

2012-2013

University Attended: National University of Singapore

FEEDBACK 1

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

Orientation Week before the start of term in early August. Lots of welcome events organised by both the university and more informal student groups, the vast majority of which are optional but worth attending. Some cheap overseas trips organised for exchange students, to nearby Malaysia and Indonesia. Induction afternoon at the Business School is vital to attend as it gives very important information about how the Business School operates and their policies etc. Timetables are also distributed at this meeting.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Some modules are lecture-style, in large auditoriums, and last 2 hours. These modules then usually have additional weekly seminars (1 hour). Majority of Management modules (beginning with codes MNO) are different, however. These are usually smaller classes of 20-30, taught seminar-style and are highly interactive, lasting 3 hours. Attendance and participation is monitored and for most modules, this will contribute 10-20% of your final grade, so go to classes and don't be afraid to speak up! The MNO courses tend to be 'Continuous Assessment', meaning that they have essays and tests throughout the course but usually do not have a final exam at the end of the term. I found the standard of teaching to be high, and the workload slightly heavier than Manchester. Most modules will have group work, and be sure to pull your weight in groups as peer assessment is normal. I found classes to be interactive, largely fun and very interesting. Local students may seem distant at first, but are very friendly if you make the effort to engage with them. They also put a LOT of effort into presentations, which I have found has rubbed off on me and should help me back in Manchester and in the future. The bell-curve marking system can be frustrating, as I have found myself getting 75-80% in tests but being one of the lowest in the class. Passing modules should be easy enough, but attaining the top grades (A) can be extremely difficult.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

I only needed to contact Sue and the MBS team a handful of times throughout the year, but they always replied within an hour of my email and were extremely helpful! Thank you!

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

More face-to-face meetings with the students who have already been there... I feel like I have a lot of practical information which might help students about NUS and Singapore in general. *(MBS comment: There is a meeting organised during the second year for all outgoing and incoming students who have been on exchange to and from the destinations students are going to.)*

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Clarisse and Jessie in the NUS office are very helpful and will try their best to sort any issues on the spot. They deal with a huge international community at NUS, so if you mention at the beginning that you are on exchange from Manchester, they will be help you in any way possible.

INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER

From what I remember, there was a small fee at the beginning of the year for some form of basic insurance at NUS, which was compulsory. There is a health clinic and large hospital on campus, thankfully I did not need to visit either all year. If you are planning on travelling widely in Asia, be sure to have all of the necessary vaccinations before you arrive in Singapore, as I think it was more expensive than the UK.

INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS

There was a charge at the start of the year, during enrolment, which was termed as Misc. Fees. I think this amounted to approximately £75 and was paid online. I'm not completely sure what this fee covered, but once you are there you will see the amount and quality of the facilities available to you as an NUS student. From state-of-the-art IT suites to infinity pools, gyms, rock-climbing walls and free internal shuttle buses, the £75 misc. fees are fair enough! To stay in Singapore for a year, you will need to complete a medical check-up. I tried to get this done in the UK beforehand, but the waiting times meant I had to get it all done in Singapore – which actually worked out much better! At the start of term, you can have the Chest X-Ray, HIV test and other medical examinations completed at the Health Clinic on campus at NUS – it only takes a couple of hours and costs just £25, which is much cheaper than the costs in UK! I would highly recommend emailing ahead and organising an appointment for your first few days in Singapore. Your student visa will not be issued in Singapore without the results of these medical tests.

ACCOMMODATION

I stayed in U Town Residence, in the University Town complex. STAY HERE! All of the exchange students seemed to live in this area and the price is very reasonable. I think it eventually works out at between £260-280 per month, but it must be paid in two lump sums, in August and January. The apartment I lived in was 4-bedroom and on the 23rd floor (amazing view!), was clean and comfortable. There were no cooking facilities (except a microwave) in the apartments but there are two large food courts in the complex serving every food imaginable, and a fresh meal should cost no more than £2-3. Do not pay the extra money for the air conditioned apartments! The standard apartments have fans, and you adjust to the heat after a few weeks. The U Town complex (built 2011, I think) also has 24-hour Mac and PC commons, an infinity pool, gym, shops, 24h Starbucks, Subway, supermarket, restaurants, food courts, laundrette, study rooms... everything you need! There is also a bus stop with free buses to key areas of the campus, including one direct to the doors of the Business School.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

The humidity can be daunting at first, but you get used to it after the first few weeks. The weather doesn't change to any noticeable degree all-year round; it's always hot, humid and there's a good chance of rain any day. Travel on the MRT (tube) is very cheap, fast, clean and efficient. Buy an Ez-link card (similar to London's Oyster), which works on the MRT, buses and some shops. The university has a tube station at Kent Ridge, which is also served by the free university shuttle buses. Clementi and Dover stations are also nearby. Singapore is an amazing city – crowded at times, yes, but there is virtually no crime, the streets are clean and the cost of living is generally cheaper than the UK. The only thing which is noticeably expensive is alcohol, expect to pay £6-9 for a beer in a bar, even more in a club. A bottle of vodka in a supermarket is approx. £25. There are a lot of budget airlines serving Changi Airport – with cheap flights daily to Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines... there is also a cheap, long-haul airline called Scoot, offering cheap flights to Australia, China, South Korea and Japan. Singaporeans are generally very friendly, but may seem a bit distant at first. You may find that you need to start up conversations out of the blue, but once you do, everyone is welcoming and friendly. There are also hundreds of exchange students from all over the World, and it is very easy to make friends and meet people with similar interests. I'm considering relocating to Singapore in the future to live and work permanently.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

“10 months spent making countless new friends, backpacking through 10 countries and having experiences that I will never forget – all whilst holding my own amongst very talented students in one of Asia’s best business schools.”

FEEDBACK 2

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?

NUS’s induction programme was thoroughly conducted. For the business school it lasted for a week and it involved several meetings at the business school with information provided with regards to courses, student life and accommodation. Meeting tea session was also conducted in order for the students to meet their professors and colleagues, as well as an excursion to the city with local students explaining the culture of Singapore and helping exchange students settle in. Overall very useful .

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support

The style of teaching at NUS is slightly different from the University of Manchester with the lectures in NUS being more interactive - due to the compulsory participation and the smaller ratio of students per class. Access to business courses was quite difficult, particularly during the first semester, due to the limited amount of places reserved for exchange students per class. Methods of assessment varied depending on class. Usually classes would have two main midterms exams, compulsory participation and group projects and others would be more intensive in terms of workload throughout the semester, with continuous assessment and no final exams. The teaching staff had always been helpful and approachable.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

The international Team have been very helpful, all the necessary information was provided in time for our preparation and in detail.

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

The information provided was more than sufficient. No questions were left unanswered.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students

The host international office had been very supportive throughout, however, it would be useful to have been provided in advance with further information with regards to the process of adding and dropping new modules since the online system provided for the students to do that is quite complex and the process is different from the one followed in Manchester

INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER

Please include any information relating to the purchase of compulsory health insurance ie costs etc. or whether this was waived by having the University of Manchester Insurance Policy

Having the University of Manchester Insurance Policy was enough.

INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS

This should be information on any extra fees that the University charged but should not include accommodation, books, transport, visa etc.

N/a.

ACCOMMODATION

As much information as possible on what accommodation is recommended or not recommended.

I would definitely recommend the accommodation I had been allocated in Singapore which was 'UTown Residence'. It was one of the newest, cleanest and most convenient in terms of location and accessibility to the university's facilities and also at the heart of University Town, one of the newest sections of NUS's campus. 'Cinnamon College', 'Tembusu College' and 'College of Alice and Peter Tan' had the same benefits however they came with compulsory meal planning with which many students expressed dissatisfaction. I would not recommend 'Prince George's Park' accommodation although the rooms offered there are relatively bigger, because starting this year the majority of exchange students were allocated to either one of the residences at University Town therefore all the 'action' was taking place there.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups

Public transportation is reliable and reasonably priced in Singapore. All that is required is the purchase of an 'EZ-Link' Card which the holder needs to top up and gives access to buses and trains. On campus transportation is covered by free on campus buses running every 10-20 minutes but they can get very crowded especially during peak hours. Taxis are relatively expensive and sometimes hard to find but cab sharing between students is pretty common and reduces the cost significantly.

Social life in Singapore is very rich and varied; abundance of clubs, pubs and restaurants catering to all tastes and budgets however alcohol is in general quite pricey. Each Wednesday is 'Ladies Night' in Singapore which means women get free access and discounts in clubs. Special Guest lists are also organised for exchange students at different clubs each week which give free entry and discounts at the selected places.

My integrating experience with local students was very positive. Singaporean students might appear shy initially however they had always been very friendly and approachable. Initiating conversation is something I would recommend.

NUS offers an abundance of student activities varying from sports, to arts, to volunteering groups which are either organised by the university itself, student societies or casual student get-togethers. One can very easily join those groups through social media (facebook groups), and from announcements at IVLE. In depth information with regards to student activity groups and how to register is provided during the orientation week.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

Hands down the best year of my life so far. Life Changing.

FEEDBACK 3

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?

NUS starts fairly early at the start of August. Before the lectures start there is an orientation week. This allows you to join teams and societies as well as the exchange PALS organising numerous events for you to meet other exchange students and explore the country. I arrived in July and so already had my bearings by then but it was good to know more about the university. There were also talks on travelling which was especially useful so make sure you go to these talks.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support

The lectures are very different from the UK. All my classes were sectional teaching which consists of 3 hour straight classes with approx 40 people in each class. This was much better as it was a smaller group. There is a lot of assessment grading that is made up of class participation so you can't miss a lecture and you have to actively contribute in class. All my modules required an element of group work with lots of presentations. In addition to this, most modules had a mid-term exam and individual assignment. The teaching quality is exception and I really liked the style of teaching as it's a lot more personal and all the teachers know you by name. It is a very complicating 'bidding' system to get on to courses and so make sure that you sign up early and have back up choices, I couldn't get on all the courses I wanted.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

I have found the MBS international team very helpful. Sue is always very quick at responding to enquires. Make an effort to keep in touch with the MBS team.

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

No, I think it was very relevant and concise. I found the meeting with the NUS exchanger who was the year above me to be useful since she had firsthand knowledge specific to NUS so make sure you pay attention and ask lots of questions!

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students

I found the exchange department to be extremely helpful and very proactive. Clarrise especially, you will be in touch with her regularly so introduce yourself.

INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER

Please include any information relating to the purchase of compulsory health insurance ie costs etc. or whether this was waived by having the University of Manchester Insurance Policy

NUS requires you to pay \$58 for their health insurance.

INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS

This should be information on any extra fees that the University charged but should not include accommodation, books, transport, visa etc.

The student pass required costs about \$200 in total.

ACCOMMODATION

As much information as possible on what accommodation is recommended or not recommended.

Definitely, 100% stay at UNIVERSITY TOWN accommodation. It was built in 2011 and is where all the exchange students are.

It has the following facilities:

- Infinity pool
- Gym
- Rock climbing wall
- Pc and mac comms
- Badminton/basketball courts/dance studios
- Mini supermarket
- Food canteens
- Starbucks/subway
- Book shop
- Lots of ATMs

The rooms are all very clean and modern.

I stayed in UTOWN residence which used to be called Graduate Residence. I would highly recommend here. DON'T STAY AT PGP, its further away and lacks the atmosphere that UTOWN has.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups

Transport:

Singapore uses an 'ez card' which is similar to an oyster card where you top it up and swipe onto mrt and buses. MRTs are mass rapid transport a bit like the London underground but a millions times more efficient and better! It links all of Singapore and you will use it all the time. Transport is very cheap apart from taxis which are expensive!!! Comfort and City Cabs is the main taxi firm in Singapore.

Travel:

Amazing location to travel round Asia and cheap. Make sure you allocate yourself at least a month or two to travel around and get to know the Asian culture. Feel free to ask me specifics on travelling ie. Best places to stay and budgets via email. (lucie_hinton@hotmail.com)

Social life:

It's very expensive to go out in Singapore as drinks prices are excessive. If you do go out there are some incredible roof top bars and clubs - Altitude, Avalon, Helipad Swiss hotel...

Easy to keep fit as lots of sports and easy to go to the gym or using running tracks.

Make sure you integrate with the local students, most other exchange students only attend NUS for one semester and you are there for two so it's even more important!

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

...A roll coaster of ups and downs where I studied, travelled, worked and met the most amazing and diverse people, all in all providing me with an unforgettable and life changing experience!

(My old school was doing a feature in their magazine about alumni who are on gap years/overseas internships etc and this is my article for it:

Part of studying an International Management degree at the University of Manchester required me to spend a year of my 4 year course at an International University overseas. The initial lists offered 30 different Universities across the globe in Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand.. I was keen to spend my year in Asia being a central global hub for business. I was awarded a place at the National University of Singapore which is ranked the 2nd top University in Asia and 29th the in the world according to the Times Higher Education rankings.

Never having been to Asia and not knowing anyone, I headed out 6789 miles to Singapore last July and began my year exchange. It was important to me that I got to know the local culture as much as possible integrating myself into local life, from eating 'chicken rice' to being 'fined' I certainly feel I have done this .

The Asian culture is very different to the Western way of life, mainly the fact it is so much more collective compared to the individualistic way of the West. In most of my classes I was the only foreigner, this was both interesting for myself and the local students. The competitive Asian environment has led Asian students to be renowned for their hard work and concentration on education. Students are often found working through to 2 or 3am most nights with little room for external activities compared to the UK where extra activities providing an all round experience is equally as important to studies.

In addition to my studies I spent time travelling around Asia- Bali, Cambodia, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Thailand and the Philippines were some of the places I explored. Each trip providing a story to tell and a new set of wonderful and interesting people met.

I have just finished my academic studying and on Monday I will begin a 4 month Internship with Ogilvy and Mather based in Singapore. The experiences of this year have certainly been eye opening and life changing one and I have no doubts that the internship will also contribute positively to my overall overseas experience.

FEEDBACK 4

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?

Introduction to life at NUS. Information regarding module selection, general information regarding library facilities, sports and other basic things such as bus routes and information around campus. The programme lasted around 2 hours while the campus tour around business school was around an hour. Free t-shirt and goody bag + lots of booklets regarding the university were handed out. All in all - quite informative and useful.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support

Similar teaching style to the UK- Lectures and Tutorials. Tutorial is compulsory attendance while lectures are not. Some modules have a "seminar" teaching style, each section is 3 hours- per week! Attendance to all seminars is compulsory.

Method of assessment is quite tricky and super competitive! All marks are given on a bell curve system where the class average is taken into account. Anything below the mean is a C or less while above the mean would be an A. Students are really competitive so the mean in most classes is around 80-90%.

Choosing modules is unbelievably tricky as you are required to "bid" for the modules you want to select, if that doesn't work out, you need to fill out an appeal form, giving reasons as to why you want to select that particular module and give back-ups in case the appeal form is disregarded.

Teachers/ Lecturers are really friendly and helpful.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

Good level of support. Nothing that I can think of that should be changed/improved.

Maybe try and get more exchange students or Singaporeans in general who are studying at the Manchester Business School to come and speak to students regarding the country. *(MBS comment: This is offered to students through a meeting in the second year once students know where they are going).*

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

The meetings were helpful. The school covered pretty much everything we needed to know, you can never really be fully prepared and there's always a lot more to learn when you actually arrive in a new country. However, information regarding student finance, the school in general and insurance costs was useful. As well as speaking seniors who had previously attended this university.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students

The International office was really helpful in selecting/choosing modules. However the Careers office was awful! They were really rude when I went to ask for help regarding my CV (even though I was extremely clear, that I only intended to apply for internships back in the UK. I just needed help in improving my CV).

INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER

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Even after completing all the relevant vaccinations, chest x-ray etc in the UK. After coming here we were still asked to take a "general check-up" at the University Health Centre. It cost me about 25 Singapore Dollars.

ACCOMMODATION

As much information as possible on what accommodation is recommended or not recommended.

NUS- has opened a new campus last year called 'University Town'. Most exchange students as well as a lot of local students are housed here. The whole place is amazing!! I would encourage students to apply to all housing in University Town first such as 'Utown Residence' and Cinnamon College. However, any other college in University Town is equally good. Do not apply to PGP. (Prince George Park)

Utown Residence- apartment style housing. Share an apartment with 3 other students, mostly exchange students from other parts of Europe. No meal plan. Most rooms here have no air-conditioning. Can get really hot sometimes. So try and apply for a room with air-con. Air con is charged depending on how much you use it. Therefore no extra cost to the actual price of the accommodation.

Other residences in University town (Tembusu, Cinnamon, Angsana & Khaya College - all share a lounge and bathroom with 6 other students living on the same floor. Inclusive of Meals.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups.

Internal Shuttle buses on campus. Getting out of campus is an effort, however, metro, buses and taxi are easily available. Taxis are not very expensive in Singapore. The Metro is probably the easiest, fastest and cheapest way to commute.

Social Life - Lots to do and see! Night life, food, culture. Singapore has it all. And easy access to the rest of Asia. Cheap budget airlines to Cambodia, Thailand. Ferry to Indonesia. Buses to Malaysia. You'll never be bored!

In the first semester, it was difficult integrating with locals (most students only stick with other exchange students) however the second semester was a lot more fun as you get used to the place and people. You feel completely at home and interaction with locals is much easier!

Very few student activity groups arranged by the university – we're sort of left completely by ourselves once we arrive.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

A perfect blend of East & West- the most amazing experience of my life!