I chose to go to Lund University in Sweden for the fall 2015 term. Lund is located near Malmo, which is about 15 minutes across the bridge to Copenhagen. I picked it because of its proximity to and international airport in Copenhagen, and other surrounding Swedish cities.

Before I left, I had to apply for housing and my courses. When applying for housing, make sure that you have read up on all the housing options you select. You can submit 5 options, and all will be considered. I didn’t even get any of my preferences. Do not turn down your housing offer, as it is very competitive to get accommodation in Lund! There are some options to live in Malmo or Helsingborg, but I don’t recommend that, you are removed from the student life in Lund. I got Klostergarden Student housing, which is on the south side of Lund. I don’t really recommend it if you’re looking for a busy dorm, it’s pretty quiet. However you do get your own kitchen and bathroom which is nice. There is a grocery store steps away from the apartments, and if you get a bike, campus is 10-15 minutes away. Klostergarden is one of the most expensive places, at about $650-700 a month.

Courses can seem quite confusing on the Lund website, but the advisors are pretty flexible in changing or altering your selections once you get there.

I had to get a residence card to stay in Sweden. It was very easy and didn’t take long to get it approved. Once I got to Sweden, I had to book an appointment at the migrations office in Malmo to get my photo taken.

I tried to pack lightly, which I highly recommend. Don’t pack a lot of things like linens and household items, IKEA will have everything for pretty cheap!

Though IKEA is cheap, Sweden in general is not. Trains and buses are pretty pricy, but they have a really good system so it is easy to get around. Groceries can be expensive depending on the store you go to, and really the prices there are not too much different than in Canada. Alcohol is extremely expensive, and you’ll probably learn to start buying in Denmark or duty free.

Lund doesn’t really get too cold of a fall, it snowed once but melted shortly after. I got by without my heavy coat, but I still needed to layer up occasionally. Bring a good raincoat and shoes, the weather is hard to predict and the worst thing is getting caught in the rain biking to class. Don’t bring too many summer clothes, once you arrive in August you only have a couple more weeks of warm weather, then it’s pants from then on.

I was planning on going to arrival day, but my plane got in too late. If you do make it on time, there will be people from Lund at the Copenhagen airport ready to help you buy a train ticket. At arrival day you can buy linens, and tickets for events during arrival weeks. Copenhagen airport is pretty easy to maneuver, and you should have no problem finding your way onto the right train if no one is there to
help. Once you get to Lund, ensure you have a map of where you’re going. If you’re like me, and not used to European windy streets, it may be overwhelming. However, if you get lost, everyone speaks English and will be happy to help you out.

If you miss arrival day, be sure to go to the International office to get your arrival package. It comes with a SIM card, and JoJo card (bus pass) which are both extremely useful.

I bought a bike right away. Bikes are essential in Lund. Don’t get a super high end one, it may get stolen.

I took an Intro to Swedish class during orientation weeks. It was helpful to get a few phrases down, and if you pass the exam you get 3ECTS credits.

I chose to continue my Swedish through the semester, and I really enjoyed the class. I recommend it, as you will become more immersed in the culture. Even though everyone pretty much speaks English if they need to, it’s nice to complete a transaction at the grocery store in Swedish!

I took a Swedish Culture class, and a sustainable eating class which are both classes for exchange students. Both were interesting as they are not things that I would ever take in my kinesiology degree. I did try to get into some science courses, but the course load is a bit heavier, and I wanted to have the flexibility to travel.

Grading seemed to be fairly generous, and if you fail an exam you have the chance to take it again.

Travel is easy in Sweden. You can get to almost anywhere by train. Malmo is about 20 minutes away, and is a great city to explore. In the summer they have a big festival which I recommend seeing. Helsingborg is 20 minutes north of Lund, and it is possible to take a ferry to Helsingor, Denmark. Gothenborg is a beautiful city with a cute old town, and archipelagos. I recommend doing at least a night there as it takes 3 hours to get there by train. Stockholm is 5-6 hours train, or a 45 minute flight. Stockholm is a must see, and was probably one of my favorite cities.
There are many good day trips around Lund, and lot’s of hiking locations. My favorite was Kullaberg, which is north of Helsingborg. Also try to get down to the most southern point of Sweden!

In Lund itself, there are many good places to eat, but it is usually quite expensive. The better option would be to head to the Nations. At the beginning of the semester you pick a nation to join, I joined Hallands, but it really doesn’t matter which one you pick. Nations are like fraternities or sororities, but are not as exclusive. Each nation has accommodations for students, a bar, club, and events. It’s really fun to get involved in the nations, making lunch or serving at the bar.

I joined a field hockey team, Nayan Damar Lag, which was really fun and I met some great people on the team. I brought my gear with me because I knew I was going to play. I recommend joining a club or team!

Swedes can seem quite guarded until you get to know them. But they are very nice people! I felt very safe walking at night by myself as well.

I was able to travel to so many different countries. I got to Munich for Oktoberfest, Paris, Finland, Switzerland, Hungary…the list goes on! If you meet a group of people who also want to do a lot of travelling, that’s even better!

I really enjoyed my experience, and I recommend Lund to other students for sure!