating (1-5)	Comments
VUW Trimester 1/YEAR					
EE4210 (Computer Communication Networks II)	English	NWEN304	15	2	A lot of the content overlapped with NWEN243, so there were times where I was relearning the topics from NWEN243
CS2106	English	NWEN301	15	5	This module was content

(Introduction to Operating Systems)					heavy, with a new topic every week. There were weekly assignments and three programming projects. The module itself was interesting but it required a lot a work.
CS2102 (Database Systems)	English	SWEN304	15	3	The module was fine but the group project was unpleasant. It involved creating a webpage to enable the user to manipulate the database. But I struggled more on PHP and HTML rather than SQL. In this module you learn SQL and have to figure out PHP and HTML yourself.
EE3031 (Innovation & Enterprise I)	English	ENGR301	15	3	This module involves a lot of class participation and group projects. The lectures were classroom orientated and encouraged discussion.
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					

Course Registration/Enrolment

Please describe the registration process at your host university. What kind of help was available?

The course registration was done when you applied for NUS online. If you didn't get the modules you wanted, you could still try to apply for it during the appeal days once you get to NUS. You could also talk

directly to the faculty in charge of the module. You could also email nghelp@nus.edu.sg for any queries.

How successful were you in registering/enrolling for classes you wanted? What advice would you offer to next year's exchange students about registration at your host university?

I got into all of the modules I wanted. Two modules had an exam clash but since they were both compulsory subjects, I was allowed to take both. My head of school had to email them to prove that they were compulsory modules. For the modules you did not get, my advice is to apply for them during the appeal days.

Do you have any advice for future students when choosing and applying for courses?

Don't just take the modules because you think they'll be easy. I took CS2102 for this reason but it was my least favourite module. Take the courses that might not be offered at VUW if possible.

Academic Experience

How did your academic experience differ from your time spend at Victoria? Did the academic experience meet your expectations?

At Victoria, my lectures only lasted 50 minutes. At NUS, the lectures lasted around 2-3 hours. Tutorials and labs were about the same as those in Victoria.

How did the style of teaching at your host university compare with that at VUW? How did the workload compare to what you would expect at VUW?

The teaching style was about the same. The only difference is the difference in accents of the professors. The workload was about the same but for some projects, they expect you to do more. For example, in the database project, they expected to have webpage even though the module itself only taught you on the database aspect.

What would you recommend as an appropriate course load for other VUW students visiting your partner university? What specific courses would you recommend to visiting VUW students? Why?

I recommend only taking 3 modules or 4 at the maximum. This allows you to focus more on the subjects while also travelling around. I would recommend maybe taking a Chinese, Tamil or Malay class since these languages are the official languages in Singapore other than English.

What advice would you give VUW students about succeeding academically at your host university?

Gradually study throughout the semester and ask questions frequently. If you are in a group project, please do not slack off. Even if you are on exchange and the grades do not matter as much, do not be the person the group has to cover for because you slacked off.

What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, and internet access at your host university?

Computer facilities were excellent. In Utown, there is a 24 hour PC and Mac room. However, whatever you saved in one computer only remained on that computer, so if you use another computer, your files would not be there. There were multiple libraries throughout the university. There is wifi around the campus but at my accommodation, they only provided a LAN cable so you would have to buy a modem yourself for wifi.

If you went to a country where English is not the native language, how did you prepare for this? Were there any intensive language courses provided by the host university?

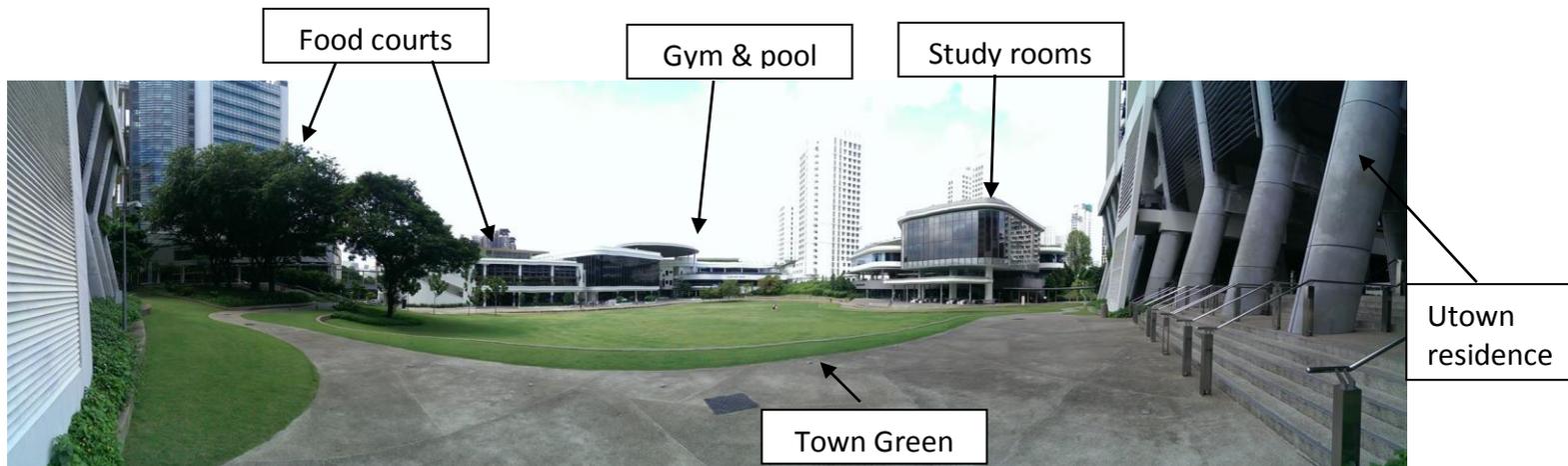
E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

I stayed at a non-aircon room in Utown Residence.

What were the pros and cons of this form of accommodation?

Pros: It is one of the newest accommodations. It is also close to the gym, pool, study rooms, mini supermarket, food courts, and a field (called the Town Green). Cleaners also clean the common areas (kitchen, showers, toilet, lounge etc).



Cons: can't cook in the accommodation so you always have to buy food or cook it in the microwave. Apparently a lot of exchange students apply for this accommodation so it is quite competitive.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

I definitely recommend the accommodation at Utown Residence. It is close to a lot of facilities and it is the newest. I have heard of some exchange students moving from other accommodations to Utown on their second trimester.

How early can you move into accommodation?

You could apply for early check in which allows for a check in a week before the trimester starts. However, you must pay extra. I recommend this because the activities for exchange students were a week before the trimester started.

What options were available for meal plans or cooking facilities? How satisfied were you with the food?

No meal plans or cooking facilities at Utown Residence. But there were two food courts nearby. I was extremely satisfied with the food since it only cost around \$3-5 for a meal.

If you lived in off-campus housing, how easy was it to find? What should future VUW exchange students know about living off-campus?

Do you have any tips of advice for future students when applying for accommodation?

Apply on the day the application for accommodation opens. Thoroughly research the type of accommodation you would like. The application will ask for 3 choices, so be ready with your choices.

F: Personal & Cultural Connections

What was it like making friends? How successful were you at making friends with local (i.e., not international) students?

It was quite easy to make friends during the exchange activities (check out NUS i.Care and NUSPeerAdvising). In all honesty, I had more international friends than locals. But I had a few local friends that I made through the clubs I joined.

What was it like to adjust to the culture of your exchange country/university?

I don't think there was much difference in the culture, so it was quite easy to adjust.

What, if any, cultural differences did you find particularly challenging? How would you recommend students to prepare for these differences?

As I said above, there wasn't much difference.

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

The food. Make sure to try out all the local delicacies since food is quite cheap over there.

How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students?

The people there are very nice. You just need to reach out and they should be very helpful.

As far as you could tell, how easy would it be for students with disabilities to study at your partner university? For students who are visible minorities in your host country? For students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered?

I think it would be manageable for students with disabilities to study at NUS since there are elevators and ramps. NUS is quite diverse and there were many different races studying there, so I don't think race would be a problem.

Did you face any issues regarding discrimination in your host country? What were they, and what advice would you give to future students?

No

G: Extra-curricular/Social Activities

What organized activities (clubs, sports, etc.) were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?

There were a lot of clubs on offer. I joined the Archery club and the NUS Rovers (tramping club). I thoroughly enjoyed both clubs. In archery, I won the group competition at the end. NUS Rovers takes you out of the city and into nature. Also, your accommodation may also offer many different activities. Utown residence offered badminton and kayaking competitions as well as a trips to various places. Make sure to check out 100MIN - The Enrichment Series, where the activities offered only take 100 minutes.

What do you recommend other visiting students see or do on their weekends or holidays?

Check out if there are activities on offer thorough i.Care, peer advising or 100 min. Try and keep your Mondays or Fridays free so that you could go on a 3 day trip to Malaysia or other close by countries. Don't just go to the urban areas of Singapore, make sure to visit other areas as well (such as Pulau Ubin).

What opportunities were there for students to work on-campus? Off-campus?

I am not too sure since I did not work in Singapore.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

Again, I am not too sure since I did not intern or volunteer at Singapore.

5 things to take to your host country or region

- 1 **Bed sheets, covers and pillows. These will not be provided to you.**
- 2 Light jacket or cardigan. The air-conditioning is freezing in lecture halls and in some stores.
- 3 Umbrella. Sometimes it just randomly rains. It can also double as a shade from the sun.
- 4 Drink bottle. You will sweat a lot. You need to keep hydrated.
- 5 NZ souvenirs to give to your new friends.

5 pieces of useful advice would tell a VUW student going to your host university

- 1 **Eat, eat and eat. While travelling, you will encounter food that you might not be able to eat elsewhere. Don't just eat food you're familiar with, try to be more adventurous with food.**
- 2 Get rid of the "I'll do it next time" mentality because there might not be a next time.
- 3 Don't just walk into a lecture hall, sit there for 2 hours then just leave. Try to introduce yourself to your classmates and make local friends.
- 4 If possible, keep your Fridays or Mondays free so you can travel around.
- 5 Bring some formal clothing because some classes require you to wear business formal attire during presentations.

Top 5 Things to do

What are your 'Top 5 Things To Do' future VUW students at your host university or city/country?

- 1 **Visit Gardens by the Bay. The domes are really beautiful and it's mind blowing to think about how they built it.**
- 2 Go to Sentosa Island. It has Madame Tussauds, a trick eye museum, Universal Studios, a Merlion statue and scenic beaches.
- 3 Visit Marina Bay Sands during the night. The double helix bridge looks spectacular lit up at night. You can also catch Wonder Full, a light and water show.
- 4 Go to the River Safari, Night Safari and Jurong Bird Park. There's discounts online if you buy tickets to more than one place.
- 5 Learn some Singlish. Confirm good lor.

H: Personal Experience

Please write one paragraph about your exchange experience. Plus, don't forget to submit some photos to the exchange office!!

At first, my exchange was a push outside my comfort zone. But it was a much needed push because I have become more independent and I've learnt to explore even when alone. Studying at the National University of Singapore has allowed me to interact with people of many cultures as well as different perspectives. It also allowed me to experience a slightly different style of teaching and learning. My exchange also enabled me to see the opportunities I was missing out on because I was afraid to venture out. As a result, I have developed a serious case of wanderlust. I can't wait until my next travelling trip!

