My Time at Lund University, Sweden

Exchange Report

Hej!

I am a 4th year Business student who studied at Lund University in Sweden from August 2016 – June 2017 (Full-year exchange). The last 10 months have been the best time of my life. I travelled around the world, experienced a completely different culture, and made life-long friends in Sweden. I will be sharing my experiences throughout this report and be providing some tips for future exchange students that want to study at Lund University!

Pre-departure

Before leaving for Sweden, there are a number of things I had to do in Canada to make sure there would be no problems down the road during my exchange.

Packing

Sweden is a very cold country, colder than one would think. Besides the essentials, I recommend bringing a thick winter jacket for the months of October – February. Personally, during the last few months of my full-year exchange, I started missing my family. I also recommend bringing pictures that remind you of home – including pictures of pets, family, friends, etc. Finally, keep in mind that you will be travelling to different countries and cities, which means... shopping! I left a little extra room in my luggage to Sweden, which helped fit extra clothes, gifts and anything else I bought during my travels.

Residence Permit

The residence permit application was somewhat of a hassle, however, the quicker it is finished, the earlier the approval for the permit. I heard back from the agency regarding my approval about 2 months later I finished my application. Students going to Sweden should make sure they show proof of sufficient funds in their residence permit application.

Passport

I had to renew my passport before I left for Sweden because it would have expired during my stay in Sweden, which would stop me from coming back to Canada. If
students need to renew their passport, they should do so well ahead of time before departing to Sweden.

Financial Details

Sweden uses a currency called Swedish Crowns (SEK). Sweden accepts credit cards in most places; however, I would recommend bringing a few thousand SEK to pay for activities held by the school that can be bought during the orientation weeks.

Arrival and Orientation

Arriving at Copenhagen airport after a very long flight from Vancouver, I was tired, lost, and in need of direction. Luckily, student volunteers from Lund University were standing right by the baggage exit in bright light blue shirts, to welcome exchange students. From there, they directed us to buy a train ticket from the airport to Lund Central. The train took about 45 minutes and once off the train, there were more student volunteers to drive us from Lund Central station to the LU accommodation offices, where we got our keys. This is the first day of a two-week orientation.

There are plenty of activities during orientation, where students can mingle and make friends. Activities include a treasure hunt, welcome party, hike, and sports day. Some of these activities can be paid for on the day of arrival.

Accommodation

Accommodation is extremely hard to find in Lund. I applied the minute that the housing application opened because I had heard how high the demand was. I got very lucky and got my first choice (Parentesen), however, some of my friends had come to Sweden without housing. As for Parentesen, it is a great residence because of its liveliness and social environment. Parentesen’s residents are mostly Swedish, with about 2 or 3 exchange students on each floor. I would highly recommend this residence to someone looking to make Swedish friends very easily!

Another residence that seems to have many Swedish students is Sparta. This residence is also very lively, with a common floor/kitchen where floor mates can socialize and do other activities together.

For students who want a quieter environment, I would recommend Palsjoang. Here, you get your own kitchen, own shower, and no common room or kitchen. All the residents here are exchange students.
Academics

Lectures at Lund University were very engaging and eye opening. Professors encourage questions and discussions amongst students, creating a comfortable atmosphere. In the 8 classes that I took, none had more than 100 students and most students were on exchange as well. This formed a very diverse group of students from all around the world and created interesting discussion and brainstorming. Lectures were taught in English and flowed very well.

Most of my lectures were once or twice a week and about 2-3 hours per week. Lectures were not mandatory for grading, however, I highly recommend attending. Classes gave me a new insight on the learning differences between North America and Europe.

100% of the grade was determined by the final exam in 2 of my classes. The rest had a group project, a group presentation and a final exam. It was a pleasure working with students from different parts of the world as I learned so much just through our teamwork.

Nations

Nations at Lund University are social groups that students must join in the first couple weeks in Lund. During one of the orientation days, students have a chance to get to know the nations at a fair run by the nation’s representatives.

Nations hold social activities everyday including brunches, board game nights, sports games, and sittnings (dinner parties). For example, Hallands nation, one of the 13 nations, holds volleyball drop-in every Wednesday where students can come in at the set time and play volleyball with other students. Except on Sundays, there is an event held by a nation that students can participate in, as long as they are part of a nation.

Lund – The City, The People, The Culture

Lund is a student city that has a warm feeling once you get settled in. You can get to anywhere in the city by foot or by a short bike ride. One of my favorite things about the city is being able to walk by the beautiful cathedral right in the heart of the square.

The people in Lund are very friendly and social with one another. The Swedes I met were very welcoming and inclusive and I felt very lucky to live in a city like Lund.
Coming to Sweden, I experienced a big culture shock, like anyone would. However, I welcomed it and saw the change as an opportunity to grow. The buildings are different, the people speak a different language, and things are done a little differently. But this was all a part of the experience and I wouldn’t have had it any other way.

Travel

It seemed like every other weekend I was travelling to a new city in Europe with my friends I made on exchange. I used a website called Skyscanner to book my flights, as well as SASyouth. SAS is an airline that provides discounts to people under 25 with SASyouth. Every city I visited in Europe, I experienced a new and exciting environment. Having the opportunity to visit these amazing places, I felt extremely grateful. I watched Neymar play soccer in Barcelona, I saw Paris from the Eiffel Tower, and I took a dip in the Blue Lagoon. One thing to keep in mind with travelling is that you are a student – with deadlines, group meetings and assignments.

Advice

1) Everyone in Sweden speaks English almost fluently. Although Swedish is their preferred language, don’t worry about communication barriers.
2) Don’t be nervous about meeting people. I remember when I first came to Lund, I was worried it would be difficult to meet people and make friends. What I did not realize was that most exchange students are in the same boat as you and want to meet new people. There are plenty of opportunities and events set up by the school where students can get to know one another.
3) Buy a bike once you settle into your residence. It will help you get around town and you will fit right in with the Swedes!
4) Keep an open mind and enjoy what may be the most free, exciting time of your life. Time definitely flies when you’re having fun and my 10 months in Sweden definitely ended too soon.
An Emoji-themed sittning (Swedish dinner party) held by Ostgota nation

The Lund Cathedral right in the heart of Lund
My floor mates having breakfast in the kitchen at my residence

The beautiful ivy-covered Lund University library