



Universitas 21 Summer School report

- U21 event and university visited: FASSTRACK Asia / National University of Singapore (NUS)
- Name: Layla Rogers



- Why did you choose to apply for this U21 event?

I chose to apply for this U21 event as I thought it to be an amazing opportunity as I have a particular interest in cultural diversity through studying religion and have never travelled a lot before so I thought it'll be crazy not to apply for such a fantastic scheme. Plus, the bursary was also one of the main reasons why I also applied as I wouldn't have been able to fund the trip alone so for the University to help out was so generous and I would definitely suggest that when it comes to U21 students are not put off by their financial background as the grant covers pretty much all of what is for me and many others a once in a lifetime opportunity.

- What was the best thing about your experience?

There were so many great things about this experience that I can't put it all into words. But the main thing I really loved about the trip were the friends I made along the way, in fact via the

NUS Facebook page I met someone also going on the same scheme at the Airport just before the flight! and hung out with her during the remainder of the trip all from posting what flight I'm on to would anyone want to share a taxi only to find out someone was on the same flight meaning I had a friend from day one.

The amount of independence gained from the trip was also one of the many highlights for me, as from booking my flights to working out the MRT routes throughout Singapore enabled me to be in control and showed me that I can travel again to such a big place far different from Birmingham and my hometown back in Wales.

Plus, the food and sights were also spectacular particularly in my opinion the Taiwanese Beef Noodle soup I tried in the field trip to Taiwan and Gardens by the bay one of Singapore's main attractions which performs a light show every night.

- What benefits do you think you gained in relation to your personal development e.g. your confidence, competence, knowledge, future employability?

Throughout my time at Asia under the FASSTRack Scheme and the lead up to it there were many benefits which helped me in developing my interpersonal skills. For instance, the lead up to the trip benefited my organisational skills such as the booking of the flights and the coach to the Airport as well as the

budgeting of the bursary into different sections.

The trip also helped immensely with my confidence when it came to meeting new people though it helped knowing everyone was in the same boat of not really knowing each other.

The scheme also scores highly in helping with future employability in my opinion as it enables many skills to be developed during the duration of the trip ones you may not even think you're capable of e.g. organising and planning the flights, accommodation etc.

- How did your U21 bursary help you?

The U21 bursary helped me significantly covering all of the travel and accommodation costs whilst still giving me enough left over for food and drink on a day to day basis. The only money I had to fund myself was spending money which didn't work out a lot anyway due to the good exchange rates.

- What did you think were the most attractive things about the University of Birmingham when promoting it to other international students?

When promoting the University of Birmingham to other International students the things I viewed to be the most attractive about the University is its architecture such as the Aston Webb and great Hall. The library was another thing I viewed to be highly attractive with its different coloured glass panels. The University's greenery is also another selling point with its clean cut grass and trees surrounding the campus.

- Is there anything you would have changed about your visit?

There is nothing I would've changed about my visit as I thoroughly enjoyed my experience at NUS in Singapore and my visit to Taiwan. I just wish I travelled a bit more around the surrounding areas as you're allowed to do so in your spare time.

- What advice would you give to students thinking of applying for a U21 Award in the future?

The best advice I could give to students who are thinking of applying for a U21 Award in the future would be to just go for it, as there is nothing to lose yet so much to gain! From new friends to new experiences all in a once in a lifetime opportunity.

