

My Experience at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

A) Program of Study

Class Name	# of hours/week	Comments	Evaluations
BU8542 Social Marketing – Making the World a Better Place	3	I found this class very interesting because of the range of social issues we cover, but learning about them from a marketing point of view. There is also no exam, so the project is very practical – creating a marketing campaign for any social issue.	Group project – 60% 2 Quizzes – 20% Participation – 20%
BU8543 Tourism and Society: Journeys of Discovery	3	Interesting learning about the tourism industry, from both a culture and business perspective. The main course project involved writing a book report as a group. The professor wasn't extremely engaging though.	Participation – 10% Group Project – 30% Final Exam – 60%
BM2506 Digital Marketing	4	This course is a very technical and analytical course. I felt that it focused more on digital analytics than the marketing side, but nevertheless, it was a highly useful and relevant course. The workload is quite heavy in comparison with other classes.	Group Project (digital marketing plan for an assigned, real-world company) – 35% Individual Assignments (weekly McGraw Hill Connect modules) – 20% Class Participation – 15% Final Exam – 30%
BU8544 Consumers' Pursuit of Health, Beauty & Wellness	3	I really enjoyed this course because it covered topics that I am very interested in – healthy lifestyles,	Class Participation – 10% Individual Assignments (weekly McGraw Hill Connect modules) – 20% Test – 20%

		fitness and the beauty industry. We discussed these issues from a marketing perspective, so it gave me good insight if I ever want to work in this industry.	2 Group Projects – 50%
LH9001 Hindi Language Level 1	3	I took this introductory Hindi course since I wanted to learn a new language. The work load was heavy in comparison to other classes because there is a lot of practice required, but it was a very fun and engaging class and the Professor was very good!	Participation – 10% Frequent in-class tests – 70% Oral Presentation – 20%

B) Semester Timetable

The orientation for exchange students was on Thursday January 11, 2017. This was for all exchange students coming to NTU, however the business school held its own orientation session on the same day just for business students. I booked my flight ticket for the day before (Wed. Jan 10th) as this was the first day we could move into our residence, and so that I could attend these orientations.

Semester Schedule for Winter Semester (2)

Semester length	Jan 15	May 11
Teaching weeks	Jan 15	April 20
Add/Drop Period	Jan 15	Jan 29
Recess Week	Mar 5	Mar 9
Exams	Apr 23	May 11

Since I did not want to wait until the last minute to book my return ticket, I had to play it safe and book it for the last possible day of exams (May 11th). However in actuality, my final exam ended up being on May 3rd, so I had 1 week extra at the end which I used to travel.

C) Procedure to Follow Upon Arrival

Communicating with NTU about requirements, procedures and questions was very easy and efficient. They always replied very promptly and provided me with the necessary information.

Before you leave home, make sure you have printed out all necessary documents. To get past immigration at the Singapore airport, you will need your passport, NTU acceptance/enrolment letter and In-Principle Letter (IPA). All these details will be communicated with you by NTU. The process at the airport was very quick and I did not have any problems. From here, you can either take the MRT (will take about 2 hours, as the airport and NTU are literally on the opposite ends of the country) or a Grab or Uber if you have lots of luggage, which is what I did. By car, NTU is about 40 mins from the airport.

Once I arrived on campus, I went straight to my residence office. You will need to show the confirmation letter of your housing placement to register and get your key. **Make sure to check the office hours so that you are not stranded outside during the middle of the night.

When I first arrived, my luggage unfortunately had not arrived yet as the airlines had lost it. So, I did not have much unpacking to do. When you get to your room, there will be some furniture there for you, such as a bed and mattress, a desk and chair, and a closet with some shelving and a safe. You will need to bring or your own materials such as bedsheets, a pillow case, hangers, etc. Another option is to also rent these things from a student run service called DormBuddy. The same that I arrived, I went to the Global Lounge to register my arrival with them and get more paperwork for my student pass registration and matriculation card. You will need to take your passport, embarkation card from the airport, NTU letter of acceptance and receipt of payment for the miscellaneous fees. This Global Lounge is located at North Spine and you can get there by taking the free campus shuttles –Red Line or Blue Line. I also went to the campus grocery store in the same location and bought a \$15 Singtel sim card for my cell phone.

The first few days, it might seem overwhelming because there are so many things for you to remember to do, and in my case, I had the added stress of my luggage and all my belongings not arriving! But don't worry, all the other exchange students are feeling the same way, and everything will fall into place. Just try to meet as many people as you can!

D) Budget

Item	Cost	Total cost for 4 months	Notes:
Flight Ticket	\$1277		I got a round-trip ticket as it was much cheaper. I booked it through Qatar Airways and highly recommend them!
On-campus meals	\$10/day	\$1200	I budgeted an average of \$10/day for eating on campus. To save money, I packed oatmeal packets from home to make my own breakfast in the morning. This would save me from buying 1 meal in the day.
Groceries	\$30/week	\$480	This includes weekly trips to the grocery store to buy things like bread, milk, fruits, snacks, etc.
Leisure	\$60/month	\$300	This includes fun activities in the city, eating out, etc.
Residence	\$395/month	\$1600	I was allocated to a single room without aircon at \$395/month
Transportation within Singapore	\$80/month	\$320	Your NTU card acts as a pass for the MRT and busses so simply reload it with money as needed.
Travelling		\$1500	This really depends on how frequent you want to travel.

*Do make sure to bring sufficient cash with you. Although everything in the city can be paid with credit card, the on-campus canteens are almost all cash-based. I would recommend at least \$2000 SGD. You can open a bank account here on campus, but I chose not to. Make sure to store your cash in a safe and secure space, such as your room lock box.

E) Procedures Before Arrival

Once you get the official acceptance from NTU, there will be many deadlines and steps for action. This can be a bit overwhelming at times but as long as you keep track of all the dates in a calendar and remember to take action on time, it will be fine. The first step will be to login to the Incoming Exchange Portal. This will be your one-stop shop for all details regarding your exchange. This portal is where you will see details about course approval, housing application, and visa application.

The visa application is very simple and does not take long. It is also much cheaper compared to visas for other countries (a \$30 non-refundable application fee and then a \$60 fee upon issuance of the visa). For the application, they will ask you to upload a scanned picture of your passport, and passport headshots so I recommend having those ready early on. I renewed my passport in Sept/Oct and it was ready within a week. Also, it is a good idea to go get an extra pair of passport headshots to keep with you for travel (they always come in handy). Once you get the approval within a couple weeks, you will receive the IPA letter and this is what will let you get into Singapore. Then once you move-in, you will have to make an appointment with the immigration officer at NTU to get your actual student pass. Don't worry about this whole process – just make sure to follow the instructions and deadlines communicated to you by NTU

Applying for on-campus housing was very easy. The only choice in your hands is whether you want a roommate or a single room. I opted for a single room so I could have my privacy when I wanted, and a place to practice my music. Regarding air conditioned rooms, that decision is out of your control, and is based on a random lottery system.

Course registration and approval is the one thing that can be a bit difficult at NTU. Early on in the semester preceding your exchange, you will have to look at the courses from last year and choose the ones that interest you, and send them for approval to Telfer. Just because Telfer approves them, doesn't mean NTU will approve them or that you will be registered in them. So just get as many as you can approved. Out of my 5 courses, I only got pre-registered in 1 of them before the term began. This seems very odd but don't worry, this is normal! The first 2 weeks of the term are known as the "Add-Drop period" when all the students apply to all the other classes they need and try to switch into other sections to create their desired timetable. I was able to schedule my classes so I had Thursdays and Fridays off every week!

F) Address and Description of Housing

I was allocated to Crescent Hall (150 Nanyang Crescent, Singapore) – single room, no A/C. This room costed \$395 per a month, for a total housing bill of \$1660 for the whole semester (4 months). Although this is on the pricer end of room costs at NTU, it is still way cheaper than what we are used to in North America, so it was not an issue.

Here is a list in Singapore dollars (per month) of all the housing halls.

Halls 1 & 2	Double Room	\$250
Halls 3 & 16	Double Room (air-con)	\$300
Hall 4	Single Room (air-con)	\$395
Hall 5	Double Room (air-con)	\$310
Hall 6	Double Room	\$270
Hall 7	Double Room	\$250
Halls 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15	Double Room (air-con)	\$290
Crescent Hall & Pioneer Hall	Single Room (non air-con)	\$395
	Single Room (air-con)	\$435
Binjai Hall, Tanjong Hall & Banyan Hall	Single Room (non air-con)	\$400
	Single Room (air-con)	\$435
Tamarind Hall	Double Room (non air-con)	\$290
	Double Room (air-con)	\$325
	Single Room (non air-con)	\$400
	Single Room (air-con)	\$435

At first, I was a bit worried about not having A/C in my room at first, but it turned out to be completely fine! Every room has a ceiling fan which is quite powerful so as long as you have it on the whole time, it feels quite comfortable.

The room itself was very small. I did get used to it eventually, but there really is not much room to move around so you will have to adjust to it! Also note that while there is WiFi throughout campus, there is no wifi inside our residence rooms. I already knew about this, so I brought a router with me from home which was such a good decision! Your room is equipped with an Ethernet (LAN) port so I just hooked up my router the first day with an Ethernet cable and it worked very well.

While my hall had convenient laundry rooms with washers (\$1) and dryers (\$1), the common “kitchens” were not that great. It only had 1 microwave, a sink, and 1 common hotplate, but no fridge! This lack of fridge made it challenging to buy and manage groceries. You can buy a mini fridge for your room but I did not think it was worth the high cost just for 4 months.

Apart from the various campus gyms, my hall also had its own fitness centre downstairs, which was very convenient. There was also a bus stop right outside my hall for the campus shuttles.

For food options, every hall has its own canteen downstairs. Unfortunately I did not find any vegan food choices in my hall’s canteen, so that just meant having to always go somewhere else on campus for meals. This required some planning, but not a big issue as there are many other nearby canteens with more options.

G) Comments and Recommendations

NTU is a really great university and I'm really glad I chose to come here! However, do be aware that the academics here can get quite rigorous and competitive so just be aware of the type of classes you choose to take. Usually, we are just required to take any business elective here so most exchange students like to take "easier" courses with a lighter workload in order to have more time to travel and enjoy their time here. I think it's important to enjoy your experience here, but don't forget that this is your chance to study at a world-class institution so don't neglect your courses either. Also, if you do plan to travel, try to get ahead of your deadlines and finish homework in advance so that you are not overwhelmed with assignments after you get back.

Closing Thoughts

My experience here in Singapore has been incredible so far and I'm truly so glad that I chose to come here for my Exchange. This was my first time travelling and living on my own, and it has really been a good learning experience for personal development. People always tell you about how great their experience was and how many friends you make, but you never really understand it until you go through it! I have made so many lasting friendships here, and it really is astonishing how quickly you make connections with other students here. I am so happy I decided to participate in exchange because not only do you get the opportunity of a lifetime to travel to areas in the world which you have never seen before, but also experience a whole new type of culture and lifestyle. Singapore is a melting pot of cultures and is quite "Westernized" at the same time, making the transition smooth. It is also very central to other destinations such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, India and numerous other parts of Asia, making it the perfect spot to launch your adventure!