

# Exchange Report

Spring 2024

Uppsala University

Sweden

CHIA Hok Yee

## 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

Upon arriving in Uppsala after a pre-exchange journey to the UK with my cousin, I was greeted by Uppsala University's shuttle service at Stockholm ARN airport. Luckily, a friend of mine from HKUST got into Uppsala University together, so I met up with her and boarded the shuttle to the university for registration. To my surprise we heard some girls speaking Cantonese boarding the shuttle together. It was a pleasant shock, as I had not expected to find others from Hong Kong besides my friend and me.

We struck up a conversation and ended up spending time together (and went on most of the trips in the upcoming months together). Since most of us lived in Flogsta, we planned our way back to Flogsta together (it was super hard pushing all 3 luggages I bought with me with snowy ground). When I finally received the keys to my dorm and got to the corridor, a kind Swedish corridor mate greeted me with a warm smile, offering assistance. Over the next few days, I gradually met the other corridor mates in the shared kitchen area.

Honestly, the kitchen didn't look great at first, I even doubted my choice of choosing Flogsta as my dorm area. Our corridor mate then decided to initiate a kitchen cleaning session together. Through our collective efforts, the kitchen transformed into a more welcoming place, and we've named our corridor as the 'penthouse' (As it was located at the top floor).

### February

February started with Chinese New Year at first where all of us from Hong Kong gathered for a special dinner at a Chinese restaurant. We enjoyed traditional food, drew on my iPad, and had a fun time playing mini mahjong together ahahaha it was a fun experience celebrating CNY with friends.

After the New Year festivities, we took our first trip to Gdansk, Poland, it was a very short trip, and we simply went there because of the cheap ticket price. We also went on our only ski trip in Sweden. A funny incident occurred when we spent two hours at the beginner ski area before realizing the more challenging junior slope next to it, which seemed huge and scary.

Towards the end of the month, we visited Finland and were amazed by the magical Santa Claus Village. Despite our travels, we had to balance our adventures with school. The curriculum here is demanding 'it's not easy. We have to put in a lot of time and effort to understand the material because it's designed for us to do most of the thinking. Instead of traditional lectures, we were given lengthy articles to read (20+ pages each) and then engage in in-depth discussions with other students. While lectures can be missed, discussions are mandatory, making our learning experience very student driven. Adjusting to this style of study has been challenging for me, coming from a different educational background in Hong Kong.

### March

In March, we hit the club scene for the second time. Clubs here in Uppsala University are different from those in Hong Kong. These clubs are run by various "nations" within the university (kind of like societies at HKUST). If you're a member of a nation' like Varmlands Nation, in our case' you can party at the club for free every Friday when the nation's building transforms into a club.

Here's the funny part: on our first attempt, we were a bit too enthusiastic during our pre-drink session and got turned away for being too tipsy (note to self: don't overdo it if you want to get in!). After a 30-minute breather, we finally made it inside and bumped into some Swedish classmates from our morning marketing class. It's a small world after all!

Clubbing in Sweden seems to be a regular thing, my fellow Swedish groupmates told me they will hit the clubs weekly based on their nation memberships' maybe because there isn't much else happening around here, haha!

We then went to Copenhagen, Vienna, and Budapest, making unforgettable memories. Juggling trips with academics was quite the challenge. Deadlines for reports and finals coincided with our travel plans, leading to some stressful moments of working on reports/meetings mid-air and on trains (not an experience I want to repeat, let me tell you!). Thankfully, everything turned out well in the end, and our projects were a success.

### April

April kicked off with a trip to Nice with my high school friend (who's studying in the UK). I was amazed by the view even through the plane window, and in love with the place right after landing (probably because I'd been surrounded by snow in Sweden for so long' it was like a breath of fresh air seeing the bright blue ocean, sandy beaches, and clear skies).

After getting back to Uppsala, we caught our first glimpse of the northern lights! Who would've thought we'd see them in April? I was all set to get to bed when my corridor mates whatsapped me with a pic of the aurora. Truly an amazing surprise!

Soonly it was time for our second course, a quick one-month course. We dove straight into our project, teaming up with my Hong Kong friends this time. It was great collaborating with them, although working with our Swedish group mates before was also a blast, haha! We worked on the project very quickly because guess what? Italy was calling our names (it was the place I've always wanted to visit!)

Italy was great, but it was honestly overrated in my opinion. Wayyy too crowded and although the food was good, I got a bit tired of it. My friend even got some money uplifted. But overall, April was a month full of everything ' traveling, studying, cooking, and hanging with friends.

### May

Back in Uppsala from Italy in May, I decided to stick around for a bit before our super LONGGG trip from late May to mid-June. With courses nearly wrapped up, just a Swedish Language exam left, I found myself with plenty of free time. So, what did I do? Embarked on a quest to find the tastiest supermarket bread! I went all out, even buying three loaves at once to sample as many as possible before I leave Uppsala. The consequence? Bread for breakfast, lunch, and dinner! But hey, all in the name of culinary exploration, right? Haha!

Weather in Uppsala turned lovely once we got back so I cut my bus monthly pass and walked to school instead (around 30 mins walk). And on day offs, I'd be wandering around under the sunlight~

In mid-May, I successfully convinced my high school friend to visit. We had a fantastic picnic day and even got last-minute tickets to a Taylor Swift concert (only around 400 HKD!). My first concert experience was a hit! I just love Sweden in this weather' no more white, just lush greens, yellow flowers, and endless blue skies (the days are so long, the sky's still slightly light even at midnight).

As May wrapped up and there's only half a month before heading back to HK, the anxiety of not securing an internship offer hit us hard. But hey, life rolls on! Between endless email checks and nerve-wracking interviews after our brutal Swedish exam, it was time to hit the road again! Next stop: a grand tour of Malta, Portugal, Spain, and France!

## June

June started with us being in Barcelona. After more than a week of traveling, I started to miss my bed in Flogsta already. However, the trip must go on, we've still got a week of traveling left!!! As some of our friends had to leave early, my friend and I took on Paris solo. Oh my gosh, Paris was so nice. I would say it's my favorite European city after all!!! The croissants, the views, the vibes, and even the olympic flags everywhere. It's just too perfect to be true.

After the trip to Paris, we went back to Uppsala for our one last week in Sweden. When I got back to the corridor, I noticed most of my corridor mates were either gone already or tidying up their things. On one hand, I'm craving Hong Kong cuisine and missing my friends; on the other, I don't wanna leave so soon :(((

**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**

1. Type of passport holding: Hong Kong Passport
2. Type of visa required: Student Visa (Resident permit for student)
3. Required documents: Please refer to the Swedish Embassy website
4. Visa fees: Around \$1000HKD

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

Basic Swedish  
International Business and Marketing  
Business in Networks

**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)**

1. I've received the course registration details before getting to Uppsala
2. Have to decide on what courses/preferences upon arrival and did not have an add-drop period.
3. Registration email provided, Uppsala University school website.

**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**

1. Flogsta (Off-Campus dorm)
2. Apply accommodation through Uppsala Housing Office (Linked with but not a part of Uppsala University)
4. Shared kitchen, Washing machine in another building, Garbage room in another building.

**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**

1. No
2. No

**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 80,000

**Others, please specify**

N/A

**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**

Basic Swedish

Business in Network

International Business and Marketing

**Favourite Food**

Cinnamon bun

Meatball

Princess cake

**Hang-outs places on campus**

Dark room in Ekonomikum

Canteen in Ekonomikum

The grass outside Ekonomikum

**Must-dos in the city**

Fika

Ride electric scooter

Go to nation clubs

### **Not-to-dos in the city**

Drinking in public area

Don't be too tipsy if you wanna get into the club

### **Useful local apps or websites**

UL app

SL app

Bolt

### **Words to describe my study abroad experience**

Happy

Exited

Great