



Exchange Report

Wong Chun Yat

Spring Term 2022-23

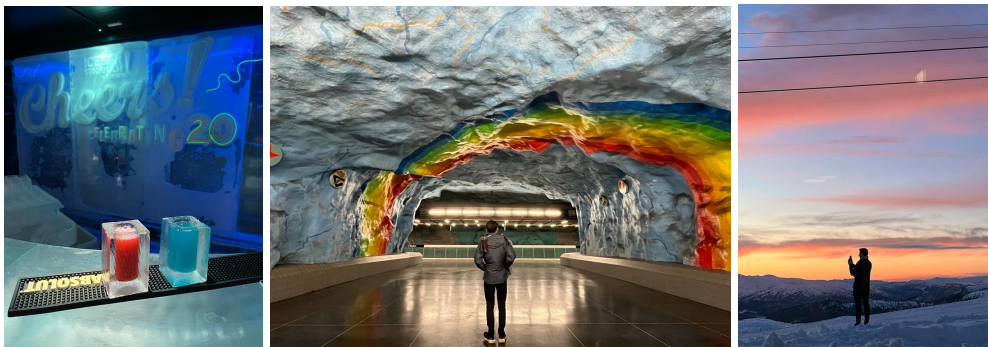
Stockholm School of Economics

Sweden

Part 1 - Monthly Activity Log

January

In January, I had an incredible adventure in Sweden and Norway. When I arrived in Stockholm on January 9th, I tried some delicious traditional Swedish cuisine, including pickled herring and swedish meatballs. One of the most memorable experiences was visiting the famous Ice Bar, where I enjoyed icy cocktails in a unique setting made entirely of ice. I also took the time to admire the impressive art on display at different railway stations in Stockholm. Before the semester begins, I embarked on a four-day trip to Norway, where I had the opportunity to explore some incredible cities, including Oslo, Voss, Flam, and Bergen. The natural beauty of Norway was truly breathtaking. I had a great time skiing and snowboarding in the ski resort in Voss. Overall, January was an incredible month filled with adventure and new experiences.



February

In February, I had the opportunity to travel to Poland for 8 days, and it was an amazing experience. I tried all sorts of Polish dumplings, and they were absolutely delightful. The highlight of my trip was visiting the Salt Mine in Krakow, which is one of the world's oldest operating salt mines. I also had the chance to explore the capital city of Warsaw, which was full of history and culture. Looking back, I was surprised at how cheap it was to travel in Poland, especially compared to some other destinations in Europe. I was able to stretch my budget much further than I expected, which made the trip even more enjoyable.



March

In March, I went on two amazing trips. The first was to the northern part of Sweden, specifically Abisko, and Tromsø in Norway, to hunt for the Northern Lights. The weather was extremely cold, but my friends and I were fortunate enough to witness the stunning lights in the sky on three out of the four nights we were there. It was definitely worth braving the cold temperatures. Shortly after, I had mid-term exams, and once they were done, I embarked on another journey to Italy. I visited Milan, Florence, Rome, and Venice, and each city had something special to offer. I marveled at the stunning architecture of the Milan Cathedral, walked through the historic Colosseum in Rome, and visited the Vatican City. I also explored the beautiful islands of Venice, including Murano and Burano. The weather in Italy was much warmer, and I loved the stunning views, delicious food, and refreshing Aperol Spritz. Italy has quickly become my favorite country to visit.



April

In April, I had an unforgettable journey through Europe during the Easter break. I started in Amsterdam, where I was captivated by the city's picturesque canals and rich history. I visited the Van Gogh Museum and the Rijksmuseum, which both have impressive art collections. Next, I traveled to Rotterdam, which was a completely different experience from Amsterdam. The city's modern architecture and innovative design were awe-inspiring, and I visited the iconic Markthal, which was a paradise for foodies. In Den Haag, I visited the political center of the Netherlands and took in the beautiful seaside scenery at Scheveningen Beach. The Mauritshuis Museum, with its collection of Dutch masterpieces, was a highlight for me.



Next, I visited both Brussels and Brugge in Belgium, each with its own unique charm. In Brussels, I admired the stunning Grand Place and tried some delicious Belgian chocolates. In Brugge, I wandered through the cobblestone streets and enjoyed the medieval architecture.

Next, I traveled to Paris, which was a dream come true. I visited iconic landmarks like the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre Museum, and I strolled along the Seine River, taking in the romantic atmosphere of the city.

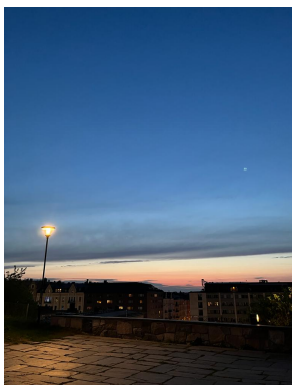
Finally, I ended my journey in Berlin, where I learned about the city's history by visiting the Berlin Wall and the Brandenburg Gate. I also enjoyed the city's world-class museums and vibrant nightlife.



May

In May, I decided to stay in Stockholm as the end of the semester was approaching and things were getting busier. Despite that, I still managed to explore some of Stockholm's stunning archipelagos like Vaxholm and Grinda. It was a perfect way to escape the hustle and bustle of city life and enjoy the serene beauty of nature.

I also spent more time exploring different parts of Stockholm like the King's Garden, where I enjoyed a peaceful stroll amid the lush greenery. I visited the Nobel Prize Museum, which was a fascinating experience as I learned about the achievements of some of the world's greatest minds. I left Stockholm on June 1st, feeling grateful for the wonderful experiences I had during my time there.



Part 2 - General Exchange Information

1. Visa procedures

After receiving my official acceptance letter from SSE in October 2022, I began the process of applying for a student visa. I submitted all necessary information through their online application system and waited for updates. Along with the application, I needed to gather required documents such as my passport, passport-sized photos, proof of acceptance letter, proof of financial support, and proof of travel medical insurance. To obtain the insurance proof, I emailed HKUST for assistance.

Luckily, I received approval for my residence permit just before the visa policy changed in November. I simply emailed the Authority to receive the soft copy of my decision letter, printed it out, and brought it to the migrant office in Stockholm for photo-taking and fingerprint collection to obtain my residence permit card. Under the new Sweden visa policy, students are required to visit the embassy in person for fingerprint and identity checking. However, the Hong Kong embassy does not offer these services, which means students need to travel to other countries to obtain the decision letter required for their student visa application.

2. Orientation activities

The student association SASSE at SSE has an exchange committee that offers various orientation activities. During the first week of the semester, I participated in an info day which included a campus tour. I also attended the orientation talk organized by the school, where free kanelebulle and coffee were provided. On the orientation day, I purchased my access card for 100 SEK which granted me access to the School's front door and other facilities. There were many networking activities throughout the semester, including bowling, pubs, and banquets, which were all very interesting.

3. International Services & Activities

The exchange committee at SSE offers low-cost trips to Lapland and Gotland exclusively for exchange students. While it's unfortunate that these trips didn't fit into your school schedule, it's great to know that these opportunities are available for those who are interested in exploring more of Sweden and its neighboring areas.

4. Accommodations

I lived in Saltis, a dormitory situated just a minute away from SSE, which is very convenient for me. Although I live in a shared room, I have it all to myself as I don't have a roommate. The monthly rent for my accommodation is 4700 SEK. Each room in Saltis has its own kitchen equipped with only one hotplate and a private toilet. Additionally, there are two washing machines available, but they need to be booked in advance.

5. Course Registration

To register for courses at SSE, simply access the school's online portal. It's important to note that if you're interested in studying master-level courses, you should seek pre-approval from SSE before registering. In the spring semester, there are two registration periods, each lasting

1.5 months, and you're allowed to register for up to two courses per period. In my case, I registered for two courses in the first period and one in the second.

6. Teaching & Assessment Methods

As for teaching and assessment methods, they're quite similar to those at HKUST. SSE also uses Canvas for reading course materials and submitting assignments. In terms of assessment, SSE uses a variety of methods, including exams, group projects, individual assignments, and class participation. Some courses may have attendance requirements, while others may not. Some courses may also have pre-recorded lectures. You can find more information about the courses on the SSE website.

7. Finance & Banking

Sweden is known for being a cashless nation, where the majority of transactions are done through credit or debit cards. The currency used in Sweden is SEK, with an exchange rate of about 1 SEK = 0.76 HKD. During my exchange, I found it convenient to use my HSBC debit card as a payment method since it didn't charge any extra transaction costs.

8. Climate

Stockholm experiences a cold and snowy winter season from January to April, with temperatures often dropping below freezing. However, the city is well-prepared for the winter season with efficient snow clearance and de-icing measures.

As the weather starts to warm up in May, Stockholm transforms into a beautiful city with blooming flowers and greenery. It is a great time to explore the city and enjoy the many parks and outdoor spaces.

9. Health & Safety

Stockholm is generally a safe city. However, like in any other urban area, it is still important to take basic safety precautions, such as keeping an eye on your belongings and avoiding poorly lit or secluded areas at night. Additionally, during the winter months, it is important to be mindful of icy and slippery conditions on the streets and sidewalks.

10. Food

I mostly cooked my meals at the dormitory during my exchange at SSE. There is a Lidl grocery store conveniently located right next to the dormitory, which offers affordable prices for groceries. Dining out in Stockholm can be quite expensive compared to Hong Kong, so cooking at home was a great way to save money.

11. Transportation

The cost of transportation in Stockholm is SEK 26 for a discounted student fare that is valid for 75 minutes. As I live in Saltis, which is located in the city center, I often choose to walk instead of taking public transportation. There are also boats available that allow you to visit the islands near Stockholm.

12. Communication

In Sweden, the primary language is Swedish, but many people are also fluent in English, so communicating in English is generally not an issue. People typically use messaging apps like Facebook Messenger, iMessage, WhatsApp, and Snapchat for communication. When it comes to purchasing a SIM card, Telenor is a popular choice, as their data plan works across Europe.

13. Sports & Recreation Facilities

While there are many sports clubs available for students to join at SSE, the campus itself doesn't offer many sports facilities due to the relatively small size of the SSE building.

14. Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

At SSE, there are various clubs offered by the student union SASSE, but I didn't join many of them. Instead, I primarily socialized and networked with other international students who lived in Saltis with me.

15. Cautionary measures

It's important to prepare for the freezing temperatures in Stockholm, especially during the winter months from January to April. It's recommended to bring warm clothing such as heattechs, winter jackets, gloves, and hats to stay warm and comfortable.

Items to bring

1. Passport
2. Student visa documents
3. Cash and credit/debit cards
4. Travel adapter and converter
5. Mobile phone and charger
6. Laptop or tablet and charger
7. Umbrella or raincoat (for the rainy season)
8. Toiletries and personal care items (toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, etc.)
9. Prescription medications (if applicable)
10. School supplies (notebooks, pens, pencils, etc.)
11. A backpack or other carrying bag

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>