

Exchange Report

Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden

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Table of Contents

Monthly Activity Log	3
General Information	4
Items to bring	8
Useful Information.....	8

Monthly Activity Log

January

The orientation day held by SASSE, the student association of SSE, has made my arrival a very welcoming one. Not only the representatives of the student association have toured us around the campus, helping us to familiarize with the environment, but also they had assigned a buddy to each exchange group for us to ask questions and familiarize ourselves at SSE. At night on the orientation day, SASSE hosted a welcoming party for all exchange students, and we all had a great time trying Swedish snacks and hand-made beer.

February

Studying was a big part of my exchange. Unlike UST, where we would usually take 5-6 courses throughout a semester, SSE splits one semester into two periods, and encourage their students to take a maximum of 2 classes per period. Teaching was much more intense in SSE; however, at the same time, we could put more attention on each path as there were fewer courses on our plate. In SSE, professors put a lot of emphasis on justification and mathematical induction. Although the materials were challenging, the learning process was a pleasant one.

March

Since there was ten days break for all of us, my friends and I decided to go on a trip to Berlin. Berlin's weather was continental, and it was mostly raining throughout the day. Although it was already late March, the cold weather made staying out very difficult. Berlin is a city with many stories waiting to unfold. When we took a day tour there, the tour guide brought us to this modest residential area which looked so indifferent to the others. There he told us that residential area was actually where most SS family lived back in the times of World War II. He also us there was where Hitler committed suicide when the Russians marched in and occupied Berlin.

April

I enjoyed the harmonious and reciprocal learning environment in SSE. When we were doing a group project for one of my courses, my groupmates were willing to help proactively and ask if I would need further clarification. Even for classmates who were not in the same study group, they would still be willing to share resources across the whole class. The inclusive atmosphere allowed students to bond beyond their peers but also as a class.

May

Mingling was a big part of SSE's culture. Not only all students were welcomed to join societies held by SASSE, but also a dinner party was held for all of us at the end of each month. We would all be dressed up and get to know people that are different from our own disciplinary.

June

After my exam, I seized my last chance of travelling around Sweden. The south-west of Sweden was mostly comprised of fishers since it was lying near the coast. People there were even more welcoming and showed great hospitality. They were more environmentally friendly and preferred to go package free. It amazed me when I ordered tea in a restaurant, and they served me using a clipper instead of a tea bag. People would also bring their lunchboxes around to keep the remaining food they could not finish. It was amazing to observe the self-consciousness of people.

General Information

Visa Procedures:

A regular exchange programme would require you to apply for a resident permit. Before your application, you need to prepare the host school's acceptance letter, a proof of insurance and a bank statement that indicate you are financially competent to sustain your living during your stay. Upon a successful application, you would collect a tentative acceptance letter from the Swedish embassy. Since the Swedish embassy in Hong Kong is not available for stamping your fingerprint and taking a photograph for you, you will not be able to collect your residence permit card there. You will have to generate the residence permit card in the immigration centre in Sweden. It is important to bring your tentative acceptance letter with you and make a reservation prior online.

Orientation activities:

Orientation activities are available in SSE. The programme coordinator will send you the agenda of the orientation before your arrival. The orientation day will usually be held after you have finished checking in to your hall.

International activities:

SASSE, the student association of SSE holds different events for exchange students. Regularly, students can join any student societies that are organized by SASSE. Those societies comprised of sports, entertainment, etc. SASSE will also host a welcoming dinner ball for all exchange students at the beginning of the semester. Students can

also look for updates in SASSE exchange students Facebook page

Accommodations:

After your acceptance in SSE, your programme coordinator will send an email inviting you to apply for SSE housing. Within that email, you will have to state your preference regarding the location of the hall and the room type. An acceptance email will be sent after reviewing your application, stating final results of the preference you stated. I lived in a shared room that is located adjacent to the school, which costs 4300 SEK per month. It is important to note that during the tenure period you are responsible for any kind of maintenance (e.g. Change of light bulbs)

Course registration:

You are able to register courses via SSE portal. Since most bachelor economic courses in SSE are taught in Swedish, it is recommended to communicate with your programme advisor prior to SSE's course registration period that you would like to register for master level economic courses. If not, you will only be able to register classes in bachelor level in which most classes are not eligible to transfer.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The practical class must be followed by a lab session in which students can work on hands-on data and understand the theory by analyzing the results of the data. SSE also put a high emphasis on data presentation in which students are required to complete a lab report for every lab session. The instructor will give a set of questions to guide students to complete the lab report. Usually, the lab sessions follow strictly to a research paper that is required to be read by students before the sessions. Apart from the method of teaching, the difference between SSE and UST is that SSE invites more guest lecturers to classes, often these guest lecturers are able to incorporate their own work experience with the theory taught.

In terms of assessment, both schools are quite similar in approach. The only apparent difference is that SSE takes absolute grading.

Financing & Banking:

Sweden is nearly a cashless country; some shops don't even accept cash payment. For online payment, most payment would require 2F authentication. It is therefore essential to bring your Hong Kong sim card with you or to change the registered number under your credit card. For payment for accommodations, you are able to pay your rental fee via overseas bank transfer or by credit card in the school housing office.

Climate:

Stockholm has freezing winters and mildly warm summer. In general, there is a significant variation in temperature between day and night. You will also experience strong wind outbreaks from time to time. In winter, the temperature often falls below zero degrees from December to February, and typically exceeds the freezing point, with the melting of snow, in late March. In summer, you will experience very long days with the temperature hitting over 20 degrees.

Health and Safety

There is a clinic near SSE (15 minutes walking distance). However, I have never used health facilities in Stockholm. In terms of safety, Stockholm is a very safe city with very few people lingering on the street at night. The city is illuminated even during closing hours, which makes it difficult for pickpockets or other potential crimes.

Food

You are strongly advised to cook by yourself since it is much cheaper than eating out. Usually cooking by yourself would cost you 50SEK per meal, which is half or even a third of the price from eating out. Among all supermarkets, Lidl is the cheapest; however, at the same time, grocery options are limited compared to their counterparts. If you are searching for Chinese flavours, you can consider going to the Chinese supermarket near the central station. There you can find almost all of the spices or sauce you need for cooking.

If you decide to eat out, there is an Indian restaurant with good quality near our campus. You can also choose to walk further to a pizza place that is quite famous within that district. Nearby there is also a food court that serves a big portion and costs you less than 100SEK.

Transportation

The public transportation in Stockholm includes tunnelbana(metro) and bus. You can tap your access card for both means of transport. The metro is charged by time instead of by distance. A student discount is offered as long as you bring your SSE student card with you when purchasing the ticket.

For travelling between Stockholm city and the airport, you can choose to take a cab, the metro or the bus. The fare for taking the cab is about 500SEK, the ticket for taking the airport express is about 120SEK while the bus fare is 99SEK. It is important to note that the bus is only cheaper than the airport express if you purchase the bus ticket online. If you purchase the ticket at the desk, the price will be indifferent.

Communication

People in Stockholm usually know how to speak English. As master courses in SSE often comprised of international intakes, all of my peers communicate in English. There are Swedish classes offered by SSE, both for beginners and intermediaries. As shared by some of the guest lecturers, being able to speak Swedish is nearly compulsory to find a job in Sweden, regardless of your academic performance. However, if you plan to study in Stockholm, there is no need to worry about the language barrier.

In terms of telecommunication, you can buy a Swedish sim card in any convenient store. You will not be able to top up online since it is only available for permanent residents. However, you will be able to top up in any convenient store.

Sports and Recreation Facilities

There are no sports facilities available on the campus. However, there is a gym adjacent to the school. It costs about 4000SEK for a 6 months' membership.

Social Clubs and Networking Opportunities

The business club under SASSE will periodically host career networking events for all students. Guests invited to those events vary from start-up ventures to well-developed corporates. Students can always speak to the right industrial expert or find the exposure they are searching. Apart from career-related events, SASSE will also host a dinner party for all students each month. Students are welcomed to dress up and mingle with each other.

Cautionary issues

There is no cautionary issue to note.

Items to bring

- Clothing (Mostly winter)
- Umbrella
- Laptop
- Adaptor
- Calculator
- Medicine
- Passport
- Bank Statement
- Acceptance Letter (Both from immigration centre and SSE)
- Credit Card
- Hong Kong Sim Card
- Hand Cream/ Moisturizers
- Non-slip shoes

Useful links

SSE Homepage

<https://www.hhs.se/>

SSE Housing information

<https://www.hhs.se/en/education/study-at-sse/housing/>

Visa application

<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Visiting-Sweden/Visiting-relatives-and-friends/How-to-apply/Apply-online.html>

SSE Exchange 2019 Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/521907501643145/>