



EXCHANGE REPORT

STOCKHOLM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

Alphonse Lai | FINA & OM | Fall 2019

Monthly Activity Log

AUGUST 2019

I arrived a few days before the orientation activities started to settle down. I spent the first few days to shop necessities and explore around the neighbourhood before the orientation day. In late August, the first period started and I began taking my two courses.

SEPTEMBER 2019

The workload in the first period for me was quite light and Poland was the first country I visited. Warsaw, Krakow and Zakopane were all amazing while different from each other. The Student Association of SSE (SASSE) held a banquet for exchange students and it was quite interesting. Then, I went on a short trip to Copenhagen and Lund. In late September, around twenty students from SSE and I went to London for an activity called 'London Investment Banking Week 2019' organised by the Business Committee of SASSE. We spent a week visiting nine firms, mostly investment banks for presentations, networking and case cracks.

OCTOBER 2019

The day after returning from London, I went to Budapest for a 3-day trip. I loved the atmosphere and the price level was really low compared to Nordic countries. During the gap between period 1 and period 2, I went on an 11-day trip to the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Maastricht), Paris and Brussels. Maastricht and Rotterdam are quite boring compared to Amsterdam. Paris and Brussels have amazing food and they provided the opportunity for me to practise my limited French. Period 2 started and the workload was drastically heavier. I managed to go to Oslo in late October and they have some decent coffee there.

NOVEMBER 2019

Due to the amount of preparation I have to do for the classes, I spent the first half of November in Stockholm. To take a break from the coursework, I travelled to Berlin. There are a lot of historical buildings and I recommend doing a bit of research before visiting. The spy museum was also an interesting experience. A week after that, I went to Barcelona and it is definitely in my top 3. The views were amazing and I had the best Paella and Sangria I had ever had.

DECEMBER 2019

The weather was starting to get cooler and it started to snow in Stockholm. There was an outdoor ice-skating rink in Stockholm and it was a new experience for me. Then, I went to Austria and the Czech Republic. The food in the two countries was basically the same as those in Hungary. People there were much friendlier than those in Scandinavia. Between the end of the classes and the final examination, I travelled to Dublin where there is a gorgeous village called Howth. Irish bar was another highlight.

After the final examination, I started my 1-month trip in Europe. Cities I visited include Florence, Pisa, Rome, Naples, Bordeaux and Nice.

General Exchange Information

1. Visa Procedures

Apply for a residence permit online. Since the Consular General of Sweden in Hong Kong is no longer in charge of that, you will get your fingerprint and photo taken in Stockholm.

2. Orientation Activities

There is an orientation day where you can meet other exchange students. Every group of exchange students is assigned with an exchange buddy who is a regular student at SSE.

3. International Services & Activities

SASSE organises a range of activities for all students in SSE. Make sure you are in their Facebook group.

4. Accommodations

SSE provides two options to exchange students: Saltis and Lappis. I chose Saltis as it is only a 3-minute walk away from the main building of SSE. The options for Saltis were Single Room and Shared Room. I got a single room with a private bathroom and a kitchenette and without a refrigerator. There are large refrigerators next to the lift every floor for tenants who do not have a refrigerator in their room.

I had friends who live in Lappis and it took approximately 30 minutes for them to go to SSE.

5. Courses Registration

I received emails about course registration a few months before departure. After seeking Forrest's approval, I requested to take MSc courses which fit the curriculum of my major more.

Course Code	Course Title	Level
643	Derivatives in Investment Management	BSc
4324	Value Investing	MSc
4325	Value Investing II: Frontiers	MSc
4319	Corporate Finance	MSc

6. Teaching & Assessment Methods

643: Assignments (20%) + Midterm Exam (10%) + Final Exam (70%)

4324 & 4325: Participation (50%) + Final Paper (50%)

4319: Participation (50%) + Final Exam (50%)

The MSc courses weigh participation heavily and classes are highly interactive. Every class contains a lot of discussions. For the final paper of 4324 and 4325, I recommend starting earlier as it is quite difficult to come up with an idea.

In examinations, the locals tend to be more relaxed and they can bring food and drinks to the examinations. The time limit is quite generous.

7. Sports & Recreation Facilities

As the school building is quite compact, there is no sports facility in SSE. There is a gym nearby, but it was costly to get a short-term membership.

8. Finance & Banking

SEK is used in Sweden. Stockholm is a cashless city and I used my VISA credit card issued by Hang Seng Bank every day. Beware that some vending machines require you to enter your card pin.

I recommend bringing some EUR/USD cash if you are planning to travel around Europe. You can easily get other currencies using these two currencies.

Eating out usually costs more than 100 SEK. You can choose not to take public transportations as Stockholm is quite walkable and SSE is in the city centre.

9. Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

You can join the activities held by the committees. The most remarkable one I joined was the exchange student banquet, in which the Exchange Committee showed us some Swedish culture.

10. Health & Safety

Fortunately, I had never used medical services during my exchange period. The information about that can be found in their email.

11. Food

Eating out is costly compared to cooking by yourself. I shopped my groceries mostly in three places. Lidl offers good value. ICA provides a large variety of products. Oriental Market has Asian groceries. A few places to eat out I recommend are STHLM Brunch Club, Café Pascal, Totemo Ramen and Sushi Sho.

12. Transportation

I got an SL Access card at the student price. A single journey within 75 minutes costs 22 SEK. Even the ferries are included in the SL system.

To get to IKEA, you could take their free shuttle bus which is only a 15-minute walk from SSE.

13. Climate

It started to be cooler in December and the temperature could go below 0°C. A thick jacket/coat worked for me but I left Stockholm before it got even colder. It rains quite often too.

In August, the weather was already cool enough that I did not have to wear short-sleeved shirts.

14. Communication

I bought my sim card from a company called Halebop at 7-11. The card itself costs 50 SEK while the monthly fee for a 4-GB plan is 189 SEK. I would recommend buying several monthly sim cards in Sham Shui Po first though. The value is so much better.

15. Cautionary Matters

Not much. Stockholm is one of the safest cities in Europe in my opinion. I felt safe even when I was outside during midnight.

16. Travelling around Europe

For flights, apart from using Skyscanner, check the youth price for SAS and Norwegian Air. For airports, I always preferred ARN to BMA, and then NYO.

To get to ARN, other than the expensive Arlanda Express which costs around 170 SEK, there is in fact a route which costs 22 SEK only and it can be found using the SL mobile app.

Items to Bring

- Umbrella
- Raincoat
- Down Jacket/Thick Coat
- Watch Cap
- Scarf
- Gloves

Useful Links and Contacts

<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Startpage.html>

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

<https://sl.se/>

If more information is needed, get my contact from SBM Exchange Team by emailing at bmugexch@ust.hk.