

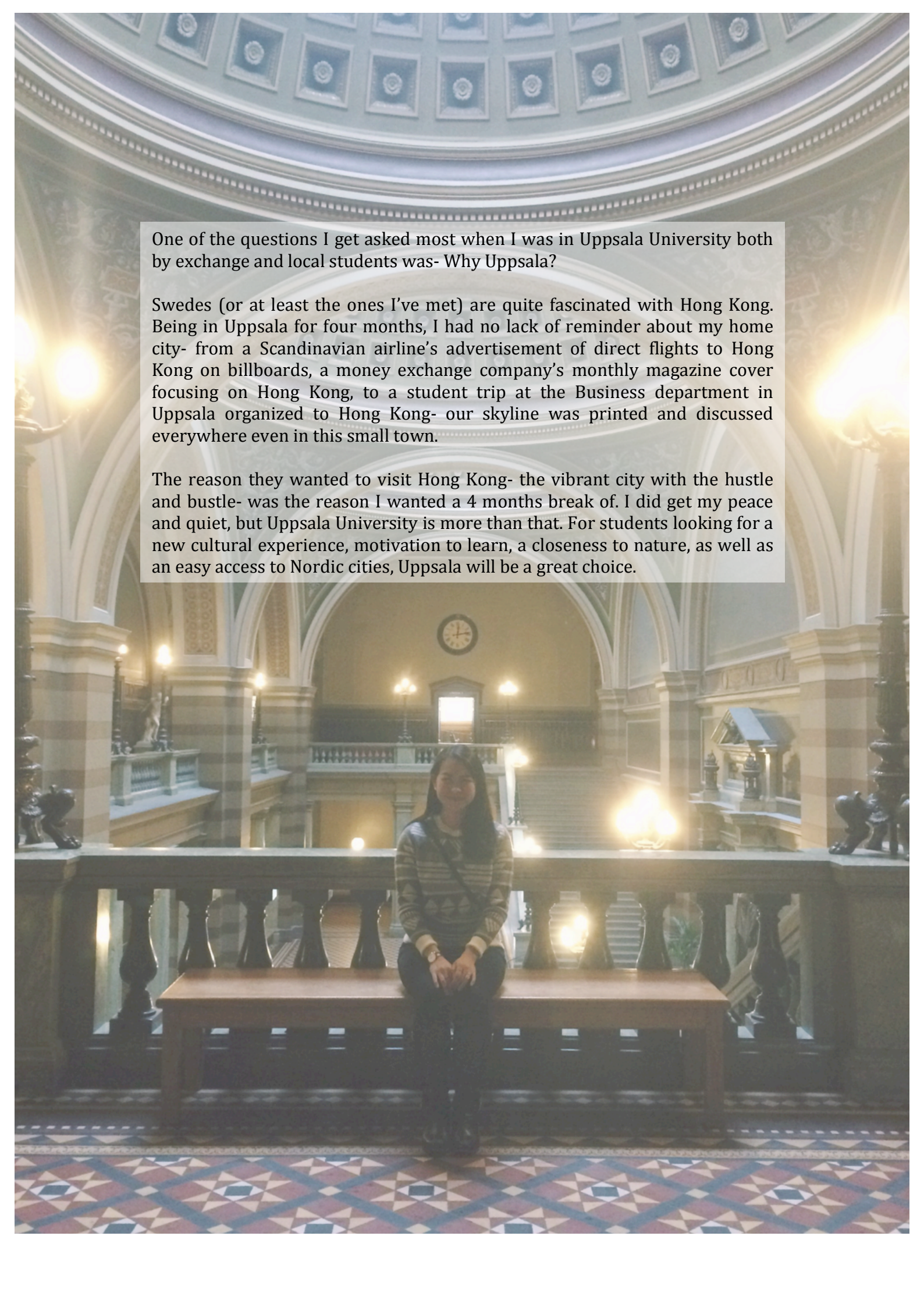
Exchange Report- Uppsala University Fall 2015



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET



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A woman with long dark hair, wearing a striped sweater and dark pants, is sitting on a wooden bench in a grand, ornate hall. The hall features a large dome with a grid of decorative panels, arched windows, and a patterned floor. The lighting is warm and golden, creating a cozy atmosphere.

One of the questions I get asked most when I was in Uppsala University both by exchange and local students was- Why Uppsala?

Swedes (or at least the ones I've met) are quite fascinated with Hong Kong. Being in Uppsala for four months, I had no lack of reminder about my home city- from a Scandinavian airline's advertisement of direct flights to Hong Kong on billboards, a money exchange company's monthly magazine cover focusing on Hong Kong, to a student trip at the Business department in Uppsala organized to Hong Kong- our skyline was printed and discussed everywhere even in this small town.

The reason they wanted to visit Hong Kong- the vibrant city with the hustle and bustle- was the reason I wanted a 4 months break of. I did get my peace and quiet, but Uppsala University is more than that. For students looking for a new cultural experience, motivation to learn, a closeness to nature, as well as an easy access to Nordic cities, Uppsala will be a great choice.

Part I. Monthly Activity Log

August: Arrival and Crayfish Party

I chose to arrive on the recommended date for international exchange students, which was a week before classes actually begin. The school offered free transportation from Stockholm Arlanda airport to Uppsala, and directly transports you to the registration hall with counters set up and all information needed to settle down. There were some organized orientation activities at different Nations throughout the week, but none were mandatory and in the two or three that I went, there weren't that many students. Quick adjusting was definitely needed for me, as there were all of a sudden too much space and too much air to breathe in.

Late August, my exchange buddy invited me to a Crayfish Party where people gather to celebrate the last of summer eating crayfish, drinking schnapps and singing songs from songbooks. It was a very fun experience, and everyone was welcoming.



September: Classes and Nordic cities on the weekends

The semester at Uppsala is further chopped into two where you would only take two courses at most from the Business School at the same time. The first two classes I started were Entrepreneurship and International Firm in Global Economy. Each class only meets once a week, with one tutorial for International Firm in Global Economy where small groups lead more discussion. Overall the environment was very similar to HKUST. I had Basic Swedish class in addition to those two throughout the semester.



Every weekend in September, I tried to visit a Nordic city. I covered Oslo, Helsinki and Copenhagen with HKUST classmates as well as new friends I made at Uppsala.

October: Papers and presentations, then long break



I focused on finishing papers and working with my group on presentations the first two weeks of October as it marks the end of my first two classes in Uppsala. It was also on Cinnamon buns day when one of my group mates who is a Swedish local invited the group to go to her home to “work” and make cinnamon buns. It was very fun to learn to make the buns, which are so prominent in their culture.

I also participated in the Uppsals Student Race running 5K. Prior to the race, I had met some exchange students runners who I practiced running with. It was nice to enjoy the natural light and temperature. We kept being reminded that the dark will come earlier and it will get colder.



End of October is either sit-in exams or a break for you, depending on whether your classes have sit-in exams. Luckily for me my classes all had take-home exams so I took this break to travel to another continent, the US, and visited more friends there.

November: New beginning

New classes begin and it didn't take too long to settle back into the class environment again. During November, I also participated in a preliminary round of the KPMG Case Competition in Uppsala University. I formed the team with three Swedish students, one of them my exchange buddy, and although not making it into the next round to represent Uppsala University to compete with all Swedish University teams, it was a good experience and good networking event. Swedish students I worked with are very hardworking and can accumulate a lot of knowledge from their previous classes to put them into use. I find them very modest and easy to communicate ideas with during group discussion. In terms of presentation skills, sometimes they might be less confident than what I remember my classmates and I used to be.



December: Wrap up

The sun sets about 2 minutes earlier everyday and in December the darkness becomes very apparent. The most extreme I experienced was when the sun rises only at around 8:30am and sets at 2:40pm. It was quite gloomy but luckily it was close to the end of my exchange and more people came to visit. I went to Stockholm for the Christmas markets and light shows, as well as visited more restaurants and cafes to spend the last bit to the fullest. On December 13th was Saint Lucia where there are candle light services at the church. My buddy also had a gathering that I went to chat and enjoy some company.

Once I finished my last classes, I once again only had take home exams left. I left on December 17th and began travelling to Hamburg, Hanover, Berlin in Germany, Budapest in Hungary and Vienna in Austria.

January: More travels and return

My travels in December was amazing, I enjoyed every part of it. I made one trip back to Uppsala in January to do final packing and welcome one more

friend visiting from the US. With her, I visited Reykjavik in Iceland. I would say Iceland is a must visit if you ever exchange in the Nordic. It's worth the visit even if you are not on exchange! Every view was breathtaking and my experience there was wonderful. Contrary to belief, Iceland's temperature did not went below freezing temperate. It was actually even warmer than Sweden and warmer than expected. I would recommend joining one of the many local tours to venture outside of Reykjavik to see the Golden Circle. I rode on Icelandic horses and with all the mountains and river around you, it was a true touch with nature.

I said final goodbyes to friends I made in Uppsala, and went to London for a last stop before flying back to Hong Kong on a direct flight from London Heathrow airport

Iceland...



Part II. General Exchange Information

Visa application

You can get more information on the Swedish consulate website. Basically you first fill out an online application for a residence permit, selecting that you will visit as a student for less than 6 months, then will receive e-mail notification to visit the Consulate in Wanchai to submit documents and take photos. After about a month, they will notify you again for the pick up of the residence card. The whole process took less than two months. One thing to be alert about is the opening hours of the Consulate. It is mentioned online and you should plan accordingly when you visit to take photos and submit documents, as well as picking up the card.

Accommodation

Exchange students at Uppsala University are guaranteed housing. A link to register for housing is included in an e-mail from Uppsala welcoming International Exchange students after the exchange offered is accepted. All rooms are singles in Sweden. Most also have a private bathroom. Normally seven to twelve people share a corridor and a kitchen.

Flogsta is known to be the exchange students dorm with a lot of parties, however, it is far from the Business school and requires either a bike ride for about 10 minutes, or taking the bus. I was registered to Karlsrogatan 3, with a private bathroom and sharing the kitchen with seven others in the corridor at the price of 3354SEK/ month. I enjoy my accommodation even though there were less exchange students. It is clean, peaceful and also only a less than five minute walk to Ekonomikum, the Business School where my classes were. Washing and drying machines are located in the basement and were free to use.

Courses

Bachelor degree's courses are all taught in Swedish. Hence, we have two options- sign up for courses in English targeting exchange students, or get exempt and try to enroll in Master courses. I was lucky to be able to enroll in the following master courses and enjoyed especially The International Firm in a Global Economy, as well as Marketing Strategy. There were a lot of group work but masters students were all hardworking and fluent in English, some even have years of working experience in different parts of the world already! It was easy to work with them and in fact I have made some great friends and gained a great network.

2FE805 The International Firm in a Global Economy	Lectures and Tutorials. The topic revolves around multinational firms dominating in the world, very relevant in terms of what I am studying. I particularly enjoyed the guest speakers.
2FE623 Entrepreneurship	Lectures only. The professor emphasizes throughout class that Entrepreneurship can't be taught, but it was nice to study cases as well as

	discuss among class. I would say this class is a little boring though and that I enjoyed less of it compared to the others I took in Uppsala.
2FE870 Marketing Strategy	Market Stimulation. This class involved very little lectures, it was basically hands on experiencing on the Marketstrat stimulation. It is a virtual world where teams are “companies” to compete in selling smartphones. Great Professor and great class.
2FE819 Leadership	Lectures and Tutorials. Instead of developing a leader in you, this class actually studies theories of different types of leadership styles. Hence, it is less boring and less participative. Each group had to teach one tutorial topic on a leadership style.
Basic Swedish	Even though I cannot speak and interact much on the streets of Sweden with my Swedish, I nevertheless familiarized with the vocabularies. Classes were fun and the language is challenging, but worth experiencing.

Social Clubs/Facilities

Almost all students belong to a “nation” in Uppsala University. For Swedish students, their nation is the area in Sweden in which they are from. There are a total of 13 nations, as exchange students, you can join whichever you would like. Snerikes nation and Stockholm nation are famous for their parties. If you belong to either one, you can enter to their parties on Tuesday and Thursday for free. One thing to note is that lines for parties in Uppsala form in as early as 6pm, especially the first one of the semester! I was too late and couldn’t get in the first time in Snerikes. If you’re not that interested into parties, the nations provide other benefits such as cheap lunches and social events. What nations offer can be checked here: <https://uppsalastudent.com/nationsguiden>

Being a business student, you must also know Borgen, which is a white house near Ekonomikum for business students to study in or get some free coffee and snacks. Every other Tuesday mornings, they have a breakfast meeting there as well where students share about world issues and what is going on for Business students in Uppsala. It is really beneficial to go and meet people and know what you can join. From time to time, they would also have other events hosted in that house. Be sure to follow “Uppsalaekonomerna” on Facebook.

Lastly, there are no free gyms for students in Uppsala. The two options for gyms are Campus 1477 and Fitness 24/7, which have membership fees. Campus 1477 targets to Uppsala students and is the newest gym. Besides weight lifting machines, treadmills and elliptical, they offer yoga, spinning, dancing classes...etc. If you hold a membership, you can go to all classes for free. They have a free trial week in the beginning of the semester. Afterwards, you can pay

per month, per semester, or per year. I have been running outdoors until the last month of exchange when it was too cold, I joined Campus 1477 for a month with a price of 500SEK. I loved their spinning classes and went every other day, which I would say is a good deal with the price I have paid.



Getting Around

I lived close enough to the school and didn't mind walking at other times so unlike a lot of students, do not own a bike. Otherwise, most students in Uppsala have a bike. Biking in Uppsala is also easy with bike paths. In case you would like to go further, buses are also available in Uppsala. They are known as UL and you can purchase a UL card to put credit in it, so each bus ride will cost 20SEK compared to a higher price if you pay by credit card per trip when you get on the bus.

Trains to travel to and from Stockholm in Uppsala are also easily accessible. Centralstation in Uppsala is 25 minutes walk from the school. A train ride to Stockholm is only 38 minutes and runs every hour. You can check the schedule and purchase tickets on www.sj.se.



Expenses

I would say my total expense is right below \$100,000 HKD. Out of that, 40% would be used on my time in Sweden, the rest for all travel expenses. Keep a look out for cheap plane prices using Google flights and Skyscanner. I also choose to stay in hostels when travelling. Sweden is only costly if you eat out a lot, otherwise, supermarket prices are quite close to that of Hong Kong.

Part III. Checklist

Even in a small town like Uppsala, you will be able to get pretty much everything in town where at least one of every type of store exist. The most important things to bring to travel would always be the following:

- ✓ Passport
- ✓ School admittance letter (required when passing through immigration)
- ✓ Sweden residence permit
- ✓ Currency (SEK, EUR, USD- always helpful to exchange with)
- ✓ European charger (two- round plug)

******Feel free to contact me if you have more questions about my exchange!
Best of luck!! ******

