

## **Seva Shorin: 4<sup>th</sup> year Bachelors of Engineering and Finance.**

My arrival into Singapore was certainly shocking, walking out of the airport I decided to take the train to university in an attempt to better understand the system, with a train every few minutes it was easy to make. The train itself was spotless much like the rest of the country everything perfectly clean and ordered, as I exited onto the platform I was immediately hit with the full force of the island state's humidity which was nothing like I have ever felt even living in Brisbane all these years.

After initial sign on, I discovered that I was to live in a non air conditioned 9 sq m room for the semester, looking back I realised that it wasn't such a big deal and I quickly adjusted to the heat. The campus is immense, covering so much land that a free bus runs every few minutes to take students around the grounds. Everything is free to use for students, the gym, the pool, the tennis courts and all of the sports teams are free to join as well which makes socialising that much easier.

In regards to my academic experiences I would advise to all future students to make sure everything to do with subjects is sorted out as early as possible as the large number of students can make changes frantic and often impossible. The major difference with the National University of Singapore and UQ is that of grading, the marking is done on a bell curve and your position in regards to the class average and standard deviation will dictate your grade, not a simple percentage, so don't slack off.

Perhaps one of the best things about exchange in Singapore is that of meeting new and amazing people. Most if not all of the exchange students lived together in the same residence blocks, and we were able to form a community together. Throughout the exchange I have met people from every continent of the world and have lived with them together for the entire semester always being minutes away from if not next door to a good friend. Everyone I met quickly turned into a friend and vacations and nights out were all easily organised with groups of new people. By the end of my exchange experience I had taken 17 flights, missed 2, visited 9 countries all with people I had never met before Singapore. The importance of all these friendships cannot be described. It has allowed me to travel anywhere in the world and know someone there, sleep at someone's house or just plan a holiday with them anywhere else in the world. All the networking was incredible and it was truly the best experience of my life meeting so many new people, the feeling of being in a foreign country and never being alone is indescribable.

My Top 5 tips on Exchange at NUS are:

1. Explore Singapore as much as you can, you are living there and the city is incredible, eat at local hawker centres they are cheap and the food is amazing, with such a mixed culture Singapore is truly unique.
2. Take a budget flight to anywhere that's on special. Being a commercial hub in south east Asia Singapore is a stepping stone to any holiday in Asia. Also the flights are very competitive, I was able to visit every country in South East Asia besides Burma and the Philippines. Most of these trips were unplanned, I simply bought flights a few days in advance and packed a back pack.
3. Enjoy the nightlife; the clubbing scene in Singapore is amazing. The clubs are top notch and there is never any violence, people are very friendly and there are always happy hours for those looking to go out on the cheap. A world class DJ will be making an appearance almost every weekend and tickets are less than \$20.

4. Make sure you enjoy your stay on campus, try to get a room at Prince George's Park residences, as it is where all the exchange students will be. An air-conditioned room will be a rare gem to find as you really have no choice in the matter and are assigned random rooms. Living at PGP is great, all your friends will be literally minutes away.
5. Be ready for both sides of the extreme, Singapore is incredibly hot outside, however the air-conditioning generally everywhere will be turned colder than the level that is comfortable so bring a jacket for class and bus trips.

Here are some pictures of what me and all the other exchange students got up to this semester!

And finally, enjoy! This will be the Time of your life, wishing you all the best.

Seva



Figure 1 Being No good on the Subway



Figure 2 Caught on Security Footage



Figure 3 Rawa Island 6 Hours bus ride from Singapore a private island with crystal clear water and white sands right at your doorstep



Figure 4 In Phuket Thailand



Figure 5 In Cambodia pretending to be Rambo



Figure 6 Bintan Island Indonesia with some exchange students 2 hours by ferry from Singapore



Figure 7 Birthday party with the gang in Chinatown



Figure 8 Celebrations after Canada's gold in ice hockey, we woke up at 3 am to watch the match and I was the only non Canadian or USA supporter there a confusing sport ice hockey is



Figure 9 Alcohol and good company at McDonalds, don't worry drinking in public is legal in Singapore



Figure 10 An island drive in Bali



Figure 11 This is where we rode, a monkey temple in Bali



Figure 12 On our 1000km motorcycle journey in Vietnam



Figure 13 Me and the Singapore Skyline 73 Stories up on the Heli Pad of the Swissotel - The only phone coverage up there is Indonesian