
**EXCHANGE
REPORT:
UPPSALA
UNIVERSITY**



2022 Spring

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UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

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January

We were greeted by snow-covered roads and chilling winds when we first arrived in Stockholm. It feels absolutely surreal to be travelling overseas amid COVID. We spent a few days exploring the capital before travelling westward to Gothenburg and Malmö.

We returned to Uppsala a few days before term commences and settled down. We travelled around the city in the upcoming weeks, visiting places such as the Cathedral, Castle and the University Hall, also searching for places where we can buy cheap groceries. We also travelled to Västerås for visa application procedures (as the Migrationsverket offices are all full in Stockholm and Uppsala) and did some sightseeing, we found ourselves playing like kids on top of a frozen lake, enjoying the stunning sunset view.

Before the end of January, we had dinner with our corridor, it was nice finally meeting everyone in our corridor. Despite the cold weather, it was a very warm and welcoming 2 weeks in Uppsala.



February

We started off February by visiting the Netherlands and Belgium. Netherlands had just opened up after a month-long lockdown thus there are not many tourists, we managed to visit many famous tourist attractions without a huge crowd, such as the Anne Frank House. We visited Brussels and Bruges in Belgium, and tried lots of popular delicacies such as chocolates and waffles along the way.



Back to Sweden, despite having our lectures through zoom, each week we worked on our group assignment for the course and review other groups' work. The workload is quite heavy, but it is quite interesting through reviewing others' work and receiving feedbacks from others. We were able to understand how the Swedes learn through peer learning.

We headed off to Abisko in Northern Sweden in late February to see the northern lights. We were very worried at first as the weather forecasts indicated that the weather will be poor during our stay, however, on the night we went on the northern light tour, we were absolutely fortunate that the sky cleared up and we were able to see the northern lights with our naked eye! It was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience!



March

I somehow managed to find time travelling to the UK and France during the study break. I watched a football match in Liverpool, it felt like being in a dream when you could support your beloved team in their home ground! In France, we visited lots of attractions for free as students studying in the EU (so remember to make good use of your residence permit!) I was amazed by the beautiful scenery in Paris, and I was also shocked by the sheer size of the Musée du Louvre, there's no way you could finish the entire museum within a day!



April

School resumes and courses were finally conducted physically. The marketing course required us to work on a marketing simulation in groups, applying theories and models in the simulation. The management course was conducted in a similar format as last period's course, just that we conduct peer review by sharing our work in class, followed by a discussion based on our work. The discussions got quite heated sometimes, but it was fascinating to see how multi-faceted leadership could be, and fun to learn how leadership is being perceived in different parts of the world.

I spent the end of April in Sweden celebrating Valborg with my friends. It is one of the biggest celebrations throughout the year for Swedes. In Uppsala, Valborg starts with the Running of the Falls at the Fyris River, where students build various kinds of vessels using their creativity and glide down the river. We had a great time cheering for the participating teams, especially the teams with vessels in peculiar forms. We spent the afternoon playing with locals and international students in the park, before going clubbing in one of the Student Nations.



May

We travelled to the Baltic States in early May, visiting Tallinn and Kaunas. It might seem to be a less popular tourist destination, but I would recommend it if you had the opportunity. Tallinn's well-preserved Old Town is surrounded by modern architectures, hosting numerous start-ups and tech firms such as Skype and Bolt. We were also touched by the hospitality of Estonians, always greeting us cheerfully and catering our needs throughout our stay. Kaunas's Ninth Fort Museum commemorates the victims of The Holocaust and the following oppression under Soviet rule, it was one of the most appalling experiences throughout my trip beside Anne Frank House.



Weather in Sweden becomes warmer in May, therefore I spent some time camping and wild cooking with my friends. The Swedish authorities has set up camping grounds in natural reserves, with toilet facilities and wood for lighting up a fire pit. We spent the whole night chatting by the fire pit and enjoying the sound of the crackling wood.



We also travelled to Italy in late May, admiring the stunning views of Venice and Florence, as well as the ancient ruins in Rome and the Vatican City. Most of the countries have removed all COVID restrictions so there are lots of tourists in the city.



June

We completed our take home exams and presentations for the courses. I also bid farewell to many people that I have met in the past 6 months, it was an uneasy task for me. I spent most of the time re-visiting many places and having farewell meals and parties.



1. *Visa Procedures*

A Residence Permit is required for citizens of countries outside of EU. The application usually takes 2-3 months thus you should start your application immediately once you have received your Letter of Acceptance. You are required to submit your proof of insurance, documentation of financial means and Letter of Acceptance. Currently, as the Swedish embassy in Hong Kong is unable to offer photo-taking and fingerprinting services, you will first obtain a confirmation letter from the embassy in Hong Kong regarding the visa approval, you will then have to make an appointment at the Migrationsverket office after you have arrived in Sweden in order to obtain the Residence Permit Card.

2. *Orientation Activities*

As mentioned earlier, the university is composed of various different Nations. There are 13 nations in total with each nation having its own facilities, tradition and culture. Each nation will host different orientation activities in the welcoming week. You will receive a temporary Nation Card for you to enter all Nations and participate in their activities without a fee, this is an excellent way for you to experience the atmosphere and try out facilities offered by different nations. The Uppsala Business & Economics Student Association, Uppsalaekonomerna also arranges activities for exchange students in the welcoming weeks.

3. *International Services and Activities*

The International Mobility Office offers support to exchange students regarding courses and other practical matters. Pick-up services upon arrival at Stockholm Arlanda Airport are available on a designated dates, typically a few days before term starts. A welcome desk will also be set up in the airport.

There is also a buddy programme available for incoming exchange student to pair up with a Swedish student buddy, who will assist you in settling down and exploring Sweden. Several excursions such as city and university tour, and even a tour in Stockholm had been organised in the past semester.

4. *Social clubs and Networking Opportunities*

Student life in Uppsala is one of the most unique experiences in Sweden and the nations are at the core of it. The Nations will continue to host various different events throughout the semester, from movie night, formal dinners to clubs. Applying to become an official member in one of the Nations will allow you to enjoy certain members-only benefits, such as discount on meals and free-admission to clubs.

Participating in events host by Nations will surely allow you to meet all sorts of people from all across the entire university, and it is certainly something you should experience as a student in Uppsala.

5. Accommodations

The university housing office offers accommodation to exchange students but it is not guaranteed. However, there are plenty of flats available so it should not be a concern if you submit your application on time. It is not recommended to find your own housing as it could get very complicated and difficult.

All three of us stayed in Flogsta (Sernanders Väg), a huge student residential area where most international students live. Each room has its own bathroom and toilet, and we share one big common area and kitchen with the rest of the corridor. I really enjoyed staying in Flogsta, it is a very vibrant place and you could easily hang out with your corridor-mates, there are plenty of entertainment (aka corridor parties) every night in Flogsta.

6. Courses registration

A semester is being divided into 4 periods with students taking no more than 7.5 ECTS credits (~4 HKUST credits) on average per period. Courses are either in 7.5 ECTS or 15 ECTS and a total of 30 ECTS credits (equivalent to ~15 HKUST credits) are required for each semester.

In our case, we took a 15 ECTS course (Management and Control 2FE412) for Period 1-2, and 2 7.5 ECTS courses (Leadership 2FE229; Marketing 2FE222) for Period 3-4.

The university offers a list of Business and related courses for exchange students to take: <http://fek.uu.se/student-en/incoming-exchange-students/courses/>, exchange students could only choose from this list.

The university does not have an add-drop period, thus, courses course changes are not possible once you have received your course confirmation, you can only follow the courses that you have been admitted to already.

7. Teaching & Assessment Methods

Swedish education emphasise on peer learning, thus there are plenty of group work and seminars for peer review. Course instructors usually acts as a facilitator by laying out the focus area of discussions and encouraging students to share their own thoughts.

Taking one of our courses, Leadership (2FE229) as an example, we were required to work in groups to submit a hand-in to answer questions based on the assigned

readings for each week. We would then share our work with the rest of the class and raise a question for the entire class to discuss. After class, we would review on our classmates' work and submit a peer review document.

Regarding assessment methods, since the courses are highly participative in nature, attendance is mandatory for seminars (but not lectures) and course performance is being evaluated based on participation in class. Examinations will take place at the end of each course in the form of group presentation, written exam or take-home exam.

8. *Finance and Banking*

The official currency of Sweden is Swedish Krona (SEK).

Payments are usually done through contactless means as most shops are cash-free nowadays. It would be unnecessary to bring cash to Sweden, instead, apply for debit or credit cards with low overseas transaction fee in Hong Kong and bring them with you to Sweden.

If you wish to withdraw cash when you are travelling around Europe, ask for a PLUS-system ATM card from your bank for overseas withdrawal, most ATMs in Europe do not accept Hong Kong ATM cards as they are running on UnionPay network.

As far as I know, most exchange students from Hong Kong does not have a Swedish bank account since opening a bank account will require a Swedish personal number, in which temporary residents will not be given one.

9. *Climate*

Swedish winter is cold and dry. In Uppsala, the temperature drops below 0°C in January and February with only 6-8 hours of sunlight, there is huge temperature difference between day and night. It gets warmer starting from March onwards with temperature rising above 0°C in daytime although it is still sub-zero in the night. Summer approaches in May/June with temperature rising to around 20°C, there will also be ample daylight throughout the day.

Bring sufficient winter clothes to Sweden, such as wind/waterproof winter jacket. Beanies and mittens are also very useful to cover body parts that are exposed to cold air. Remember to wear multiple layers to keep yourself warm in the cold.

10. *Health & Safety*

Sweden is one of the safest country in Europe, there are often police and security officers patrolling in crowded places such as train stations. However, there are

often cases of bicycle theft, so do not leave your valuables on your bicycle if you have one and always secure your bicycle before leaving.

Drinking is prohibited in the public, if you bumped into police or security officers with any alcoholic beverage that has been opened, you will be asked to dispose it immediately. We have heard stories about people being taken away by the police due to public drunkenness, if you do not wish to earn yourself a trip to the police station, make sure you have a safe ride home after clubbing.

11. *Food*

There are quite a number of restaurants in Uppsala. However, it is far more expensive to dine out than to cook by yourself. A single meal costs 120SEK on average. A lot of Asian restaurants offer lunch buffets, which is a nice way to enjoy a large meal without paying a huge sum of money. Some Nations will offer lunch or dinner as well, although the portion is relatively small, it is much cheaper than eating at a proper restaurant thus a good way to save some money.

Most people simply cook at their corridors, so do learn how to cook before coming to Sweden! You could find cheap groceries in supermarkets ICA, Lidl or Willy's.

12. *Transportation*

It is quite easy to get around in Uppsala. Biking is certainly the cheapest way, it is also quite convenient as Uppsala prides itself in its well-developing cycling paths. Consider purchasing second-hand bikes from other students through social media groups to save some money. However, it would be a bit dangerous to bike during winter as the roads are very slippery.

You can also travel around by public transportation. UL, the company which manages public transportation in Uppsala County, runs buses and commuter trains (Upptåget) within the city of Uppsala and throughout the county. The bus network covers most of the key destinations in the city. There are frequent bus services running from 4am until around 1am. To travel on public transports, simply purchase a ticket via the UL app before you board the bus or train. A single ticket to travel within the city is valid for 75 minutes and costs 20SEK for students. I would recommend purchasing a monthly all-zone ticket which entitles you to travel within the city and around the entire county, including bus services to Stockholm Arlanda Airport, which costs 620SEK for students.

13. *Communication*

Official language of Sweden is Swedish. Most people speak very fluent English with clear articulation so it is quite easy to understand them. Still, apps such as Google

Translate will come in handy as menus in restaurants or food labels in supermarkets are all written in Swedish.

14. *Sports and Recreation facilities*

There are no free sports and recreation facilities in Uppsala, Campus 1477 is one of the more popular sports facilities in the campus, offering a wide range of activities in students.

There are plenty of other recreational activities in the winter, including a small ice-rink in the city centre, you could even bring your own pair of ice skaters to a lake in the nearby city of Västerås to skate!

15. *Cautionary measures*

Bring sufficient winter clothes and be mentally prepared about the short daylight in winter, it could be a bit hard to adapt at first. Swedes are relatively reserved people when compared to other Europeans, so don't be annoyed when they appear shy or disinterested in you, they are actually very friendly and nice.

When travelling in other parts of Europe, stay vigilant and be extra careful with your personal belongings. Scams and theft are quite common in major tourists spots and train stations.

Regarding camping/wild-cooking, it is forbidden to light a fire outside of designated areas in natural reserves. Fire ban is normally in force during the warm seasons, meaning that you are forbidden to light a fire in certain areas, pay attention to the announcement by rescue services or county governments.

- Passport, HKID, Acceptance Letter, Student Insurance, Swedish Residence Permit (Make photocopies if necessary)
- Cash (EUR/USD for travelling), Credit Cards, Debit Cards
- Router or LAN cable (some accommodations does not have WiFi)
- Phone and laptop
- Camera
- Cables and chargers with charger adaptor (Type C or F socket)
- Medicine, personal hygiene products
- Winter Clothes (Wind/waterproof jacket, down feather coat, mittens/gloves, beanie)
- Optional: Waterproof boots (Your feet will get wet in the snow)

- A. Migrationsverket (Migration Agency) – For Residence Permit
<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Studying-in-Sweden.html>
- B. Uppsala University Housing Office
<http://housingoffice.se>
- C. Course Catalogue
<http://fek.uu.se/student-en/incoming-exchange-students/courses/>
- D. Transportation in Uppsala: UL
<https://www.ul.se/en>
- E. Transportation in Sweden (Train): SJ
<https://www.sj.se/en>
- F. Uppsala Health Care Information
Tel: 1177
- G. International Mobility Office - Incoming exchange
Email: incoming@fek.uu.se
Tel: +46(0)18-471 1407 (EU, EES) or +46(0)18-4716801 (Non-EU)
- H. Student Nations
http://www.uu.se/en/admissions/student-life/the_student_nations/