Preparation for Exchange
The closest airport to Lund, Sweden is actually in Denmark so this is important to know when booking your flights. Once you land in Denmark there are volunteers from the university to guide you to the train and help you buy a ticket. In Sweden you almost always need to buy a ticket before you board a train. Sweden is a debit/credit card society so make sure to notify your bank that you’ll be abroad and your cards should work fine. Skåne (the county Lund lies in) is known for being very windy so bring a windbreaker/good jacket. I would also recommend packing an adaptor for your electronics and unlocking your cell phone before you leave Canada as they give you a free phone card on arrival day. Make sure to sign up for the 2 week introductory Swedish course and also the Mentor Group before you come (they should provide details to both with your acceptance/introduction emails). These are two great ways to meet other students and help you say simple day-to-day things in Swedish. Hopefully you landed accommodation through LU Accommodation but if you are searching yourself don’t limit yourself to just Lund. Malmo, Helsingborg and other smaller surrounding cities on the transit routes are perfectly commutable daily distances.

Arrival Day – don’t miss it!
If you are staying for a whole year in Sweden I would recommend visiting the Tax Agency’s set up on arrival day so you can obtain a ‘samordningsnummer’ if you would like to work during your studies. I did not do this and now it is a hassle to obtain one so late in my stay. Be sure to also get a free ‘JoJo card’ for transit in Lund and the rest of Skåne. My boyfriend is Swedish and we lived together so I therefore did not live in LU Accommodation but Arrival Day is when they give out keys and offer shuttle rides to the different residences. I have heard that bedding is not provided in the residences but it is sold (a bit expensively) on arrival day so students on a budget beware. Students would be better-off taking a trip to IKEA (Malmö) to purchase bedding however the trip can be daunting when you first arrive and the University organized shuttle trip to IKEA isn’t until a couple weeks after Arrival Day, so most pay the extra for the bedding.

During Exchange
Travel in Sweden is mostly all by train. There is also a bus system that serves the city of Lund and the greater area. Your Jojo card can be loaded with funds and is cheaper than buying individual fares each time you travel. If you live in another city it works out better financially to get a student monthly pass if you’re commuting daily.
When you first arrive there is almost too much to do. There will be events every single night, if you choose to take part. Everyone is so keen to meet new people and make friends that there will be a constant stream of invites. Facebook is a crucial way to keep in touch with groups and
organizations and is used for nearly every event. If you don’t have Facebook...you might want to consider it, in order to stay in the loop.

Student life is everything in Lund. Pick a Nation that suits you (there’s an Open House day at the term start) and become a member of StudentLund. The membership fee is small compared to the fun, and you require it to go to nearly every student party. It also gets you student discounts at local shops.

**Reflection**

The biggest challenges I’ve faced on my exchange year have been missing my loved ones. I am fortunate that my boyfriend lives in Sweden and this made my transition so much easier. I am very happy with my decision to learn Swedish, as it meant I was happy to go to parties where everyone spoke Swedish where I imagine other students may have shied away. I got quite involved with one of the Nations at the beginning of the year but slowly lessened my involvement due to study requirements and the fact that I didn’t feel like partying as much as they did. If I could go back in time, I probably would have been more involved with LundaEkonomerna, the Business student union as they seemed to mix fun with seriousness and have a really cool charity organization called Light.

Before I came I wish I realized that not living in student housing would affect how many people I got to meet. Most of my friends ended up being from the Nation, novisch activities (activities for new students) or business courses but I know that living with other people creates really strong relationships.

My advice for future Lund students would be to live in student housing if possible, learn at least some of the Swedish language and don’t be afraid to get to know Swedes. I have heard people saying Swedes are reserved and stand-offish but my experience has been such the opposite; they are some of the most sincere and kind people I have ever met. And they sure know how to throw a good party. A lot of international students tend to hang out with kids from their own country which is totally fine especially when you’re missing the comforts of home, but remember you’re in Sweden to experience something new and what better way than to get to know your Swedish peers? My last pieces of advice are buy a bike, WEAR A HELMET (even if no one else does; trust me I crashed hard) and save a little time in each day to take a Swedish ‘fika’ and appreciate the amazing country that you are fortunate enough to spend time in.
Photos

The beautiful school library.

A nice bike ride in Täby, near Stockholm
Fika with a friend in Helsingborg.

The beautiful school grounds near AF Borgen in Lund.
Redbull Tandem bicycle race with Östgöta Nation.

A beautiful ‘sittning’ with tuxedos and ball-gowns.
Baking Swedish Christmas cookies with Morfar.

Christmas feels in Stockholm.