



IT University Travel Report

Host University: Singapore Management University

Study Programme at IT University: Global Business Informatics

Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad: Exchange Agreement

Courses studied abroad: Intercultural Communication, Interaction Design Prototyping, Digital Business, Supply Chain Management

Exchange Period: Fall Semester 2019 (aug-dec)

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Feel free to contact me through my student mail if you have any questions regarding studying abroad in Singapore or with the process in general.

Your stay abroad

What was it like to study at [the university] (including choice of courses, academic level, social life at campus)?

The choice of courses at Singapore Management University is very different from ITU. You are invited to a bidding round, before you start your semester. Here each exchange student gets 100 points and can bid for courses. However, every exchange student I met did not get all the courses they originally wanted, but it worked out in the end. The academic level is high, both for students and professor. I felt very happy about all my professors they come from a great background with experiences and are well articulated. The courses vary in how the grade is distributed and the students do a lot to get the highest grade. The grading system at Singapore Management University is normally distributed, so in some courses you can feel the students really compete for the grades. Some courses I did not have a final exam and the grade consisted of 20% participation, 40% group project and 40% open book test. However, during my studies there were periods where I felt stressed and the communication between groups can take a lot of your time. Some days I had to meet with my study group at 8 in the evening and work for three hours to make our presentation ready. Sometimes you feel like some of these group meetings could have been avoided, but I highly recommend to show up and participate in them. It is part of their culture and the Singaporeans are very kind towards exchange students. All of the local students live with their parents far away from the university, and because of this there is always students on campus, libraries, cafés and etc. Singapore Management University has A LOT of *clubs* such as; Golfing, Swimming, blockchain, Scuba-diving, exchange committee etc. I think they have over a 100 different and the students participate in them and you can join any club you would like. I decided to join the blockchain club. The reason for this club was to meet other

students who was interested and to extend my knowledge on blockchain. The club hosted various events with speakers from all around the world with backgrounds relating to blockchain. I highly recommend to take a part in one club, especially to extend your network.

What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations?

During my bachelor degree, it was always my plan to take one semester abroad. I wanted to see how other universities work and meet people who study in the same area as me and extend my network. Furthermore, I saw going abroad to Singapore as a good way to excel English, since I my whole degree will be taught in English. This is why Singapore was great since their first language is English, so it an "easy" Asian city to go to. I believe it lived up to my expectations, but it is not just a holiday to go abroad. It takes time to prepare and you can meet frustrations while you are there. However, I would recommend all students to try it once.

Please describe what you got out of your stay, both personally and academically, and how do you expect it to contribute to your further studies?

I would say personally I got a lot out of it. Better understanding of the cultural diversity and how different the school system is in Asia. The group work forced you to communicate across different cultures and respect each other's differences. Academically it was different, I had four courses, mid-terms, participation grade and group projects. Some periods are very stressful and you can expect to have a group meeting on a Sunday at 22:00 - 24:00, because it is a puzzle to get all the group members to meet. However, I should not scare you away, it is part of the experience. Because of this the way you go to school is very different. The classes are smaller than we are used to in Denmark. The maximum students that are allowed into a class is 45 and each student has a name tag, so the teacher can call you out by name and take your attendance. I had two courses I learned a lot from and I firmly believe that I can use a lot of my knowledge learned in my further education at ITU. However as explained previously because of the bidding system it is very difficult to get all the courses you want. So be prepared to a lot of confusing in the start, but it will all work out eventually.

Arranging your stay

Please give a short description of the process of arranging your stay:

Before I got my acceptance letter from SMU, they invited all the exchange students to a closed group. In this group, the upcoming exchange students could share questions, create post about apartments and SMU also created reminders for all the students. Through this group, me and Kathrine (another student from ITU who went to SMU) found four other people and then the six of us arranged where to stay through Singapore Housing Company. We were two from Denmark, two from Schweiz, one from Germany and one from Sweden. Singapore Housing Company is however not a company I would recommend. They did not answer some of our questions, took a lot of money for administrative fees (and there were no administrative things they did). I believe every exchange student I met was unhappy with them. We even got our apartment two weeks later than agreed upon. So, me and the swede had to stay in a separate apartment for the first two weeks and then transfer. In the end it all worked out, but I believe it could have been done cheaper, but

would properly require more work.

What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?

Use the Facebook group SMU sends a link to. I believe they send the link two months before you the semester starts. Find students from Europe (some other flats have a lot of issues with too many different cultures mixed into an apartment), not saying it cannot work with other cultures. However, when staying a lot of people in a small space it easier to cope with if you share the same culture. Find people within your age group and with same expectations.

Lastly, I met up with some Singaporeans who are doing exchange at ITU and met with them in Denmark and then again in Singapore where they showed me around. So, ask ITU, if there are any Singaporeans studying at ITU.

Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

Singapore is not a cheap city to live in. The apartment was 917 SGD so around 4500 kr. Most people stay either 4 or 6 people in apartment and everyone pays between 900-1100 SGD. Single accommodations can be cheaper, however how often do you get to share an apartment with so many different nationalities. The food in Singapore can be either cheap or expensive, there was not really a middle ground. Furthermore, the food in Singapore is really good because of how multicultural it is. I basically ate out every day since it was cheaper for me to eat street food than cook myself. On a normal day, my budget was between S\$10-20 this was used on food from the food courts. Some of it was for transportation in Singapore I found this really cheap and easy. A journey from my flat to SMU would cost around 1 SGDm if traveling with an EZ-Link card, which is a MRT card (like the Danish Rejsekortet) you can buy this at the stations for S\$12 (S\$5 for the physical card and S\$7 on the card to travel for). I would recommend to buy this as soon as you arrive. However, if you use Revolut you can just use your bank card to take the MRT, some of the students in my flat did this and it cost the same. I highly recommend getting Revolut before you go to Singapore, it is a credit card app which let you exchange valuta for no fee.

Going out in Singapore is however very expensive, if you like going out I would recommend liking Hazel's Guestlist since they arrange events for exchange students at decent prices. The typical dress code is long pants and shirt. I used a lot of my expenses on travelling, since it is very easy to travel to other Asian countries from Singapore. I went to visit Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia and the Philippines. You can even transfer to some countries by Ferry, I took a weekend away in Batam (Indonesia).

Did you apply for scholarships and would you recommend any ones in particular?

I began applying for scholarships in start February and I would recommend people to do the same. Search for scholarships within the municipality you have grown up in. Be open to apply for smaller scholarships. Apply for the travel pool at ITU and Lemvig-Müller. I received a few scholarships and it is worth the time to sit down and write an application for each scholarship.

Recommendations for other students:

- Get Revolut and cannot stress this enough. This saved me a lot of money. It is a way to transfer and exchange between different currencies without any fees. If you have more questions about this do not hesitate to contact me and I can explain it over a coffee at Analog.
- Apply for scholarships early! If you are reading this and already know you are going to Singapore start applying now.
- Get a pre-paid sim-card when you arrive
- Bring a camera (or a phone with a good camera)
- If you are Danish, I would recommend to join “Den danske sømands kirke I Singapore” on Facebook. They are arranging events for all new Danes who arrived in Singapore every start semester.