

GOING INTERNATIONAL

SINGAPORE ELECTIVE – experience report

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During my 5th year of medical school, I completed a one-month elective in the subject of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the National University of Singapore (NUS), in KK Women's and Children's hospital.

As 5th and 6th year medical students at the Medical university of Vienna we had the option of organizing our electives outside of Austria if we wanted to, so I thought it was a perfect opportunity to get an insight into a different medical and socio-cultural environment. I also wanted to be as interactive and learn as much as possible, so I decided to choose a country where I knew the language. A friend of mine who was a year ahead of me at medical school had gone to Singapore for an elective the year before and had a very good experience.

As in Singapore English is the official spoken language and I only heard good things from my friend I decided to go there for an elective as well although I had never had a working experience in Asia before.

I applied directly through the online website of the NUS for their international clerkships. [Here](#) you can find all the information needed about the program, eligibility, fees, application process and accommodation as well.

The application includes an online document about your personal details, what hospital and subject you are applying for, as well as a short paragraph of your motivation. When the online part of the application is completed, there is a list of the documents that should be sent by mail. These includes among others: Blood work including certain vaccination titers, a confirmation of your student enrollment, your medical school transcripts, a letter of good standing and a liability and medical insurance (I received from the ÖH of the medical university of Vienna). The biggest disadvantage is that each week costs about 500 Singapore Dollars, which has to be paid by the student himself/herself. The whole application process lasts about a month after all the documentation is sent.

The first day I arrived at the NUS I received a schedule for my 4 weeks. I was assigned to a small group of 10 medical students of the NUS with whom I would go to lectures and conferences with different attendings, where we presented and discussed different patients we would see in the office or at the wards. These conferences had a particularly good learning effect because each student would choose the most interesting case she/he had and we would go through the diagnostic procedures and possible

diagnosis and therapy options. During the day I would switch between the obstetrical wards, where I had the chance to deliver with only the midwives and manage labour, the gynecological wards, where I would round with the attendings on the patients, the OR where I had the chance to assist in multiple gynecological and obstetrical surgeries and the office where I shadowed the attendings during their patient encounters. During my usual day I would arrive at the hospital around 8 am and be done mostly by 4 pm. Overall I was very satisfied with my elective. The house staff including the attendings, residents and nurse staff were very helpful and open to all questions. The medical students were also very welcoming and eager to meet all the foreigners. They were also nice enough to take me out to dinner a couple of times and show me the city of Singapore.

The KK women's and children's hospital is the biggest obstetrical and gynecological hospital in southeast Asia, so the amount and the variety of patients I saw was impressive. Also, the hospital was modern and very well equipped. You can find the official website of the hospital [here](#).

During my one-month elective I rented a room in an apartment through Airbnb, because it was really close to the hospital and the most comfortable solution for me. The NUS offers a number of student dorms as well.

Outside of the hospital I had a lot of time to enjoy the city of Singapore. On one hand I found it more expensive than Vienna, but on the other there were many options for food at their famous „food quarters“ that were more affordable.

A definite must see is the huge China town and the Singapore zoo that offers multiple tours and even a night safari, where all the night animals can be spotted. For all the shopping lovers Orchard road is full of high retail-brands and more common and affordable brands as well as multiple shopping malls that also offer a variety of stores. If you get the chance, I would recommend you to spend a night at the famous Marina bay sands, with a day at the infinity pool that has an amazing view of the skyscrapers - this is definitely a unique experience.

Prior to my travel I did a bit of research about the city and found this website helpful:
http://www.yoursingapore.com/de_de.html .

All together I had an amazing time getting to know a totally different culture and getting a first-hand insight into one of the world's leading hospitals in Obstetrics and gynecology and would definitely recommend it to anyone who has the chance to go.

Some facts on Singapore

Singapore, officially the Republic of Singapore, and often referred to as the *Lion City* or the *Little Red Dot*, is a sovereign city-state in Southeast Asia, and the world's only island city-state. It lies one degree (137 km) north of the equator, south of the southernmost tip of continental Asia and Peninsular Malaysia. Singapore's territory consists of a diamond-shaped main island along with 62 other islets. Since independence, extensive land reclamation has increased its total size by 23% (130 km), and its greening policy has covered the densely populated island (5,610,000 inhabitants) with tropical flora, parks and gardens. The currency in Singapore is Singapore dollar (SGD).

Interesting Websites

- [Website about tourism](#) in Singapore
- [National University of Singapore \(NUS\)](#)
- [KK Women's and Children's hospital](#)
- [Clinical Elective Programme NUS](#)

Pictures



Buddha Tooth Relic temple in China town, Milena Nikolic



Gardens by the bay, Melina Nikolic



KK Women's and Children's hospital, Milena Nikolic

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