

Exchange Report

Spring 2024

Uppsala University

Sweden

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Monthly Activity Log

Write a log of one paragraph for each month highlighting some of your interesting exchange experiences, activities, impressions & places of interest. Please describe your study, learning and life experience. This section should be at least 600 words long.

January

I first arrived in Sweden on the 11th of January. Uppsala University had arranged a shuttle bus at Arlanda Airport to transport all exchange students to the campus. The journey took about 40 minutes, and I was exhilarated to see the pristine white snow blanketing the landscape. The temperature was bitterly cold, necessitating several layers of clothing. Upon arrival, we promptly registered for the student portal, student card, and housing key. I was fortunate to meet other exchange students from Hong Kong, and we all resided in the same accommodation ' Flogsta! We then took the school bus to Flogsta to offload our heavy luggage. Carrying 40kg of luggage through the thick snow was quite a challenge. Later, we visited IKEA to purchase pillows, quilts, and other daily necessities from nearby supermarkets. It was a promising start to my exchange journey, and I remained happy throughout the first week. However, the early sunsets in Sweden during winter were a bit disheartening, as it would get dark around 4PM, limiting my daytime exploration of Uppsala.

February

I commenced my first courses at Uppsala University, starting with a marketing course where most of my classmates were Swedish. Exchange students were assigned to different groups to collaborate with local students, which was a valuable opportunity to make friends and learn about Swedish culture. I discovered that Swedish students often take time to explore the world before starting university, resulting in them being older than us. One of my groupmates admired my courage to come to Europe alone. Despite the heavy workload from group projects and presentations, I was glad to meet many international friends through lectures. I also traveled to Poland and Finland, where I had the incredible experience of riding reindeer and huskies in Rovaniemi, although we were disappointed not to see the aurora borealis.

March

I took a weekend trip to Copenhagen, attracted by the incredibly cheap airfare. The pastries there were delicious. March was a busy month, marking the end of my first course. We had to submit group reports, engage in group discussions, and prepare for final examinations. The Swedish-style report format was initially confusing. For the exams, I had to read 12 articles, each about 20 pages long, to answer essay questions. Although it was tough and different from HKUST, the readings were insightful and deepened my understanding of the literature. I began to appreciate the slow-paced life in Uppsala, enjoying more me-time, listening to music, and experimenting with different breakfast menus. During the Easter holiday, I visited Paris with my family, finally seeing the Eiffel Tower and the Mona Lisa in person!

April

April began with heavy snow and strong winds. I slipped on an icy staircase on my way to Swedish lessons but, fortunately, wasn't hurt. All my lessons concluded in April. As spring arrived, the weather warmed up, and Uppsala became even more inviting with its clean air and comfortable environment. And the northern lights were spotted in my house! It dazzled over Uppsala. I had a long study break to prepare for my Swedish examination in May. During this time, I visited friends in Belgium and the Netherlands, delighting in the stunning tulip fields in Amsterdam. I also traveled to Italy and London with my exchange buddies. In Venice, my cash was stolen in a crowded area, which was a shocking experience, but the trip remained unforgettable.

May

The weather in May was delightful, allowing me to explore Uppsala on a scooter and on foot daily. The near-constant daylight in Sweden was fascinating, with the sky remaining light from 2 AM to midnight. I visited Stockholm's King's Garden to admire the cherry blossoms and took advantage of tax-free shopping, saving at least 500 HKD on perfumes and cosmetics compared to prices in Hong Kong. After passing my Swedish oral, listening, and writing examinations, I embarked on my final trip during my exchange. I first traveled to Malta and was mesmerized by the Blue Lagoon's crystal-clear waters. It was blissful to relax on the beach and soak up the sunshine. Next, we moved on to Portugal, where we indulged in egg tarts daily. Our last stop was Barcelona, Spain, concluding the incredible journey.

June

As my exchange journey in Sweden drew to a close, we spent several days packing our luggage and purchasing Swedish souvenirs. I bought an assortment of Swedish-made chocolates, potato chips, and bread. Reflecting on my time here, I realized how much I truly enjoyed and cherished my exchange experience in Sweden. The living standards were exceptionally high, contributing to a life full of joy and contentment. The environment was pristine, with clean surroundings and refreshing air. The Swedish people were incredibly friendly, often greeting you with a smile while maintaining respectful social distancing. Choosing Uppsala University for my exchange studies was undoubtedly one of the best decisions I've ever made.

Please briefly describe the visa application procedures, including

- 1) Type of passport/travel document you are holding
- 2) Type of visa you are required
- 3) Required documents
- 4) Visa fees

As an exchange student planning to stay in Sweden for more than three months, it is necessary to obtain a residence permit card before leaving Hong Kong. Unfortunately, it is not possible to apply for the visa at the Consulate-General in Hong Kong. Therefore, once I received the admission letter from Uppsala University, I traveled to Shanghai for passport verification and to apply for the visa.

Hong Kong citizens do not require a visa for visits to Sweden lasting up to three months. Consequently, I opted to take photos and have my fingerprints collected upon arrival in Sweden.

When passing through immigration at Arlanda Airport, you must present your admission letter and the email confirming your residence permit application.

Later on, I learned from other exchange students that there is sometimes a pop-up passport control service in Hong Kong, which meant they did not travel to Shanghai. It is advisable to check if this service is available in Hong Kong.

The visa fee is approximately HKD 1,000.

What are the course(s) that you have enrolled at the host institution?

International Business and Marketing
Business in Network
Basic Swedish

Please briefly describe the course registration procedures, such as

- 1) When did you receive the course registration details**
- 2) What is the course registration procedures**
- 3) Where can you access information related to course registration (e.g. websites)**

I received the course registration details via email in October. Uppsala University provided a list of courses available for registration. A link was included in the email to view the course details. Additionally, I checked the HKUST credit transfer database to determine which courses could be transferred.

Where did you live during the program?

Off-campus student dormitory offered by the host institution

Please briefly describe the accommodation at the host destination, including

- 1) What type of accommodation**
- 2) What is the application procedures (If you are staying at accommodation offered by the host institution)**
- 3) How did you search for the accommodation and where did you book your accommodation (If you need to arrange your own accommodation)**
- 4) Facilities in the accommodation**

I lived in an off-campus student corridor house. The housing office at Uppsala University sent me the application link in October, allowing me to choose up to three preferences. Fortunately, I was lucky to get my first choice: Flogsta.

Flogsta is located in the western part of Uppsala. It takes about 20-30 minutes to walk to the School of Economics. Each corridor in Flogsta has 12 rooms. Every student has their own bathroom, but there is only one shared kitchen in each corridor. The rooms are quite spacious. Most exchange students live in Flogsta, which gave me the opportunity to meet many international friends in the corridor. The monthly rent is around 4700sek.

Please briefly describe the health and safety support provided at the host institution, including

- 1) Whether there is health centers or clinics available on campus**
- 2) Any safety matters that you are concerned about**

Sweden is a safe country, particularly in Uppsala, where the city center is relatively small. It is generally safe for two girls to walk home at 2 AM. However, it is always wise to stay aware of your surroundings. Health services can be expensive, especially consultations at the hospital. For minor health concerns, you can seek advice at the pharmacy.

Finances

How much did you spend (in HKD) on the following items? (Please input "0" if not applicable to you)

Air ticket between the place of departure and destination (round trip)

HKD 12,000

Accommodation (for the entire study abroad period)

HKD 18,000

Program fee (if applicable)

N/A

Personal expenses

HKD 30,000

Others, please specify

Travel: HKD 40,000

My Top 3s

Please share with students some of your top 3s. If it is best to provide the information in the language of the host destination, please do so, but provide an explanation in English.

Courses at the host institution

Business in Network (Mgmt course)

Marketing

Swedish

Favourite Food

Meatball

Bread&Pastries

Potato chips

Hang-outs places on campus

Library

Garden in front of campus

Meeting room

Must-dos in the city

Play scooter

Visit Nation's clubs

Shopping in the city centre

Not-to-dos in the city

Walk to school in winter. It is really cold.

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Useful local apps or websites

UL app for purchasing bus and train tickets in Uppsala

SL app for purchasing transport ticket in Stockholm

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Words to describe my study abroad experience

Interesting

Amazing

Worth