



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

2017 Spring Semester Exchange Report

Uppsala University, Sweden

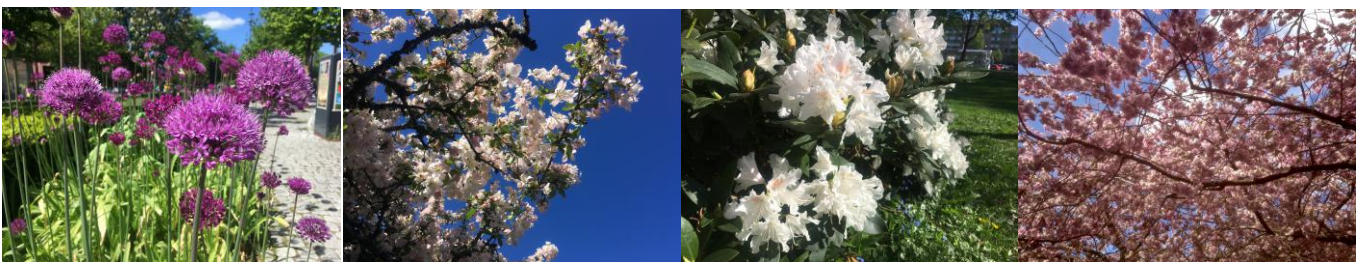


Fung Nga Lun Ellen

Marketing and Management, 4Y

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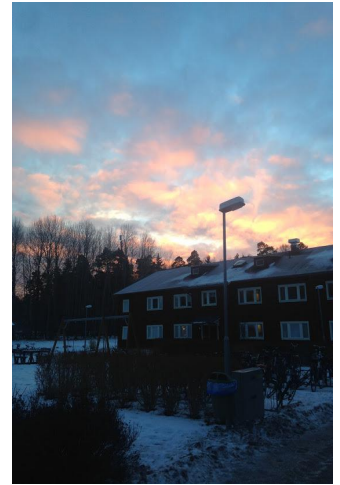
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Part 1 Monthly Log

January 2017

Since I was asked to arrive on 13th (I got this arrival date from the host school 2 months before the semester begins), I arrived Stockholm at the midnight of 12th and stayed one night at the airport. There was a school bus took me to the registration point and I met my buddy there. She took me around and helped me to finish all the registration. I got my student portal account and the key of my dorm room. The school would also arrange cars to take you to the dorm room during those registration days. I lived in Lilla Sunnersta which is 6 km away from the city center. Therefore, my buddy also helped me to buy the first monthly student bus ticket at the city center. After the weekend, the first period started and I have joined some orientation activities, which would be last for 2 weeks after the first registration day. I also managed to spend some time walking around Ekonomikum where all the business classes held in. Speaking of classes, I needed to do a home exam at the end of January. Also, the weather was quite cold, ranging around -3 to -7 degrees during the daytime, and early sunset at 3 pm, so I did not go to travel a lot.



February 2017

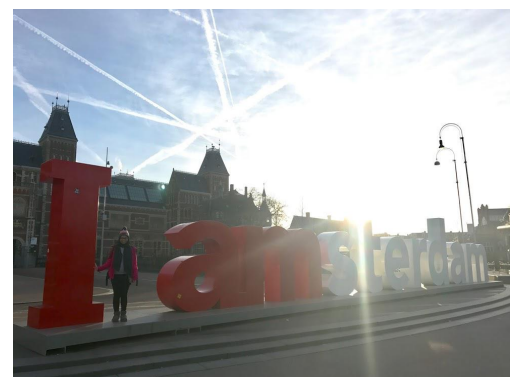


The weather turned a bit colder at the beginning and dropped to -8 degrees in the afternoon so there was more snowing. But it was acceptable if wearing enough clothes and avoiding going out late at night. It is suggested to check the hourly temperature before planning schedule and going out. The time of sunset was delaying but the dark night sky still arrived before 5 pm so it was still early nighttime this month. As for studying, there were more seminars, which required presentation and interaction with classmates and instructor. There

were also more group projects. I went for a short trip to Finland to see the northern light in the middle of the month but I could not see any at the end due to foggy sky. The 2 courses ended in the second last week so I went to Kiruna, the northern Sweden, to see northern light again at the last weekend of the month. It was stunning to see the northern light there. Also, it was very unforgettable to go there from Uppsala by an overnight train for 14 hours.

March 2017

There was a home examination I needed to finish in the first 2 weeks so I stayed at Uppsala during that period. There was a big snowing which continued for 4-5 days. It made the whole city became beautifully white. Fortunately, I saw northern light right outside of my dorm room in Uppsala! Then, there was a long break for 2 weeks but the Swedish class continued during the vacation. I went to Oslo for a short trip right after submitting my home exam. It took around 5 hours

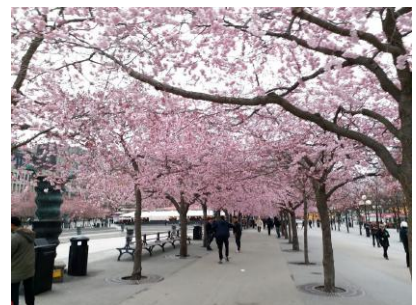


to there by train. After that, I enjoyed my time in Uppsala and studied for my Swedish classes. The weather turned better after the mid-March. It got warmer and more sunny days. Many people would sit beside the river at the city centers to enjoy the sunshine. Right before the end of the holiday, I went to Netherlands. It was great but it was not a good time to go there to see the vast sea of flowers as they had not fully bloomed yet. I started my second period in the last week of March. One thing to note, it changed to the summer time on the last Sunday in March and the clock went faster by an hour. Therefore, the time of sunset was even late at around 7pm with longer daytime. I could always enjoy the beautiful sunset when having my dinner.

April 2017



This was a very busy month. I had taken 2 marketing courses that period and the workload of marketing courses were heavier. I had around 7 seminars that month. So I spent most of the time in Uppsala to prepare my study. There was Easter holiday in the middle of the month and it lasted for a week which was very good for travelling. But I was too busy on studying and I just had some short trips in Stockholm. It might sound very boring to spend most of the time studying but April was definitely the most interesting month in Uppsala. One of the biggest and must-not missed festivals, Valborg, is held on the last day every April. It was a festival to celebrate the arrival of Spring. There were programs from the early morning to the midnight around Uppsala. It was recommended to see the boat festival in the morning and watched the firework and bonfire in Gamla Uppsala at night. The school would provide some information which were important and useful to understand the festival well. It was recommended to plan well in advance as different programs would take place in different venues around the city and there could be changes for the public transportation. There were parties everywhere around the city whole day. It was rare to see such a lively and crowded Uppsala even during very late at night. I had a lot of fun and spent the whole day outside to celebrate the festival. Speaking of the weather during that month, there was much longer daytime and the sunset could take place at around 8 pm which was quite a unique experience. As the spring was coming, the weather became much warmer in the daytime but it could be cold at night as the temperature could drop to 2-3 degrees Celsius only. But the weather was quite unstable and very cloudy in the middle of April. It is recommended to see the Sakura which bloomed from the mid-April to the end of April in Kungsträdgården in Stockholm.



May 2017



The weather was so great after the Valborg. There were many Sakura trees all over Uppsala. There were many sunny days and I went to visit Gothenburg during the first weekend in May. It took around 4 hours by train from Uppsala. Then, I worked for several projects and group reports for the next 2 weeks. I was very busy but some of the projects were interesting like creating poster. After the final presentation in the second last week, there was a 1-week break before the home examinations in the last week of May. As the weather became much warmer and

the daytime lasted to 9 pm at night, I travelled to different cities or places such as Vaxholm in Stockholm and Sigtuna during my spare time. However, there was still a little snowing in the middle of May so the weather was still a bit unstable. But after that, the weather was so great that the temperature could rise to 25 degrees Celsius when it was a sunny day. From the end of May, the daytime could last to 10 pm so the sky was always bright when I went to bed at night.

June 2017

After I finished my last home examination on the first day of June, there was celebration of high school graduation on the second day. I am not sure whether it would be held on the same day every year but it is recommended to join their high school graduation celebration because graduates would sit on decorated trucks and had a parade around Uppsala, which was really fun to watch. Then, I travelled to Iceland and Copenhagen for nearly a week. After the fabulous trip, it was the time I end my exchange trip and leave Sweden. Overall, it was a very meaningful and memorable exchange tour. I learn a lot in different areas and become less stressed. It is definitely a life-changing experience for me.



Part 2 General Information

A. Visa Procedure

While Hong Kong residents do not need Visa to enter Sweden, as an exchange students staying for more than 3 months, it is necessary to get a residence permit card before you leave Hong Kong. It is recommended to start applying it 2 months before leaving.

First, you need to submit an online application through this link <https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Studying-in-Sweden/Universities-and-university-college/How-to-apply-for-the-first-time.html>

There are many steps for the application and do not allow for saving at some step. You are advised to gather all the information stated in the website above first. Although the school has bought insurance for each exchange student, you need to get the insurance certificate on your own to apply the residence permit. Therefore, you need to send an email to the school and submit a request form to get the certificate. You may need to wait for 3-4 working days to get it. Hence, it is very important to get prepared for the documents earlier. You may need to sit for an hour to finish the application. Then, you would need to pay online when you submit the application. After that, you may have to wait for the email to book a time for the biometric measurement and photo taking. Remember to bring the passport when doing the measurement. I waited around 2 weeks after submitting the application and get the booking information to do the measurement.

After doing the biometric measurement, I waited around 2 weeks to get my card. For my case, I submitted my application on 16th November and had my card arrived on 22nd December. It took around 1 month but some people may wait longer so it is suggested to start doing it quick because you need the card when going to Sweden. For more information, you could check the link above.

B. Orientation Activities and student nations

There are lots of Orientation Activities from school, student nations and other groups. Some activities require online application in advance. You would get detailed information from their Welcome letter email and leaflets on the registration day. Uppsala University has its long history of student nations. There are 13 student nations. Their names are names of different cities in Sweden. As a Swedish student, they could only join the one they come from. But international students are free to choose. Student nations are also similar to school restaurants that students could enjoy cheaper lunches or fika in their student nations but only the members could enjoy certain discounts. After the Orientation weeks, most of the student activities are organized by student nations. It is recommended to visit and join more activities from different nations during the Orientation Weeks in order to decide which to join and get the student (nation) card. Of course, you could choose not to join any nation but simply get the student card. But it was a unique experience to join the student nations and it worth to pay some money to join. There would be an information day during the Orientation Weeks for the promotion of nations and you could get more information there. Or you could find more information here http://www.uu.se/en/admissions/student-life/the_student_nations/

C. Courses Registration and assessments

Courses registration for the 4 periods or the whole semester are done before leaving Hong Kong, except Swedish classes if studying in Spring Semester. It is required to take 30 credits in total for a semester. I joined 4 courses and I would like to share my experiences of each of them below. I would share the workload of each course but you should check the course syllabus on the course website or course guide uploaded by your instructors in the student portal for updated references.

<p>Entrepreneurships</p>	<p>Period 1-2, 7.5 credits</p> <p>There are lots of exchange students joining this course. It may be a very popular choice for exchange students. The workload is the least among all the courses I joined. The structure is very similar to courses in UST. There are lectures and guest lectures most of the time with 2 cases discussions in class. They would record attendance so be sure to know how many you have to attend to get a passing grade. As for assignments, there would be 2 group short case reports during the semester and one individual essay writing for the home examination in the end. Except the 2 case readings, there is not many to read for the rest of the course.</p>
<p>Managing Contemporary Organizations</p>	<p>Period 1-2, 7.5 credits</p> <p>This is another management course I took that period. I was required to read 2/3 of the textbook and another small book to finish some seminars and the home examination in the first 2 weeks of the semester. During the seminars, some groups need to do a presentation and other need to join the discussion. Active participation is very important in seminars regardless of courses there. There are additional readings for seminars and individual assignments for each seminar. There is a final group project report and presentation at the end of the course. There is much more reading for this course, approximately 5-6 articles with around 12 pages every week. But there are more opportunities for discussion with classmates. It helped me a lot on analysis and to remember the main theme for each topic.</p>

<p>Service Logic in Marketing</p>	<p>Period 3-4, 7.5 credits</p> <p>It is a marketing course. To pass the course, I was required to finish 4 seminars, 1 individual analysis, 1 group report and 1 essay for home examination at the end of the course.</p> <p>Everyone needs to present in group during each seminar. There are discussion sessions after the presentation. Active participation is essential to get the score. Readings are needed to finish in advance for presentation and discussions. Overall, the volume of reading is acceptable but this course is quite difficult as it required deeper analysis and frequent application of theories. Although it may be difficult, it is suggested to have active participation during discussions to enhance analysis skill which is helpful for writing reports and essay afterward. Another interesting point of this course is that there are more local master students in the class and you could learn more from them by participating more discussion with them.</p>
<p>Industrial Marketing</p>	<p>Period 3-4, 7.5 credits</p> <p>This is another marketing course. The content of this course is closely related to the Service Logic in Marketing so you may have the same classmate in these 2 courses. To pass the course, I was required to finish 4 seminars, 1 poster, 1 case discussion and individual short case analysis, 1 case report and 1 essay for home examination. The course is less difficult but the reading volume is very demanding. I was required to read for 6-7 articles with around 15-20 pages for each article every seminar. Although it was required to present in only one seminar, every group was responsible of writing summary for other seminars. And all the theories in the articles are the foundation for home examination and projects. For once, I had 3 seminars from these 2 marketing courses in a week so I needed to read more than 10 articles in a week. With this syllabus, I think the workload is quite demanding to take these 2 courses at the same time. But it is not difficult to get a pass as long as you work all the required tasks. And you could gain useful insights by taking these 2 similar courses together.</p>

D. Accommodations

The school should be able to provide a dorm room to every international student coming from outside of Europe. Most of them are single room with a private toilet so they are very comfortable and I suggested to choose between them instead of renting a room outside on your own. You are required to finish the application of housing within the required dates. There are around 6-7 choices. They are described in detail with photos on the school housing webpages but I could share my opinions about some housing options.

Salixvägen: This is the room I chose. It located quite far away from the city center and Ekonomikum (The name of the Business School there). For city center, it could take around an hour bike riding or 20- to 30-minute bus. As for Ekonomikum, it would take around 30-minute bus and 15- minute walk to there. It may sound very inconvenient. But there is a big shopping mall with all 3 big supermarkets. In other word, they have all the supermarkets in Uppsala there. It just

took 15-20 minute walk or 10-minute bus riding. And you could enjoy most of the services from shopping to postal services there. Also, it is very tranquil and beautiful with many grasslands around. During my spare time, I always walk around tracks in the forest nearby. There is also a big beautiful lake. As it locates far away from the city center, one could enjoy very beautiful sunset and sunrise, as well as other sceneries like snowing and flowers blooming. To sum up, it has the best natural environment. In addition, this dorm room provide a spacious apartment with private kitchen and toilet at an acceptable price. As I prefer high level of privacy, this is the main reason I chose this location. Although there are many residents there ride a bike from Salixvägen to campus, as an exchange student staying just a few months, it is not recommended to rent a bike for commuting because it is dangerous to ride on snowing seasons which could last for more than half of the Spring semester.

Flogsta: This is a popular choice for most of the international student. It located quite close to the business school by taking a 10-minute bus ride. Some students may go to school by riding bikes. It is also close to the city center and near to a supermarket. Each student has a room with a private toilet. But they need to share the kitchen with around 10 students in the same corridor. While the price is relatively cheaper, the kitchen could be very dirty. There are many parties so it is very easy for one to meet more new international friends there. Some of them may be your classmate. The famous and traditional Flogsta scream is also another unique experience to live there.

Rackarbergsgatan: This one may not be as spacious and lively as Flogsta. But there is a reason why I have to highlight this choice because it is the closest option to the business school(Ekonomikum). It just took 5-minute walk to Ekonomikum where all the business classes take place in. It is also close to Flogsta so it is feasible for one to enjoy the parties and scream in Flogsta and return to this dorm room even late at night. Also, it is close to the garden near Ekonomikum which will become a big outdoor party place for students on Valborg.



The outlook of Ekonomikum

For more information, you could search the exchange reports from Taiwan students on Google to hear more opinions of other housing options. But it is always better to read the official information on the housing office webpage first for updated information.

E. **Transportation**

Uppsala is not a very big city so there are few choices on transportation within the cities. Google map is a very helpful apps there to guide you to your destination with detailed information. They would state clearly which bus, which stop and when the bus will come. I would share some information including ticket price and payment policy related to the transportation. But I gather the information based on my own experience. **You should always go on the official websites of the transportation companies for the updated and accurate information.** The numbers and policies could change over time.

Bus (UL) : Bus is the only public transportation inside the city. It is called UL company, the only bus company there. As an exchange student, one may need to travel around the city every month. So it is suggested to buy monthly bus ticket at student price, especially during cold and snowing seasons. It costed me around SEK 555 a month. For the first time, one has to pay for SEK 20 more for the card. **Please check the official website for the updated price information.** With this monthly card, one could travel to all regions in Uppsala and also to the airport unlimitedly within the purchased month. But if you live really close to campus and choose to ride a bike, one single ticket within the city center area (Region 1) cost around SEK 25 buying in advance at the ticketing machine at the bus stops or Pressbyrån convenience store, or SEK 30 by credit card buying on the bus. There are other prices for the single ticket to other regions. One could also rent a bike but buy monthly card during the snowing months. In this way, one could also save some money inside the UL card. Then, it costs around SEK 22 for a single ticket in Region 1 and SEK 65 to the Arlanda Airport (Region 5) buying with the card on the bus. One important point to note, bus tickets are bought based on time length not distance. One single ticket within Region 1 lasts for 75 minutes and around 2 hours to other regions. Therefore, it does not matter where you are going and how many rides you have taken within the period as long as you are travelling in the designated area. Some other European cities also follow this ticketing system so it is better to understand it clearly and correctly before the exchange trip. In addition, there is a bus schedule at each bus stop clearly stated when exactly the bus would arrive that bus stop in Uppsala. But bus schedules are also uploaded on the official website and could be checked on Google Map. I am sorry for my messy description, please refer to the official website (<https://www.ul.se/en>) for updated information as price and schedule may change over time. One last important note is that only payment through credit card or the UL card is allowed to buy ticket through the ticketing machine and on the bus. One could not pay coins or cash on the bus for the ticket.

Taxi : Most of the time, you need to call and book a taxi unless you are getting on at the taxi stop outside the Central station of Uppsala. The fare could be very expensive so it is not recommended to take. And you could not get on the taxi at anytime you want on the street.

Bikes : The price vary for renting a bike depending on the bike you choose. It is recommended to go to some student forums or second-handed market to rent for the bike. But please make sure the bike is not broken, otherwise, you might need to spend an extra large amount of money to repair it. Also, there are rules that certain safety equipment like lighting and helmet needed to be set on the bike or appeared on the driver. You would get the related information together with the biking map when arriving the dorm room. It is important to know these rules and information in advance as obeying the rules is very important there.

The above information is for travelling **inside Uppsala**, I would provide some information below for travelling to Stockholm and other Northern Europe countries.

To Arlanda Airport: Bus is always the cheapest option to go. It took around 40-45 minutes to go from Uppsala Central Station to the airport by Bus 801. But one could also choose to go there by SJ train which could be much faster but also more expensive.

To Stockholm: Stockholm is the capital city of Sweden so there are lots of attractions to visit. Fortunately, Uppsala locates very close to Stockholm. There are several ways to travel there, like Swebus and SJ train. Swebus is cheaper than SJ train but it took longer time, around an hour, to Stockholm. For SJ train to Stockholm, it took around 35 minutes and cost around SEK 65 for student prices. But there is a much cheaper way to travel there if one had a monthly UL ticket already. Using UL monthly ticket, one could take the SL Metro Train to Stockholm. It took around 55 minutes and cost around SEK 29. This price is the single ticket travelling around Stockholm regions. The single ticket lasts for 2 hours and one could use it to travel within Stockholm if there is some remaining time for the ticket after arriving Stockholm. There is some update of the SL and UL ticketing on the day I leave so please check their official websites for the updated information.

To other countries and cities: Some cities in Sweden like Kiruna and some outside Sweden like Oslo and Copenhagen, except taking flights to these places, one could take a train to there. One of the most commonly used train companies is SJ. One could go on their website (<https://www.sj.se/en/home.html#/>) to check the ticket prices and schedules. It is always cheaper to purchase earlier online, regardless of short or long trips.

Other information:

Banking

There are a few banking companies in Uppsala. As far as I know, students who live less than a year in Sweden could not get the personal identity number for creating a bank account. But it is very convenient to use VISA credit card to shop around. In fact, cash is not acceptable in Ekonomikum. I was asked to use credit card to pay for a pair of chopstick which cost only SEK 2.

VAT/ Moms (Value-Added Tax)

Everyone needs to pay tax for everything you buy in Sweden. You could check the receipt and notice that there is an amount called moms or tax calculated and included in the price you pay. Of course, as a non-EU citizens, if you have bought something expensive and paid for the large amount of tax, you could get refund for it. Based on my understanding, the good has to be bought within 3 months you leave the EU region and you get the refund at the airport of the last destination of the EU countries. Hence, if you would like to travel to other EU countries after leaving Sweden, you could not get the refund at the Arlanda Airport. If you wish to get the refund at the Arlanda Airport, you need to leave the EU areas afterward. If you plan to get the tax refund, it is important to remember to let the shopkeeper knows when you pay for it. They would give you a receipt without the name of customers and a tax-refund form. I got the tax refund form later for some reasons but I was told to better get both of them on the same date. Although I still got the refund successfully, it is better to get everything on the date of purchase. After filling in the form, you could get the refund at the airport. It is always better to arrive earlier to do the refund as you might need to wait in queue for an hour to finish the procedure. You could refer to the official website for detailed information, procedures and requirements: <http://www.globalblue.com/tax-free-shopping/sweden/tax-free-shopping-in-sweden/> You could also ask the shop when purchasing the good. It is also important to check whether the shop has joined the Global Blue Tax Free Shopping program before shopping. You could not get the tax refund if you purchase from shops not joining this program.

Currency and expenses

Sweden has its own currency and they are called kronor. One point to note here is that some of the old banknotes would not be accepted after June 2017. It is better to check in advance. My monthly expenses not including rent is around SEK 2500-3000. One tip to lower the living expenses is to eat less outside but cook more because the price level at supermarkets there is actually similar to the level in Hong Kong, which I find it very acceptable.

Part 3 What to bring?

1. Passport, HK ID card and residence permit card	2. Acceptance letter
3. Insurance document	4. Cash (HKD, SEK and EUR)
5. Credit card (VISA)	6. Adaptor (Two-round plug)
7. Router or LAN cable (school housings do not have Wifi)	8. Warm clothes (Gloves, coats, boots, warm hat, earmuffs, Superwarm underwear etc.)
9. Medicine	10. Backpack
11. Laptop	12. Rice cooker
13. Chinese or Hong Kong style seasoning	14. Anything you find it useful to cure your homesick!!

Part 4 Useful links

I would gather the links I mentioned above here and would add something that I found it useful. I hope they could help you to prepare better. But you should do more researches on your own. There is always better to get well prepared.

1. Application for residence permit card
<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Studying-in-Sweden/Universities-and-university-college/How-to-apply-for-the-first-time.html>
2. Student Nation of Uppsala University
http://www.uu.se/en/admissions/student-life/the_student_nations/
3. School Housing :
<http://housingoffice.se/accommodation/exchange-students-master-students/>
4. UL Bus website (Bus company in Uppsala) : <https://www.ul.se/en>
5. SJ train website: <https://www.sj.se/en/home.html#/>
6. Global Blue Tax Free Refund
<http://www.globalblue.com/tax-free-shopping/sweden/tax-free-shopping-in-sweden/>
7. Tax refund point at Stockholm Arlanda Airport
<https://www.swedavia.com/arlanda/service/global-blue-vat-refund/#gref>
8. Supermarkets Guide in Uppsala: <https://teams4.wordpress.com/supermarket/>



Enjoy Your Journey!!