



Study Abroad Report

The Stockholm School of Economics
Stockholm, Sweden

Tam Kwan To, Fall 2022



Monthly Activity Log

August

I arrived in Stockholm on the 18th August, and quickly settled down and took some rest after the long haul flight before I set off for a week-long trip in Iceland.



Double rainbow at the Gullfoss falls

The summertime is the peak tourist season in Iceland for its warmer and more stable weather. I went on the Golden Circle route to visit the geysers and national parks, continued to the South Coast to go behind the waterfalls, and tried glacier hiking. The tour guides also introduced us to the history and legacies of Iceland. This was a trip full of magnificent views.

After returning from Iceland, the orientation day for the exchange students marks the start of the semester.

September

September is the month when I met new people at the SSE and wandered around Stockholm. The tourist attractions in Stockholm are centred around *Gamla Stan* (the Old Town). Watching the sunset over the calm harbour was truly an enjoyment.



October

I seized the last chance to visit the Oktoberfest in Munich on the second last day. I was lucky enough to get seats in a small beer tent in the heavy rain. The party was so much fun – great music, great beer, and friendly people. I also travelled to Nuremberg and Berlin.



Inside the Oktoberfest tent

During the short break in mid-October, I travelled to Copenhagen and Malmö, two very close cities. Sadly some of the houses at the infamous Nyhavn in Copenhagen were under renovation, ruining my pictures.

November



At the beginning of November, I flew to Istanbul – the most populous city in Europe. It was crowded with both people and cats. The city was full of delicate handicrafts and flavorful food.

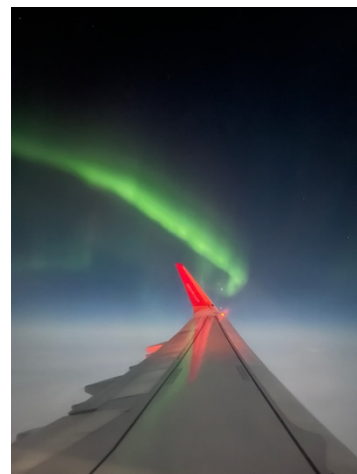
The Turkish architecture is very distinct from what we've seen in Northern and Central Europe, and is definitely worth a visit.

In late November, I also visited London and Cambridge to meet my friend from high school.

December

The Alps are one of the must-sees in Europe, and I had a great experience viewing it from the small city of Innsbruck in Austria.

From late December, I went on the last trip marking the end of my Europe journey – from Lisbon to the New Year's Eve countdown in London, and to viewing the northern lights in Tromsø. I was lucky enough to see the lights on a flight.



General Study Abroad Information

Visa Procedures

Students with a non-EU/EEA passport, like the Hong Kong passport, will need to apply for a residence permit for the exchange program. It is encouraged to apply online as soon as possible as the process can take more than a month.

Application for a residence permit requires biometrics to be recorded. However, the Sweden Embassy in Hong Kong does not provide this service. Since 90 visa-free days are granted to Hongkongers, I could submit my biometrics at the Migration Agency after my arrival.

The closest Agency to the SSE is located at Sundbyberg, and can be quite busy at times. You are recommended to book a timeslot early.

Orientation Activities

There will be an Orientation Day right before the start of the semester. Our buddies guided us around the campus and introduced us to the Student Association (SASSE), followed by orientation talks.

International Services & Activities

There was a pre-departure information session regarding visas, insurance, housing, and studies. Exchange students were also enrolled in the SASSE automatically.

Accommodations

The SSE provides two dormitories for international exchange students: Saltis and Lappis. I stayed in Saltis, which is located centrally and right next to the SSE. A small kitchenette is available in rooms in Saltis. Lappis is 30 minutes away from SSE and kitchens are shared.

Housing is not guaranteed and some exchange students had to look for housing options on their own.



View from Saltis in snow

Course Registration

Course registration for the Fall semester was open around May. It was easy and courses could be registered with a few clicks on the portal. Past grade statistics were also on the portal. Although it was on a first-come-first-served basis, it was nowhere as competitive as it gets at HKUST.

The credit transfer process took months for me. It is recommended to begin applying for course mappings back to HKUST as soon as the syllabus is released at the SSE.

Teaching and Assessment Methods

I took 3 courses in total:

- BE917 Decision Making for Individuals and Organizations
- BE918 Sustainability Challenges: Business in Society
- BE923 Sustainable Finance

A semester is divided into 2 periods, and students usually take 2 courses within each period. There are more reading materials and the professors would expect you to read them before class. Assessments usually consist of seminar discussions, assignments, group work / project, and examinations.

Finance & Banking

The currency used in Sweden is Swedish Krona (SEK). Sweden is cashless and most shops do not accept cash anymore. The most common form of payments accepted are Visa / Master debit and credit cards, and Swish, the Swedish counterpart of FPS. There are debit and credit cards available in Hong Kong that do not charge foreign transaction fees.

Since my exchange only lasts half a year, I could not apply for a Swedish *personnummer* or a bank account. Swish was thus unavailable for me.

Climate

I arrived in mid-August and the temperature was as high as 28°C. It was quite unbearable without fans and air-conditioning. The temperature was a lot more comfortable in late August. It first snowed in November and the temperature could drop to -9°C in December. Roads can be fairly slippery when the snow is melting.

Health & Safety

There are no clinics in SSE. Students are recommended to dial the 1177 helpline, or visit 1177.se to get medical advice.

Stockholm is generally safe. There are certain socio-economically vulnerable areas where a bit more caution is advised.

Food

Eating out is usually more expensive than in Hong Kong. A typical meal would cost ~130 kr and a meal at a fast food chain like Max Burgers would cost ~90 kr.

More affordable options include kebab or pizzas, and of course, cooking myself. There are 4 supermarkets nearby: Lidl, Coop, Hemköp, and ICA, and groceries are available at a good price.

There is a café but there are no restaurants on campus.

Transportation

The most common forms of commuting are the metro and buses. The entire public transport system is managed by SL, and the period tickets on the green SL card took me around Stockholm.

Bicycle lanes are well-developed in Stockholm. Shared scooters and e-bikes are also widely available.

Communication

Since I did not have a *personnummer*, a prepaid SIM card (*kontantkort*) was the only option. I purchased a prepaid SIM card from Telenor. SIM cards need to be registered, and the process of registration can be completed in minutes online with Telenor.

The SIM card can be used throughout the EU/EEA region.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

There are no sports or recreational facilities available on campus but they are available nearby. The Sports Committee organizes regular football, running, or bouldering practices, etc.

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

There are numerous committees under SASSE hosting social events. Party tickets are usually available in the Keyflow app.

Cautionary Measures

There are no special cautionary measures.

Items to Bring

- Credit card
- Some cash
- Passport
- Power banks
- Chargers
- Spare SIM card
- Winter clothing
- Winter boots
- Personal medicine
- Business suit
- Travel adapters
- Extension socket
- Pajamas
- Bed sheets

Useful Links and Contacts

- 1117.se - <https://1117.se>
- SSE Information for Exchange Students - <https://www.hhs.se/incoming-exchange-students>
- Swedish Migration Agency - <https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Studying-and-researching-in-Sweden/Higher-education.html>
- Stockholm Public Transport - <https://sl.se/>
- Vulnerable areas - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulnerable_area