



Exchange Report

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Monthly Activity Log

Jan 2020

I arrived in Stockholm a few days before the start of the school to give myself some time adjusting jet lag. Daytime is very short during winter in Stockholm. It is quite hard to adjust and sometimes depressing to see the sunset at 3 pm or 4 pm. But glad that I came to Stockholm for exchange during winter. There will be 3 mins more daylight every day when It is approaching Spring and Summer.

There was a series of orientation activities organized by SSE. It is not compulsory and some of the exchange students did not show up for the orientation. It is highly recommended to join those activities so that you can get to know other exchange students from all around the world. You will also get the SSE Access card for entering the school during the orientation.

Feb 2020

There were quite a lot of banquets and events held in this month. The orientation programme also ended with a formal Welcome Banquet organized by the school in February. All the exchange students were invited to the Welcome Banquet. It was a wonderful opportunity for us to socialize, meet new friends and experience some Swedish banquet traditions. I have met so many friendly and nice people both from Sweden and all around the world. They all added colours to my exchange journey.

Since the schoolwork is less intensive in early February, I travelled to Germany, Belgium, Czech and Abisko which is Northern Part of Europe. Each of these countries is distinctive yet with one thing in common. The common point is that I like all of them. It was great to visit the well-known, renowned tourist-spots, castles and cathedrals of Germany and Czech, which are rich in cultural and historical value. Learning about the historical stories and cultural stories behind each tourist-spot is interesting and inspiring. While for Belgium, Mussels and chocolate from Belgium won my heart. I enjoyed these mouth-watering foods a lot. Despite all enjoyment brought by Germany, Czech and Belgium, my trip to Abisko was the most exciting and adventurous one. My friends and I were so unlucky to encounter a snowstorm when we were heading to our hotel in Abisko. We were stranded inside a tourist center since the bus was suspended due to the snowstorm. We managed to get to our hotel only after 6 hours when the snowstorm calmed down. During our stay in Abisko, we joined a husky sledding tour, petting around 10 lovely huskies and interacting with husky trainers. We also managed to see the northern light right outside our hotel which we believe was the compensation from the god since we were unlucky to meet the snowstorm. The amazing northern light has absolutely highlighted the whole Abisko trip which made the whole trip memorable.

Mar 2020

Each semester in SSE is separated into two periods. There is an examination period between two periods. Since I only took a course without examination for my first period, I got a two-week break before the start of my second study period. I planned to travel to 4 counties in Central Europe. However, due to the COVID-19 situation in Europe, the whole trip was cancelled.

In mid-March, the confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Europe were skyrocketing and they have temporarily shut down some of the school, shops, gyms. Most of the exchange students from other continents were leaving due to the worrying situation. I also decided to leave Stockholm and continued to attend lectures online after thorough consideration. Most of my friends who went to the States or Europe were getting back to Hong Kong in mid-March or late-March. It was hard for me to believe that my exchange has already ended in a way that, it is being shortened to two months and most of the learnings were done online. Leaving Stockholm and ending my exchange journey like a fleeing refugee was unfortunate but I got so much learning from this experience.

Apr 2020

Not much information can be provided due to COVID-19

May 2020

Not much information can be provided due to COVID-19

Jun 2020

Not much information can be provided due to COVID-19

Visa Procedures

Visa application procedures for those holding a Hong Kong passport is not very complicated. It usually takes around 2 – 3 months for the overall application. So, it is recommended to finish visa application as soon as possible. After being nominated by HKUST, you will receive a confirmation letter from the host university. Then you can use the confirmation letter to apply for VISA online. Upon successful application, you will receive a decision letter from the authority. You will need to bring along the decision letter to collect your resident permit in Sweden.

Orientation Activities

The orientation activities started with an information session. The exchange organizing committee first introduced the Stockholm School of Economics to us, from school facilities, school rules to grading systems and some of the school activities. We were provided with very detailed and comprehensive information about the school. Then, we were taken to take the individual photo and register for the access card of the Stockholm School of Economics. With the access card, we became the students of the school officially. The orientation also included a 1-hour bus tour which helps us know more Sweden as a whole.

The orientation programme ended with a formal Welcome Banquet organized by the school. The exchange students were invited to the Welcome Banquet. We all had so much fun. It is highly recommended to join the Orientation Activities especially the banquet.

International Services & Activities

SASSE and the Exchange Committee of SSE will organize a wide range of activities including welcome banquet, sports activities, parties, social activities and even trips to other parts of Europe. For example, they organized a Lapland trip in March for exchange students who want to experience the life in Arctic Circle or want to see Northern light. Make sure you have been added to the Facebook group of SASSE or Facebook group for exchange students. The organizing committee will post the events or activities details in the group. You can simply apply for all the activities that you are interested in.

Accommodations

SSE provides two students residential housing for exchange students - Lappis and Saltis. You can choose either one. Saltis is very close to the school around 3 mins walk while for Lappis, 15 -20 mins bus ride is needed. I stayed in a single room in Saltis during exchange which I enjoyed a lot. There are other exchange students in Saltis. We sometimes cook together or having parties in the room, which was a great experience.

Courses Registration

Course registration is done through the SSE portal. You can enroll up to 2 courses per period excluding any language courses. There will be a list of courses for each period of each semester that you could choose. You can choose whatever courses within the list but you have to make sure you don't have any clashes on courses. I received a course registration email from SSE 2-3 months before my exchange. Since I am more interested in courses offered for master students. I have sent an email to request the right to register master courses.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

The teaching style is quite similar to UST. However, there are way more readings than HKUST. Professor will expect you to finish those readings and be well-prepared to go to the class with the readings.

The assessment methods are different for different courses. You need to know how the assessment will be done before you are enrolling in any courses. Most of the courses will have examination which counts most of the grade, while some do not have any examination. The assessment might be based on essays, reports, presentations or a combination of all.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

SSE does not have any sports facilities since it's very small compared to other universities. It has a size like two LSK Business Building of HKUST. That's why they do not have a lot of sport or recreational facilities inside the SSE building. Sweden has a very strong culture of drinking coffee and doing exercise. You can find a café and gym in every main street. It shows how passionate Swedish is for both coffee and gym. People there drink a lot of coffee each day. I usually had afternoon tea, Fika in Swedish, with my newly met Swedish friends, which is very relaxing and a good way to socialize. Swedish have a saying that Swedish will never refuse a Fika. So do ask people out for a Fika.

Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses)

Sweden uses its currency – Swedish Krona. Sweden is a cashless country. Most of the transactions are done through debit cards or credit cards. So, you don't need to bring a lot of cash here. Most shops here accept VISA or Master Card so be sure that you have one in your wallet since some of the shops do not accept cash at all. Most of the credit cards will have an international transaction charge like around 2%. It is quite a significant charge if you will be using a credit card for most of your transactions in Sweden. You can compare across different credit card since I know some credit card does not have international transaction charges.

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

As mentioned above. Most of the events or activities will be announced in a Facebook group of SASSE or Facebook group exclusively for exchange students. You can apply to all the activities that you would like to join. You can also join some sports clubs if you want. I joined Tough Vikings of SSE and had intensive physical training every week.

Health & Safety

Stockholm is one of the safest places in the world. I feel safe even when I was out on the street at midnight. I don't know other parts of Sweden. But it is always to be cautious anytime.

Food

I don't see a lot of traditional Swedish food around. But there are some Swedish foods that you can try like fish soup, meatball, cinnamon bun. All of these are quite nice. Interestingly, most of the Asian restaurants in Stockholm are wonderful. You can also explore a bit if you are homesick.

Transportation

Since I lived in Saltis which pretty close to SSE. It only takes me 3 mins walk to get to school. If you want to travel within Stockholm, you can simply get a student-priced SL card from any metro station. Just like the Octopus card in Hong Kong. It's a prepaid card that you have to top it up before you use it. It could be used for almost all kinds of public transportation in Stockholm. Generally, transportation in Stockholm is very convenient.

If you want to travel to other parts for Sweden or other parts of Europe, you can buy budget airline tickets online. You can simply search on Skyscanner or Omio.

Climate

Winter in Sweden is very cold compare to Hong Kong. It ranges from 5 °C to - 5°C in Stockholm which is bearable. It would be even colder in the Northern part of Stockholm. You will need some thick clothes for keeping you warm.

Communication

You can buy a sim card from the convenience store in Stockholm. They provide various data plans and phone call plans. You can choose the plan according to your needs. Some of the

plans allow you to use data in Sweden as well as the whole Europe. It is also recommended to first bring a data card from Hong Kong to Stockholm so that you can access the Internet when you just arrived there. You can buy a sim card in Stockholm whenever needed.

Cautionary measures

As mentioned, Stockholm is generally very safe and it is very international like Hong Kong. So, there is nothing that you should worry too much about.

Other notes (if applicable)

Items to Bring

- Down jacket / Winter coat
- Formal suits / shirts / shoes
- Boots and sneakers
- Gloves
- Scarf
- Universal adaptor and chargers
- Laptop and chargers
- Common medicine
- Residence Permit and passport

Useful links

Visa Application

<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Visiting-Sweden.html>)

SSE Homepage:

<https://www.hhs.se>

SSE portal

<http://portal.hhs.se>