

# Student Exchange Questionnaire

**Name:** Roberta Bryce

**Massey Degree:** Bachelor of Design (with honours)

**Host university:** Nanyang Technological University

**Semester and year of exchange:** Semester 1 2015

## **Why did you choose this particular university and/or country for exchange?**

This University happened to be one of the few that offered papers that advanced my degree. Also the location in Singapore was very attractive as it would offer a completely different perspective. I've never been closely immersed in an Asian culture before and this provided a good introduction.

## **Did it meet your expectations?**

Yes. I expected to attend University as per usual within a different country - which is exactly what I did during my exchange. As for living Singapore, my research before going was pretty accurate and I didn't encounter any massive surprises.

## **What papers did you study while on exchange? Would you recommend them?**

Game Design – Covered the mechanics of a game, and then later introduced the program Unity. I would recommend due to Unity being a well-used program, and also for the group approach on assignments.

Digital Painting – Based on photo manipulation, to achieve a realistic image. I enjoyed the constant feedback and definitely developed my Photoshop skills in the course – so would recommend.

Augmented Reality – I took this course because it fit into the app design parts of our VCD course. It was nice to design something for a real event (Singapore's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary) and have to design with the client in mind. However this class is very reliant on having a top-notch phone in order to use the software. So, I would recommend only to those who already possess recent phones.

Creative Industry – A very in-depth look into the creative industry of Singapore. As an exchange student it was really good to compare the economy of Singapore and New Zealand to get an idea of the global outlook on the creative industries. This course also happened to have the most field trips, which is a lovely way of combining your touristy needs and studies. So I would recommend as a good complimentary course for Massey's Creative Culture courses.

Graphic Storytelling- This was my favourite course I took. It was great because each week we covered a different aspect of design theory and how to apply it to comics. The lecture was set out as Introduction, Practice, and Feedback on last week's work. I found this incredibly helpful as I got a chance to get involved feedback from the entire class and also view what my classmates were doing which helped give me inspiration.

**Were there differences in the teaching methods and academic environment at your host university, compared to Massey University? If so, what kind of differences?**

The student participation in class is a lot more active at NTU. Lecturers were more inclined to teach us new techniques through their example first, which I appreciated. I also received more direct feedback; if something I made looked off they would tell me and make a point of explaining why.

**Did you stay on-campus or off-campus? What was the accommodation like?**

I stayed on-campus in Hall 14. It takes a bit of getting used to – room share, communal bathroom, no A.C., and being only able to eat at the canteen. Overall though, it was very affordable compared to Singapore's high living prices, and it being only a 15 minute walk to class was very convenient.

**How did living expenses compare with New Zealand?**

Living in a hall, I definitely saved money by being in Singapore. Power, Internet, water etc... was all included in my fairly low accommodation cost. Food in Singapore is insanely cheap if you keep to food courts, canteens, and hawker centres. However, outside of a Hall living expenses can get scary expensive – I was just very lucky to get in.

**What extra-curricular activities did you participate in at the host university?**

None, I had absolutely no clue how to sign up for any clubs. This worked out fine for me though, as it gave me time to explore the city. There was constant cheerleading practice outside of my hall though – so I know that was big at NTU.

**What's one thing you learnt about your host country or culture?**

Sometimes they serve hot drinks like Tea, in tiny inflated plastic bags and you have to spear a straw through the bag to drink it.

**What were some of the highlights of your exchange experience?**

Because of Singapore's great location, during the break you can pop over to other countries fairly affordably. So, I managed to squeeze in a trip around Thailand during the semester break, which was incredible.

**What did you find challenging?**

Due to the diverse range of languages present in Singapore you often encounter people who blend several languages together without noticing. One of my group projects had two students who would switch between English and Mandarin within the same sentence. So, sometimes you get left in the conversational dust wondering what is going on.

**What do you feel you have learnt or gained from going on exchange?**

I've definitely gained a lot more independence. Starting out in Singapore completely alone and then travelling around South- East Asia by myself has definitely proved that I'm stronger than I thought. So, it's really nice to know that I can make future life choices knowing that I don't really have to be dependent on someone else.

**Do you have any tips for future students intending to travel to the same country or university?**

Get an EZ-link card as soon as you arrive, then immediately download the MRT line map. This way you can never get lost and stranded somewhere, so very handy.

**Do you have any comments on the support provided to you by Massey University and/or by the host university before/during/after your exchange?**

I did appreciate the help from afar approach Massey and NTU shared. There were exchange student events set up every once in a while and were very low key. While NTU provided me a care package full of info that an exchange student might find useful.