

## Experience report

# Internship in Singapore

Scholarship period: 09.2018 – 01.2019

Subject of Study and Final Degree: Master of Science Chemistry

University: National University of Singapore

Identification Code: SG-2018-51423-w

## Why Singapore?

Singapore has two outstanding universities, the National University of Singapore (NUS) and the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), both of which rank among the best universities in the world according to various rankings. Additionally, Singapore is one of the most interesting places in South-East-Asia because it is a multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious country, where English is the first spoken language. Chinese, Malay and Indian people live together peacefully.

## How did I get to my internship?

With regard to our Master of Science degree program, we are able to complete a specialization internship in the subject of our Master's thesis. For this reason, I have searched for working groups whose research topics are most similar to my master's thesis and contacted the responsible professor directly. For the application, I have sent a request for the period of my internship and attached a certificate. Then my supervisor asked for a Skype interview, during which we were talking about my skills and knowledge. For example, we were talking about my bachelor's thesis. I applied almost 9 months in advance, but in my case 3 to 4 months would have been enough, as my supervisor was very flexible with regard to the start and the duration of my internship.

## Application for the visa

Getting the visa was quick and straightforward. As an intern, I received a Training Employment Pass (TEP). In Singapore, the employer must apply for the visa. So, he will send you all forms that he needs for the application. Once they are filled out, you send it back to him where they will be passed on to the relevant Ministry of Manpower (MOM). The whole process is done electronically and the processing time after submission of the documents is about 3 weeks. The cost for the visa was roughly 250 Euro. When arriving at the Singapore airport I received a temporary visa at the immigration counter. The actual visa (TEP) will be collected at the MOM.

## Public transport

I can recommend buying an EZ-Link card at the Airport directly. In Singapore you can travel almost everywhere using public transportation. Besides that, all kinds of electric scooters/bikes/hoverboards can be rented almost everywhere using a smartphone app. They can be picked up at a lot of places and dropped off at another location, which is very convenient for short distances (and fun, too).

## Accommodation

To find an accommodation in Singapore is very straightforward if you have a large budget available. I paid 750 euros per month for a small and very basic 10 square meter room with a shared bathroom. It was located in the Jurong district which is outside the city centre. For Singapore this is still affordable. If you want to live closer to the downtown area expect to pay more. I found my flat using AirB&B (Agoda.com is also quite common in Singapore) which I can highly recommend because you get the chance to live with the locals and therefore get to know the real Singaporean lifestyle. For my case, I shared a flat with a Chinese family which was a very life-enriching and interesting experience that gave me a deep insight into the Chinese culture.

## Life and food

Singapore is a diverse city of big skyscrapers and nature reserves as it strives for the vision of a `Garden City`. You will find a lot of quiet and beautiful places amid a busy city. You can go to the beaches, the zoo or head for some bars in the downtown area and a lot more. Also, food is a very important part of the life and culture in Singapore. Everywhere there are so-called food centres where you can choose

between varieties of small street food vendors. These food centres are an essential part of the Singaporean culture. The food is very cheap (between 2 to 4 euros per meal) and usually you can choose between Chinese, Indian, Malay, Thai and a lot more.

## My project and workplace

The NUS is a very huge, modern and spectacular campus where you can find almost everything you need. There are shopping stores, food centres, a gym and a swimming pool that you can use for free and a lot more. The department I worked in was located close to the NUS Hospital. The people in my working group were very friendly and obliging. Most of them were Singaporeans. Since Singapore follows the American school system, a bachelor's degree is sufficient in order to do their PhD. So, as a master student I was treated as a PhD student and was able to work independently by myself. The working time was usually 8 hours per day. We had group meetings every week, in which one was presenting his/her current project which ended in a big discussion. Additionally, a paper chosen from the one presenting was analysed. As this working group focused on different topics, the group meetings were very informative and enriching. There were also collaborations with different working groups, which focused on a similar topic. Besides work, a lot of activities were conducted, too. We went to Karaoke, Axe throwing or just celebrated different occasions and expanded our social networks.

## Summary

Overall, my Internship in Singapore was a great experience. I learned to work independently in a new surrounding with people from different cultures. I learned how to organize a project by myself and at the same time I got a great insight into a different culture.

Lastly, I want to thank the International Office for their great advice and support.

1. Marina Bay Sands



2. Flower Dome and Cloud Forest



3. The Chinese Garden



#### 4. The Singaporean Zoo



#### 5. Interview of three Nobel laureates

