1. Application phase

As long as you stick to the guidelines for the application by TUM and later on by SMU there’s not much to do wrong. Here some specific advice:

- Our DAAD language certificate got accepted, that’s a nice way of saving some money because you don’t need to do a TOEFL test.
- Most exchange students take their courses Monday to Wednesday, in order to have a long weekend for travelling. It’s useful to coordinate this with your new buddies to be able to plan trips together.
- The easiest way of getting course credits transferred is by recognition as electives.

2. Preparation

Visa:
You will receive an Email with all the necessary information and deadlines by SMU. We really recommend picking up your student visa at the pre-arranged appointment at SMU campus. Otherwise you have to get it on your own in the ICA building, which will probably take a whole day. As soon as you have the visa you can leave and enter Singapore as often as you want, which makes traveling very easy.

Recognition of credits:
After successfully bidding for your courses, you can fill out the Learning Agreement during mobility. By that you can be sure the courses are recognized by TUM.

Language course:
We didn’t take any language courses. From those who took mandarin courses we didn’t get positive feedback because the majority are local students who simply want to get good grades.

Search for accommodation:
There is no accommodation by SMU. Therefore, we recommend that you find an accommodation before your arrival. The housing situation is as complicated as in Munich and prices are high. In general, there are two options: Either you rent an apartment with other students, or you rent a room in a student housing.

We had the impression that most students share apartments (Usually 6 students in a 3-bedroom apartment). Even though you share the room, you live pretty comfortably with 2-3 bathrooms, a big living room, cleaning lady, etc. Those apartments are often in luxurious buildings with pools, gym, tennis court called “condominiums”. Lots of students stayed in those buildings: Sophia Residence, Sunshine Plaza, 8 Riversuites. Here a short overview of the buildings we lived in:

- Cityscape @ Farrer Park: We can really recommend this complex. Lots of well-maintained facilities, many exchange students here (10+ flats), rents are acceptable, good location, 20-30 min to university by bus or MRT, food court (Pek kio) and lots of stores close by, “spacious” and modern apartments with a nice view. We paid 6000 SGD rent (apartment for up to six people), here you are the number of our landlord
which has many furnished apartments in Cityscape for SMU exchange students (+65 9272 9720, contact via WhatsApp).

- Waterscape @ Cavenagh: This complex is not a typical student accommodation but rather a chic condominium for expats from Europe and Singaporeans. In order to make it affordable, we shared three double rooms and a big living room with six students. I can recommend this in case you do not fear sharing a bedroom. In total (including the provision, furniture, excluding running expenses) we paid 6000 SGD per month. We got the apartment via the agency service of Steven See who was helpful at all time (contact: steven.see@hotmail.com, What's App +65-91298282)

Be attuned to pay 700 - 1200 SGD per month and person for shared accommodation. (Many students used singaporehousingcompany.com to find an apartment).

1-2 months before the exchange SMU will create a Facebook group with all incoming exchange students. That’s when groups of 6 form and start to search for apartments on their own.

BOSS Bidding
Different from TUM, you bid for courses with e-Dollars at SMU which is called BOSS bidding. We really recommend you to take a good look at the statistics from previous years in order to get a feeling for how much to bid for one course. The amounts can vary a lot depending on course, professor and time. Most exchange and local students have to take 4-5 courses. Therefore, you have an advantage if you only take 3 courses by having more money to bid relatively. During your first bidding round, which is exclusively opened to exchange students, you can detect bidding patterns which differ from the ones at the subsequent rounds. For instance, local students generally prefer courses early in the morning whereas exchange students like most courses from Monday to Wednesday to enjoy long weekends off. (Some even take lectures for two days or one day only but we cannot recommend this). In addition, the minimum bid often reflects the overall workload of the course or the required prerequisites. SMU students are required to fulfil the prerequisites before bidding for a course. Exchange students can apply for them as well after having consulted the professor of the course via email. You just need to mention the courses from TUM you have taken which are a good substitute for the official prerequisites. I can recommend to convince the professors of various courses you are interested in before the bidding procedure starts.

3. Arrival

Buddy
This is a good chance to break the ice and get into touch with real locals. Your buddy can help you with several issues from BOSS bidding to recommendations about sightseeing, events and even questions about lectures. Our buddies were really engaging, organised meetings or showed us around in S’pore.

Welcome event
SMU will organize welcome events, city tours, parties, etc. so there will be countless opportunities to meet other exchange students and explore the city.

Contact
SMU’s international office or the student services hub can always help you if you encounter any difficulties. They offer great support and response quickly.
4. Studies

4.1 Campus

The campus looks brand new and is right next to the CBD. Every faculty has its own building, all of them are connected via underground walkways. The campus is connected to Bencoolen and Bras Basah MRT station as well as endless bus lines.

The library is very spacious and modern, you can also book private rooms for studying. During the term, the library gets more and more full, but there is always an available place and it never gets as crowded as at TUM. Still, seat hogging (“choping”) remains a typical Singaporean phenomenon which can be observed at food centres as well as in the library. There are lots of food courts and restaurants close by, e.g. Kofou, FoodRepublic, ...Additionally, SMU has its own gym and swimming pool.

4.2 Teaching

The teaching approach at SMU is totally different compared to TUM. SMU is a real business school: every lecture has around 45 students and classes are very interactive. In every class there are usually only 5 exchange students, the rest are full time students, which are often from Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, China and Japan. Attendance is compulsory and you have many assignments, presentations and cases.

The professor often knows you by name and the final grade is made up of small parts: class participation, midterm exam, group/individual assignment and presentation and final exam. The small groups offer a good chance to meet and connect with local students. We felt that, in general, the teaching standard at SMU can be considered as very high compared to other Southeast Asian universities. SMU employs lecturers from a bunch of countries who are well prepared and focus exclusively on one course per term.

4.3 Schedule

The term is divided into two halves and the recess week in between. The first half is more relaxed and gives you enough time to see how things work. That’s a good point in time to travel during the weekends. Right before or during the recess week you have got your midterm exams. As soon as you finish those many students go travelling for a whole week. In the second half, you will have many presentations and assignments and will need to study for the finals.

Overall, the workload of one course is similar to TUM (this depends on the exact course, the required prerequisites which can be found in the course outline give a proxy about the workload) but rather equally spread over the whole term. With around 3 courses, there is definitely enough time for exploring Singapore, enjoying the nightlife and travelling all around Southeast Asia.
4.4 Courses

Financial Markets and Investments FNCE102
This course deepens the content of the exercise of Investment and Financial Management from TUM. It has a strong focus on current affairs and trends, e.g. US - Chinese Trade War, Brexit, etc.
The final exam is rather hard while it is easy to get good grades during the term. If you are interested in finance from an investor perspective, this course is engaging and teaches you a good basic knowledge.

Economic Development in Asia ECON118
Very interesting course, which examines certain actions to improve the lives of the poor. You will gain knowledge about human decision making. For instance, you will be working through a paper about household decisions in rural areas of India on the desired level of education for their children. You will deal with many statistics, but instead of the calculation, the focus is more on proper interpretation. No strong statistical skills required. Every lecture focuses on a different topic like health, education, insurance or microcredits and gives insights about several historic policies of various Asian countries.

Strategy MGMT102
A basic course at SMU, hence there are many time slots available. Nevertheless, the professor (Adam Tatarynowicz) is really motivated and explains the frameworks with many real-life examples and cases like Tesla, Apple, etc. The focus is less about learning the exact definitions but more about general understanding and transferring those theoretic models to concrete topics.

Industrial Organisation ECON208
This highly recommended, still challenging course follows up on the foundations of Microeconomics. Game theory, competition, differentiation and price discrimination are the main topics. The final exam consists of exercises which can be compared to the design of Microeconomics tasks at TUM. Moreover, this course includes conducting own research as group work. “IO” connects theory and the real world as professor Shapiro loves extensive discussions about implications for reality. It’s worth noting that he is contributing broad knowledge about Uber, Apple and Star Wars.

Marketing MKTG101
This applied marketing management course provides insights on the job of a marketing manager. The aim of this module is to enable students to combine provided information in thorough marketing analysis and develop an actionable competitive strategy for a company. Participants are required to work group-based on two reports (case studies) which contain recommendations on positioning, branding and distribution issues. Furthermore, the module includes a creative video project at the end of the semester.
It can be considered as an application-oriented more through version of the marketing class at TUM (WI000820).
5. **Singapore student life/ cultural experience**

5.1 **Student clubs**

SMU offers hundreds of student clubs to participate in, e.g. sailing, diving, soccer, blockchain, real estate, arts, ballroom dance, toastmasters, … There will be a big event at the beginning of the term where all clubs present themselves. The clubs are a good chance to meet locals, try something new or continue a passion of yours.

5.2 **Food**

Singaporeans are crazy about food. No wonder “foodies” queuing for local specialities which range from high-end dining and hot pot to oyster omelette at traditional hawker stalls isn’t a seldom phenomenon at the weekend (We can highly recommend making a reservation for a table at a Korean BBQ buffet, Mala Hot Pot or Steamboat for an evening out with friends). Local food culture is well-known for its variety and influences from all over the world. This includes the famous Michelin-starred Hainanese Chicken Rice, one of several national dishes along with Chili Crab and Kaya Toast. Many expats from Europe have found a temporary home in Singapore and have formed Swiss, French and German communities - hence Western Cuisine as an outcome of this influence can be found as well.

As Singapore has a strict hygiene policy street food stalls were pooled from the outset to food centres which, in combination with Asianwide culinary influences, were the foundations for the city’s distinct food culture. As these centres have high hygiene standards, which distinguish Singapore from many other Southeast-Asian destinations, even people who tend to have a sensitive stomach can experiment with most local delicacies. Fortunately, food, in general, is very affordable. Hawker centres are located all over - even in the very heart of the city- and are benefiting not only one’s wallet but also one's taste buds. A typical food centre has an assortment of Indian (roti prata and curries), Chinese (dumplings, soups and mala hot pot), Korean BBQ, Malay (nasi goreng and nasi lemak), “seafood” and “mixed vegetables” stalls.

An average lunch or dinner costs around 4-8 SGD (3-5 €). A common food centre chain is called “Food republic” (the outlet next to SMU offers a student discount during the week), more traditional and popular sites include Newton Food Court and Maxwell Hawker Centre.

SMU accommodates its own food court called “Kofou” beneath the central library. Dishes come at 3 to 5.50 SGD as a discount student price. Further, several Thai, Indian and Japanese restaurants can be found in walking distance to SMU.

5.3 **Public transportation**

To use public transportation, you either need an EZ-link card or simply use your smartphone or credit card. You can buy an EZ-link card at every MRT station and pay your rides via tapping with the card from your prepaid account. Public transportation is really fast and reliable. Busses don’t arrive at a certain time point but are scheduled “every xx minutes”. For a 20 minute bus or short MRT (subway) ride to SMU you usually pay around 0.8 to 1.3 SGD. There is a small surcharge for rush hours. It works as pay per use unlike a monthly flat rate in Munich. All public transportation stops working at 12pm during the week. Alternatives are taxis, Grab and GoJek. On the weekends MRT and night busses are available a bit longer.
5.4 Cost of living

Rent: 800-1200 SGD a month
Transportation: about 50 SGD per month (if you live at Cityscape for public transportation), ride hailing via “Grab” is about ½ the price of German taxi rides except during the rush hour and at night time (sometimes Taxis are cheaper than Grab in case of “surge pricing” fares)
Food and groceries: 500 SGD a month
Dining-out is cheaper than in Germany, as most groceries must be imported prices are higher than at home (especially for dairy products, noodles and alcohol)
Traveling: (estimation 2 trips a month, depends on you) 500-800 SGD a month
Phone contract: 20 SGD a month
Including some further spendings you will approximately spend 2000-3000 SGD in total a month, but consider that it varies a lot regarding how often you travel, eat in fancy restaurants, etc.
On top of that there are the fixed costs of the flight to Singapore (approx. 600 - 800 EUR) and SMU miscellaneous fee (approx. 150 EUR).

5.5 Events

Nightlife:
There’s more nightlife in Singapore for exchange students than you would expect. You definitely should join Hazel’s Guestlist on Facebook. They offer free entrance to various clubs (2019: every Wednesday free entrance to BangBang Club, Thursday to CeLaVi on top of Marina Bay Sands, Saturday to BarRouge on top of Swiss Hotel and CeLaVi). Apart from that they organize pool parties, weekend trips and sell F1 tickets all at fair prices.
Good places to go out are: area around Clarke Quay and Boat Quay for bars; Clubs: 1-Altitude, Marquee, Kilo Lounge, Zouk, Attica and of course those mentioned above.
F1:
If you like motor sports you should consider watching the Grand Prix live, it’s a huge event in Singapore. Thousands of tourists flood the city and create a special atmosphere in combination with engine sounds which are echoing in the canyon of houses. Tickets are quite expensive (usually starting from 100-200 EUR), but worth it since there are concerts as well: Red Hot Chili Peppers, Swedish House Mafia, Fatboy Slim (2019). If you were not lucky enough to get a ticket you can still get a glimpse from some shopping centres and flyovers along the race track

6. Travelling

Singapore is the perfect travel hub in Asia with a big airport and many cheap flights (Low-Cost-Carriers: AirAsia, JetStar, Scoot). You can also travel to Malaysia by bus or to Indonesia by ferry. In and outside Singapore “Grab” is the most common ride hailing platform. In many countries “Grab bike” or “Grab TukTuk” offers a cheap and unusual way to move around. In Singapore most prices are fixed whereas in the residual SEA region price negotiations are common

6.1 Popular travel destinations among students

Malaysia Kuala Lumpur,
Thailand Bangkok, Phuket, Chiang Mai, Koh Samui
Indonesia Bali, Lombok, Java, Jakarta, Yogyakarta
Vietnam Hanoi, Ho-Chi-Minh City, Hoi An, Halong Bay, Ha Giang Motorbike Loop, Dalat
Philippines Palawan, Coron, El Nido, Cebu, Siargao Islands
Hong Kong
Cambodia Siem Reap including Angkor Wat, Phnom Penh, Koh Rong Island
Laos Vientiane

6.2 Travel report Myanmar

Breathtaking sunrises in between old pagodas and magnificent lakes guaranteed!
In contrast to many other Southeast Asian backpacker destinations Myanmar offers a less touristy and authentic experience. All you need is a keen interest in ancient temples and pagodas - you will find them in 1000 varieties. It seems as if time has stood still, the Burmese people live in traditional ways, little children roam the streets as little monks and ox carts are still used as means of transport. We wondered about VIP busses as a very comfortable travelling option and clean hostels which often include rooftop bars. The German Federal Foreign Office publishes useful information about the safety situation in the northern region of the country. Generally, Myanmar is considered safe - we never felt uncomfortable. For permission to enter the country German visitors are required either to have a visa on arrival (about $50, pilot project 2019) or an e-visa. First, we visited Yangon, which is the capital of Myanmar, then Old Bagan, Mandalay and Inle Lake. Travel times in between were often 10 hours, that’s why we took night busses (which saves you from paying any accommodation). We can highly recommend scheduling a minimum of 7 days for this tour. The archaeological site of Bagan can be explored best by Scooter, as you can stop whenever you want to visit the pagoda that you’ve just found next to the street. Finding the ultimate “secret sunrise / sunsets spots” is a popular activity at Old Bagan. Burmese kitchen offers mild curries and fried vegetables. These dishes come at a price around 5,000 Ks (3€). If you want to try Burmese street food at a stall (which you consider clean) visit a night market. For instance, we found a food street at Mandalay next to Kyauktawgyi pagoda which is worth a visit.
Sunrise at Old Bagan

Archeological site at Old Bagan

The general cargo vessel and water taxi at Inle Lake