

Exchange Report

Uppsala University, Sweden

Antonia Lam

Spring 2025



Monthly Activity Log

January

I arrived in Uppsala in mid-January, greeted by freezing temperatures and very short daylight hours. Honestly, during the first few days I felt quite homesick as it was hard to adjust to the sun setting and the sky turning completely dark as early as 2 PM. However, things started to feel better once I met other exchange students during the orientation activities. We bonded quickly where we would be doing grocery runs at ICA, cooking meals together and spending cozy evenings chatting over drinks in each other's rooms. They truly helped make Flogsta felt like home. On the first weekends we explored the town together. Uppsala looks much more vibrant during daytime with its aesthetic buildings and scenic streets coming to life. We walked along the river, visited the iconic Uppsala Cathedral and of course, enjoyed fika at local cafes. We were fully embracing Sweden's slow-paced lifestyle while soaking in the beauty of the town.

Towards the end of January, we took a day trip to Stockholm for the first time. The city had a completely different vibe compared to Uppsala, Stockholm is more modern and busy, yet still picturesque with its riverside views and beautiful Scandinavian architecture. We visited the Vasa Museum, wandered through the historic streets of Gamla Stan and stopped by the Royal Palace. Stockholm was so captivating that one day was not enough to explore it all, so we decided to return another time. Luckily, it's just about an hour away by train so it's super convenient for us. We wrapped up January with a fun night out at Snerikes Nation, which is one of the most popular student nations known for its Tuesday parties. It was an unforgettable evening filled with dancing, singing along to music and enjoying the vibrant Sweden party scene.



Feburary

February began with my first experience of heavy snowfall in Uppsala. The entire town was blanketed in white, and as someone born and raised in Hong Kong, seeing snow was incredibly exciting. The scenery was absolutely stunning, even though the freezing temperatures made walking to school in the morning quite a challenge. Still, the beautiful views gave me extra motivation to start the day.

One of the highlights of the month was attending my first ever gasque, which is a formal Swedish dinner party hosted by Snerikes Nation for new members. Everyone dressed up for the occasion: suits for the guys and formal dresses for the girls. A unique tradition during the dinner was singing the nation songs after each course, followed by taking a shot. By the end of the dinner, we would all stand on our chairs, waving our napkins and singing together. The gasque itself was a lot of fun but the afterparty was even better. We danced and celebrated with new friends from the nation, ending the night on a high note. Later in the month, I also went to my first party at Värmlands Nation with friends. Värmlands is known as one of the most popular party nations that they host clubbing events every Friday. The venue was spacious and the music leaned more toward pop hits. One of the coolest parts was partying in their library, which transforms into a dance floor at night! During daytime, it's a quiet study space.

February ended with an unforgettable one-week trip to Italy with three of my friends. We visited Venice, Florence, Rome, the Amalfi Coast and Sorrento. It was my first time in Italy and although the locals weren't as friendly as I had expected, the incredible food and wine more than made up for it. The trip was filled with beautiful sights, delicious meals, and great memories.



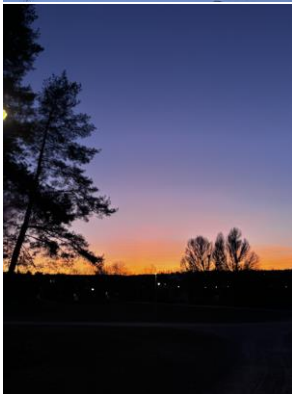
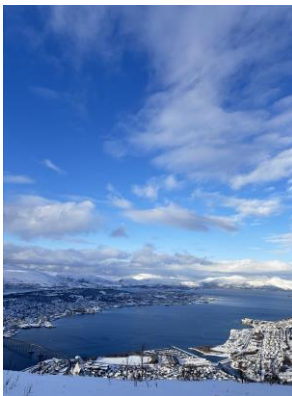
March

I kicked off March with a four-day trip to Tromsø, Norway. Since I had the chance to study in Scandinavia, visiting other Nordic countries and seeing the Northern Lights was high on my exchange bucket list. Tromsø felt like a true winter wonderland with breathtaking snowy landscapes. We took the cable car up the mountain to enjoy a panoramic view of the city and joined a tour where we got to feed reindeer and try reindeer sledding. I even tasted reindeer soup for the first time—it wasn't bad at all! To me, it tasted like a mix between beef and lamb. One of the biggest highlights of the trip was seeing the Northern Lights right after our reindeer sledding tour. It was such a magical and unique experience. Although the aurora wasn't very visible to our bare eyes, thanks to iPhone's night mode, I was able to capture some beautiful photos. It's a memory I'll never forget.

We also went on a nighttime snowmobile tour where we got to drive snowmobiles for an hour under the stars, hoping to catch the Northern Lights again. Unfortunately, due to heavy snowfall and fog, we didn't see them that night. But since we had already seen them the day before, we didn't feel like we missed out.

The rest of March was more relaxed. I attended classes, met up with friends, tried out different restaurants in the city and enjoyed some beautiful sunsets around Flogsta. I also got a gym membership to stay active as there wasn't much to do in Uppsala to be honest, so it was a good way to keep busy.

At the end of the month, as ski season was wrapping up, I went skiing at Romme Alpin with my friend. It was my first time skiing in Sweden and I had a great time. The slopes were spacious even though there were lots of people. It was a fun experience.



April

I started April with a trip to the UK to visit friends. I stayed in Leeds with my friends who are studying university there. I was genuinely touched to finally have proper dim sum and delicious Chinese food again after weeks of pizza, pasta, and meatballs, it was such a comforting change! Reuniting with familiar faces was heartwarming. I also traveled to London to meet up with friends from boarding school whom I hadn't seen in three years. I missed them a lot, so it was special to spend time together and enjoy the city. I was lucky to have surprisingly good weather during my stay in the UK, which made the trip even more enjoyable.

After returning to Uppsala, spring was finally arriving. The city was warming up and cherry blossom trees began blooming all around making everywhere look so pretty. My friends and I took a trip to Stockholm to visit Kungsträdgården, which is a popular cherry blossom viewing spot where the trees line up beautifully. Kids were playing with petals on the ground, seagulls flew overhead and the whole atmosphere felt vibrant. You could really feel the spirit of spring in the air.

Wrapping up April, the highlight of the month arrived—Valborg! It's the biggest festivals in Uppsala where everyone gets hyped for three days of non-stop celebration. Before the official day, different student nations hosted pre-parties. My friends and I joined the one at Värmlands Nation where they built an outdoor stage for a DJ and partied until midnight. The energy was incredible, everyone was dancing and celebrating the arrival of Valborg. On the official day, we joined the Champagne Gallop hosted by Snerikes Nation, where people spray champagne on each other and party together. Snerikes went all out with a massive stage and lighting setup. We wore raincoats and sunglasses to avoid getting soaked but I still ended up heading straight home for a shower afterward! To end the night, we went to Gamla Uppsala to watch the bonfire and fireworks. It was such a cozy evening. Everyone gathered around the fire and we even danced in circles around it. The fireworks were spectacular, exploding right above us. And of course, the night wasn't over yet—we headed to Norrlands Nation for their midnight party. During Valborg, the city truly never sleeps and people party until the sun rises!

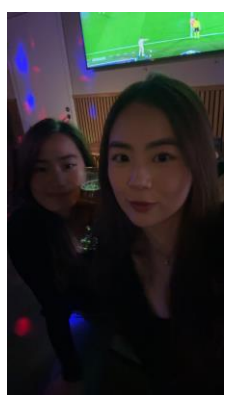
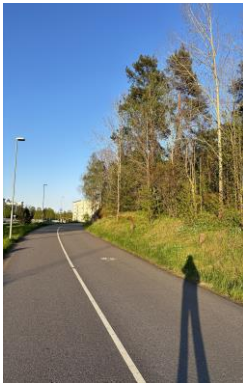


May

As May began, I realized my exchange experience was coming to its end. The weather in Uppsala was beautiful, warm and sunny. With daylight stretching so long that the sky remained light even at midnight. It felt like the city never truly got dark. With summer approaching, the atmosphere was lively. Apart from enjoying beers by the river with my friends, I also loved walking from Flogsta to the city center, soaking up the sunshine and spring breeze. Uppsala in spring and summer is so much more vibrant and enjoyable compared to the cold, dark winter months. Since some of my friends were leaving in mid-May, we went out for one last night partying together to celebrate. We danced, sang and made the most of our time. But it was also bittersweet as it was hard to believe how quickly time had passed and that it was already time to say goodbye.

In mid-May, I went on my first-ever solo trip to Copenhagen, which turned out to be a unique and memorable experience. Copenhagen was absolutely stunning—the architecture, the streets and the overall vibe were so aesthetically pleasing that it is full of Scandinavian charm. I visited the famous Nyhavn, watched the sunset and enjoyed dinner by the river. It was such a vibe and after this trip, Copenhagen officially became my favorite city in the world. This experience definitely inspired me to go on more solo trips in the future.

I spent the rest of the month cherishing every moment with friends—hanging out, going on last night outs, and making the most of our remaining time in Uppsala. Since I was leaving in early June, May was filled with heartfelt goodbyes and unforgettable memories.



Part I-General Study Abroad Information

- 1) **Type of passport/travel document you are holding** : Hong Kong passport
- 2) **Type of visa you are required**: Residence permit for students
- 3) **Required documents** : Refer to the Swedish embassy website for updated information
- 4) **Visa fees** : around 1k HKD

Visa application procedures:

Before arriving in Sweden, I visited the Swedish Embassy in Shanghai to have my passport checked as part of the residence permit application process. After arriving in Sweden, I completed the final steps by having my fingerprints and photo taken, which finalized the registration for my residence permit.

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

First study period: International Business and Marketing (15 credits)

Second study period: Business in Networks (7,5 credits), International Business Strategy (7,5 credits)

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 an email from my exchange advisor at Uppsala University with detailed guidelines on course registration. You can find the list of available courses for exchange students on the university's official website. Once you've reviewed the course options, you can begin course mapping and register through the link provided in the email. It's important to ensure that you register for a total of 30 credits per semester, with a minimum of 15 credits per study period. After completing your registration, you will receive a course confirmation email.

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**

The Uppsala University Housing Office provides accommodation for exchange students. I received an email from them with detailed instructions on how to register for housing. In the application, you can select two preferred accommodation options, and you will be randomly assigned to one of them based on availability. After submitting your preferences, you will receive a confirmation email indicating which accommodation has been assigned to you.

In my case, I was placed in Flogsta, one of the most popular student accommodations among exchange students. It features corridor-style living, where each student has a private room with their own bathroom, while the kitchen is shared with other students on the same floor which would be your corridormates. Basic facilities such as a laundry room and bike parking spaces are also provided.

My Top 3s

Favourite Food

Pizza

Pasta

Ikea meatballs

Must-dos in the city

Drink beer by the river

Commute by scooter

Join Valborg parties

Useful local apps or websites

Voi (for scooter)

UL (for bus tickets)

SL (for train tickets to Stockholm)

Words to describe my study abroad experience

Unforgettable

Rewarding

Eye-opening

Part II – Items to bring

- **Clothing: Both summer and warm clothes (Sweden has a wide range of temperatures from January to June)**
 - **Heattech layers**
 - **Down jackets**
 - **Gloves**
 - **Scarf**
 - **Beanies**
 - **Winter boots (waterproof)**
- **Electronics:**
 - **Mobile charger and cables**
 - **European plug adapter (EU standard)**
 - **Laptop**
- **Personal Items:**
 - **Medicine**
 - **Debit and credit cards (Sweden is cashless)**
 - **Instant noodles or snacks**
- **Travel Documents:**
 - **Passport**
 - **Letter of Acceptance from Uppsala University**
 - **Residence Permit application documents**

PART III – Useful links

- **Swedish Migration Office (Residence Permit Application)**
<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English.html>
- **Uppsala University Housing Office**
<http://housingoffice.se>
- **Course Catalog for Exchange Students**
<http://fek.uu.se/student-en/incoming-exchange-students/courses/>
- **Student Nations Guide (For nation activities, restaurants, and student parties)**
<https://nationsguiden.se/>