

National University of Singapore (NUS)

Lamb School FAQs

These questions were submitted by students prior to an exploratory trip in Spring 2017.

General University

- Can students apply to NUS and NTU at the same time?
 - No. Purdue's Study Abroad Office asks that you apply to one program. However, if you are not accepted to your first choice then you will be offered a second choice.
- Are there some great web links that can help me out?
 - http://www.nus.edu.sg/iro/doc/prog/sep/sep_incoming_exchange_guide.pdf
 - http://nus.edu.sg/iro/doc/prog/sep/come_to_nus_presentation_slides.pdf
 - <http://nus.edu.sg/iro/prog/sep/incoming-exchange-students.html>
- What is undergraduate and graduate student enrollment?
 - Undergraduate: 27,700 Graduate: 10,000
- What is the campus like?
 - Much like Purdue's--a mix of classroom buildings and residential halls. Food courts that are unbranded, along with things like a Starbucks and a Pizza Hut.
- What are some non-classroom learning opportunities?
 - Most student organizations are open to exchange students, although apparently exchange students rarely join them.
- What are the date ranges for each term?
 - In general: Early January to early May (Spring term) and early August to early December (Fall term)
- I know Copenhagen has opportunities to have an internship, so I was curious if Singapore by chance had a similar setup.
 - No, Singapore does not allow internships while in school. If you wanted to get an internship to do AFTER your semester is over, however, that would be possible for up to 6 months.
- What is the cost of living for an exchange student?
 - Much less than it is at Purdue! The numbers below are for the entire 18-week semester:
 - Housing: SIN\$2160=US\$1547
 - Required dining plan (breakfast and dinner 6 days per week):
SIN\$816=US\$584
 - So the Purdue total is usually US\$5,000, compared to the Singapore total of \$2131.
- How does Singapore compare to other study abroad options?

- Very favorably if you take into account the ability to complete COM major courses, instruction and day-to-day life in English, affordability, safety and opportunities for exciting side travel in the region.
- How is it unique from Purdue?
 - It is strategically unique in terms of curriculum. NUS COM courses tend to be multidisciplinary which complements our program well. It is also strategically *not* unique in many ways: safe, English-speaking, etc.
- How multicultural is the university? What is done to promote diversity?
 - The campus is very multicultural and hosts many exchange students. Programs are designed to help integrate new students to the university and celebrate diversity.
- What is the safety like?
 - Singapore has one of the lowest crime rates in the entire world, and the campus mirrors the country's low crime rates. Additionally, Singapore is sheltered from natural disasters possible in the rest of Asia (typhoons, earthquakes, etc. don't happen there).
- Are there doctors close/available?
 - Yes. There's actually a university hospital right on campus, and the medical school is a partnership between NUS and Duke University. Top notch.
- Is there some sort of orientation for international students?
 - Orientation (week zero) happens the week before classes start and typically is the first week of August. For semester 2, it is the first week of January.
- Are there locations in which I can go running or exercise?
 - There are several fitness facilities (each residential college has its own small gym, but there is also a recreational sports facility in UTown). And of course the whole city is a nice green space for running.
- Is there campus-wide Wifi?
 - Yes.
- Are there any breaks?
 - Yes. In addition to many shorter religious holidays, there is a recess week halfway through each term. It happens:
 - Fall/Semester 1: In September after 6 weeks of classes
 - Spring/Semester 2: In February after 6 weeks of classes
- Is the semester length similar?
 - It is a little shorter if you count days in class, but a little longer if you count total time. Courses last 13 weeks. There is a one-week break halfway through each term (see question above). After 13 weeks, there is a one-week period with no classes called reading week for studying for your final exams. Final exams last two weeks. So it's a total of 17 weeks.
 - Students should plan to stay until the end of the first week of May. For semester 1, students should plan to stay until the end the first week of December.

Residence Halls

- I understand that for exchange study abroad programs I am billed Purdue tuition. How am I billed for my residence hall? By Purdue or by the other institution?
 - The student will pay housing costs directly to NUS or NTU.
 - Students on exchange program pay only two items to Purdue: tuition (and differential fees for specific majors) and Study Abroad insurance. That's it. All other expenses are paid directly to the host institution or the host institution's housing provider as is the case with almost all European programs.
 - If a Purdue student is receiving financial aid or scholarships through Purdue, he or she will get the award 8-10 days before the start of the overseas semester. The Purdue Bursar will deduct what the student owes Purdue (tuition and insurance costs). The rest of the money is deposited to the student's bank account (student must have a direct deposit arrangement with Purdue). This can be used for study abroad expenses.
 - If the student is eligible for the Purdue Moves scholarship, the student can get the award sooner if he or she completes the Early Disbursement Form (a document that will come with the scholarship notification email). The money is then deposited to the student's bank account (again, student must have direct deposit arrangement with Purdue). If the student chooses not to have the scholarship money early (and some don't want to touch it until later), the money will be credited to the student's Purdue account 8-10 days before the start of the overseas semester.
- In the residence halls would I have a roommate from Singapore or another international roommate?
 - All Singapore dormitories are single occupancy. Bathrooms are shared in an arrangement similar to that at Purdue (a certain number of rooms have a communal bathroom). There are some arrangements where your single room, along with 4 others, would open into a common room and bathroom. You would not be able to choose which arrangement you prefer, but both ensure that you will have a bedroom to yourself.
- When I move in to a residence hall do I need to bring my own furniture? What exactly would I need to bring?
 - All furniture is provided, but you will want to bring linens and towels. During orientation, there is a planned excursion to Ikea. You could purchase your linens and towels during this excursion.
- Are the dining courts of some sort or will I need to find food elsewhere?
 - There are dining courts and restaurants on campus. Options range from the more-adventurous ethnic cuisines to western-style food. There is even a Pizza Hut and Starbucks right on campus. There are several housing options; if you stay in a residential college, then you must also purchase the dining plan, which includes breakfast and dinner 6 days a week. It's cheap. If you stay somewhere

else, then you don't have to buy a dining plan and can eat on your own. There are lots of options, Asian and western, both on and off campus.

- Are there gluten-free or allergy-friendly dining options?
 - Yes.

Living

What is the nightlife like?

- There are many on-campus activities in the evening. We saw posters for a dodgeball tournament, a movie festival and many other fun things. Some students mentioned that, much like Purdue, the pubs are located just off of campus. The more club-like establishments would be found in central Singapore.
- What is the weather like?
 - Singapore is very close to the equator. It is hot (highs of 90 degrees, lows of 75 degrees) and humid year-round. Rains tend to be short and intense. They are more common during the months of December-February. Despite the hot and humid temperature, air conditioning is widespread and covered walkways help keep you out of the sun.
- What are the drinking/smoking laws?
 - The legal drinking age is 18. Smoking is prohibited on campus, but immediately off campus there are places where people hang out to smoke.
- What is the general cost of living in Singapore like?
 - The most expensive things for regular people are housing and cars. You'll have university housing and won't need cars, so almost everything else is cheaper than the U.S.
- How much should I allot to spend?
 - Depending on your lifestyle, your expenses should be similar to when studying at Purdue. If you plan to travel a lot, of course, you'll need to budget for that.

Courses

- What are some average class sizes?
 - Class sizes are a little bigger at NUS than they are at Purdue; even upper division classes are likely to have 50 students in them.
- What courses are offered?
 - http://www.nus.edu.sg/iro/doc/prog/sep/sep_incoming_exchange_guide.pdf
 - http://nus.edu.sg/iro/doc/prog/sep/come_to_nus_presentation_slides.pdf
 - <http://nus.edu.sg/iro/prog/sep/incoming-exchange-students.html>
- What is the normal credit load per semester?
 - Exchange students can either take 3 courses (12 credit hours) or 4 courses (16 credit hours). Three is the minimum requirement.
- What is the maximum credit load per semester?

- It's theoretically possible to take 5 courses (20 hours), but our impression is that it is rarely done by exchange students and would cut down significantly on free time and opportunities to travel.
- What grading scale is utilized?
 - The grading scale utilized is similar to that at Purdue.
- Are there any art history courses? Are there any language courses?
 - At NUS, semesters are called "modules." The link below helps you identify courses offered each module:
 - <http://www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/info/ng/NG-Modules.pdf>
 - The link below has course descriptions and syllabi:
 - <http://www.nus.edu.sg/nusbuletin/search-modules/>
- Is the work load for 12 credits at NUS similar to the workload for 12 credits at Purdue?
 - It might actually be a little lighter, because it only takes 3 courses (at 4 credits per class) to get to 12 hours at NUS. However, a prestigious university like NUS does attract top students. You should expect to work hard in class to get the grades you desire.

Culture

- Describe the cultural values of Singapore.
 - From our few days of Singaporean experience: Efficiency. Cleanliness. Capitalism. Harmony.
 - Efficiency: Things run on-time and in an orderly fashion.
 - Cleanliness: The country is extremely clean; there is very little trash on the ground (especially for a city of 5.5 million) and it seems that every tree and shrub is manicured.
 - Capitalism: Singapore is a world financial center.
 - Harmony: Three main ethnic groups (Chinese, Indian, Malay) co-exist peacefully. In dining halls and even food courts in the city, for instance, there are separate places for people to put their dirty dishes if they are part of religions with guidelines for dishes and food.
- Do you need to know another language?
 - No. By law, English is the dominant language of Singapore, though many residents speak other languages at home.

Travel

- How easy is it to get to the airport from campus?
 - Easy. When you arrive, we would recommend taking a taxi to campus. While there may be cheaper options via public transportation, you will be tired and slightly disoriented from your long flights, and you'll probably also be pulling a suitcase or two. A taxi to campus will take about 15-20 minutes and run you about \$25. There is a centralized and well-organized taxi pickup location. There are ATMs right by the taxi pickup location, so you can get some cash to start your

journey. Many Singaporean taxis do take credit cards, so make sure to ask before you get in.

- How much is a roundtrip flight from the U.S. to Singapore?
 - It would be smart to budget about \$1,200, although it is not uncommon to find flights for about \$850. If you can fly out of a large city such as Chicago or L.A., travel time will be shorter and flights will be cheaper than flying out of a smaller city such as Indianapolis.
- How much are flights to other places in Asia, using Singapore as a base?
 - Singapore has excellent budget carriers such as AirAsia. Travel around the rest of Asia, and even to Australia, is less expensive than flights of similar duration would be in the U.S. Many destinations cost less than \$100 roundtrip.
- I have a friend in Germany right now who received a temporary German citizenship card/passport, is there a similar thing I would have to acquire in Singapore?
 - Yes. Upon acceptance to a Singaporean exchange, you are given a provisional document to be used to enter the country. During orientation with the university, you will travel to the immigration office to have your full visa-like document completed. If you miss orientation, you will need to do this on your own. But it's very simple--there's almost nothing you need to do before leaving the U.S., and there's no need to do what some other countries require as far as going to a consulate in Chicago or something. It's much easier than that.
- Is there easy to use transportation around the campus? Buses, subways, taxis, etc.?
 - Buses are quick and easy. They are air-conditioned and have Wifi.
 - There is not a subway station on campus, but there are free shuttles that can take you to the nearest subway station and connect you to the rest of Singapore.