



# UPPSALA UNIVERSITET (SWEDEN)

## Exchange Report

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## **PART I: MONTHLY ACTIVITY LOG**

### ***January***

I arrived at Uppsala University on the recommended dates, taking the university shuttle bus. Despite having a lot of luggage, the students and staff were incredibly helpful and assisted me with moving everything. First, we went to the academic building for student ID registration and dorm key collection. The university offered a pillow and blanket set for 300 SEK, which I purchased for convenience, but these can also be bought elsewhere. Note that bedsheets and covers are not included, so bring your own or buy them locally.

During orientation, various student nations had booths set up—don't forget to ask for the two-week temporary nation card! It's a great way to explore events and decide which nation to join. The first month was mostly about settling in, attending orientations, and making new friends.

### ***February***

I spent most of February in Uppsala, attending nation parties and celebrating Chinese New Year with fellow exchange students. I also took a day trip to Stockholm for a ski excursion and embarked on my first major trip: Iceland. We took a FlixBus to Copenhagen and then flew to Reykjavík. Though the journey was tiring, it was absolutely worth it.

Iceland's weather in February is unpredictable—pack ski gear, waterproof jackets, and sturdy shoes. We were lucky to see the Northern Lights on our first night during a guided tour and even tried aurora hunting on scooters in the city center! The landscapes were breathtaking, but food was overpriced and underwhelming. If you're staying in an Airbnb, I'd recommend cooking with groceries from local supermarkets.

### ***March***

March was packed with travel! I visited Lithuania and Latvia (thanks to cheap flights) and then headed to Tromsø, Norway, where I went snowmobiling, reindeer sledding, and saw the Northern Lights again. Next, I traveled

to Paris and Alpe d'Huez for Tomorrowland Winter—an unforgettable experience, though balancing skiing and partying was exhausting.

Later, I took advantage of affordable flights to Gdańsk, Poland, and spent a day in Oslo (which was underwhelming—I'd recommend Tromsø or Bergen instead). I ended the month in London, where the weather was surprisingly sunny. The city's diverse food scene, especially Asian cuisine, was a welcome treat!

## ***April***

Back in Uppsala, spring had arrived—flowers bloomed, and I enjoyed a slower pace after March's nonstop travel. Later, I visited Amsterdam to see the tulip fields, which were stunning.

A friend visited me in Sweden, so I showed her around Uppsala and Copenhagen. Afterward, I focused on preparing for my Swedish oral exam. The highlight of April was Valborg, one of Sweden's biggest festivals celebrating spring. The three-day event (Skvalborg, Kvalborg, and Valborg) involves parties, picnics, and bonfires. I pre-booked tickets for student nation parties, but walk-ins are possible—just arrive early to avoid long queues. On Valborg day, we picnicked at Ekonomikum and watched the bonfire in Gamla Stan.

## ***May***

I traveled to Southern Italy and Greece with friends, finally enjoying warm weather. We flew into Naples (which felt a bit rough) before heading to the islands. Be cautious of inflated prices from locals, and plan transport in advance—it can be chaotic.

Next, we visited Santorini, which became one of my favorite destinations. We stayed in Fira, a less touristy area with great restaurants, and our Airbnb host was incredibly kind, even driving us around. Oia, the iconic town, was crowded but worth it—yes, even the long photo queues in front of the blue-domed church! The food was delicious and surprisingly affordable.

Back in Uppsala, I savored my final weeks—attending nation parties, picnicking by the river, and riding scooters daily.

## ***June***

My exchange journey ended with a road trip through Western Norway. Despite gloomy weather at first, the scenery was heavenly once the skies cleared. We stayed in rural cabins surrounded by sheep and cows—a peaceful, nature-filled experience I'd never get in Hong Kong. We hiked daily and cooked meals together.

Returning to Uppsala, I spent my last days with friends, revisited Stockholm, and bought a Swedish flag for them to sign. Saying goodbye was bittersweet—I'll forever cherish my exchange memories in Sweden.

## **PART II: GENERAL STUDY ABORAD INFORMATION**

### ***1) Visa Procedures***

As an exchange student, you must apply for a residence permit card if you plan to stay in Sweden for more than 90 days. During the application process, you may notice that there is no Swedish embassy in Hong Kong handling these applications, as the Swedish office no longer processes them. Instead, you must submit your application through the Swedish embassies in either Beijing or Shanghai.

In my case, I applied and received confirmation of my application while in Hong Kong. Then I flew to Shanghai to for passport check in early November. However, I received an email on November 22 about the information that there was a pop up passport check on December 16-17 in Hong Kong, but if you are unable to secure a spot, you will need to travel to Beijing or Shanghai for this step. Therefore, I would suggest you to wait a bit and see if there's any pop up embassy in Hong Kong before travelling to Beijing or Shanghai. Once in Sweden, I scheduled an appointment to complete my photo and fingerprint registration.

For the most up-to-date information, always refer to the official website.

### ***2) Orientation Activities***

Before your arrival, the university will send you details about the orientation activities. I highly recommend arriving on the school's suggested arrival date, as they provide an airport pick-up service with a shuttle bus and a welcome pack for students.

If you are a business student, the business union organizes a welcome month filled with various activities, offering a great opportunity to meet new people and make friends. Do keep an eye on their nations, where you can join their activities by becoming a member. I would definitely recommend joining one of them to have a better exchange experience.

### ***3) International Services & Activities***

I joined Snerikes Nation, which hosts a variety of events where you can socialize Uppsala. Additionally, there was a community called ESN which offers international activities, such as a northern lights trips, ski trips and mingling activities, providing students with valuable experiences beyond the classroom.

#### **4) Accommodation**

Uppsala University offers a wide range of student accommodations to suit different preferences. You can choose from various types of dormitories based on your needs. I lived in Flogsta, the most popular accommodation among exchange students. Each flat houses 12 people, with private bathrooms and a shared kitchen. The monthly rent is around 5,000 SEK. If you're looking to make new friends, enjoy a lively atmosphere, or experience fun in-house parties, Flogsta is the best choice! I really enjoyed living there even though some people said it was far from campus, it only took me 15 minutes by bus or even less if I biked or rode a scooter. When the weather was warmer, scooters were the perfect choice, just scan and go, plus it was a fun way to get around. The area also had a supermarket open from 7 AM to 11 PM, so I could easily get all my daily essentials. Another perk? Free laundry and dryer access! The only downsides were having to sort recycling monthly and occasionally needing to use a laundry room in another building. Overall, I'd highly recommend staying there as it's affordable, has a great community, and the convenience makes up for the small inconveniences.

#### **5) Course Registration**

There is no add/drop period for course registration, so you must enroll in your courses before arriving in Sweden. However, you can refer to the course offer list based on your exchange semester to help with your selection. More details will be provided by Uppsala.

University's coordinators via email.

#### **6) Courses Taken**

I took a total of three courses:

Basic Swedish I (7.5 credits)

Business in Networks (15 credits)

Management Control (15 credits)

You need to take 30 credits to fulfill the basic requirements. I studied basic Swedish in addition to the basic requirements, but this is optional.

## **7) Finance & Banking**

You cannot open a Swedish bank account unless you have a personal identity number. However, this is not a major issue since Sweden is a cashless society, and contactless payments are widely used. You don't need to carry cash, but it's a good idea to bring some euros for traveling., especially in places like Italy and France. ATMs are available in the city, but they charge high withdrawal fees.

## **8) Climate**

Uppsala is cold and freezing in winter, with temperatures typically ranging from 0°C to -10°C. However, indoor temperatures are comfortable, as heating systems maintain around 20°C. Wearing a gloves and beanie was so important if you are staying outdoor. The most challenging part is the early sunset, it gets dark around 3 PM in winter, and by 4 PM, it's completely dark. Personally, I didn't struggle much with winter depression because I had braced myself for even worse. I'd heard stories of the sun setting at 2 PM, so when it stayed light until 3 PM, it almost felt like a bonus! My advice? Expect the darkest scenario before arriving, that way, reality might actually feel a little brighter. And you may consider taking vitamin D supplements.

## **9) Health & Safety**

Sweden, especially Uppsala, is a safe place, but it's always important to take precautions. Bike theft is common, so make sure to lock your bike securely.

For healthcare, medical consultations are expensive, so pharmacies are a good place to seek advice for minor health issues.

## **10) Food**

Groceries from ICA supermarket or WILLYS are reasonably priced, sometimes even cheaper than in Hong Kong. However, eating out is expensive but it is cheaper than I expected. I would it is similar to the price in Hong Kong. But of course cooking is so much more cheaper than dining out.

Student nations offer discounted meals, making them a more affordable option. Since food choices in Sweden are somewhat limited, I strongly recommend learning to cook to avoid getting tired of repetitive meals.

## **11) Transportation**

In Uppsala, students mainly use bicycles or buses for transportation. Buying a bike is highly recommended, as it makes exploring the city much more enjoyable. If you are worried about bike theft or tired of looking after your bike, renting shared scooter is highly recommended. There's two main brands: Voi and Ryde. You simply download the app and link it with your credit cards for payment. I use voi the most because it is cheaper comparing to Ryde. Depending on how often I am staying in Uppsala, I sometimes buy day pass (30 minutes) or monthly pass (300 minutes). I would say it easier, faster and cheaper than taking a bus if the weather is not too cold. But do remember to wear a pair of gloves if u decided to ride a bike or scooter, or else your hands will be frozen.

If you take the bus, use the mobile app to purchase tickets, as students can buy discounted tickets. In Uppsala, they use UL and in Stockholm they use SL. If you are taking the bus to Arlanda Airport, you can take 801 bus and buy the bus ticket at the UL app (the one mentioning from/to Arlanda airport).

## **12) Communication**

Swedish people speak fluent English, so communication in restaurants or supermarkets won't be an issue. However, Google Translate can be useful in places where only Swedish is displayed.

## **13) Sports & Recreation Facilities**

They have a gym called campus1477 but it's quite far from Flogsta so I never been there. I usually just went out jogging.

## **14) Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities**

There's a lot of student nations in Uppsala University. Do join the nation tour on the first week and get to know more about it. The highlighting events will be gasque and Valborg. Don't miss that out!

## **15) Cautionary Measures**

Dress warmly during winter, as Uppsala can be much colder than other parts of Sweden. Always carry your student card, as it's needed to access discounts, including student-priced bus tickets. Register on the Mecenat App to prove your student status and take advantage of student discounts.

## **PART III: ITEMS TO BRING**

- Clothes
- Mobile charger and adapter
- Notebook and charger
- WIFI router and LAN cable
- Towel
- Bed sheets
- Medicine
- Heattech
- Thick socks
- Gloves
- Winter boots
- Cash (Euros)
- Debit and credit cards
- Internation student card (optional)
- Travel documents (Passport and VISA, letter of acceptance)

## **PART IV: USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACTS**

Sweden Migration Office for applying residence permit card

<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English.html>

Uppsala University Housing Office

<http://housingoffice.se>

Course Catalog

<http://fek.uu.se/student-en/incoming-exchange-students/courses/>

Uppsala Bus Operation – UL (for checking timetable, arrival time etc)

<https://www.ul.se/en>

Nations timetable for regular activity, restaurant and student party:

<https://nationsguiden.se/>

Sweden Medical Website

<http://www.1177.se>