

OCT 05 2009

CFJ

Uppsala International Summer Session

1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS / ON-SITE ORIENTATION

There are lots of hostels in both Stockholm and Uppsala that don't cost much - there's also some more upscale ones available. There was an orientation for UISS, which included a dinner and then listening to the director of the program. The basics of the program were explained: who the teachers were, when classes would be and where, how to figure out which classes you would be taking, etc. It was very useful.

2. ACADEMICS

The classroom structure was similar to the UW's, but smaller. The class size was probably about 15 students to a teacher. The classes were set up with tables in a circle, with the teacher sitting or standing at one end. The teachers would lecture or begin discussions. The morning classes were language classes, so there was often more debating than lecturing. The teacher/student relations were good - the teachers were considerate and flexible and made learning fun. Tests were given every two weeks which included the material covered in class so far. The director and program assistants had offices in the same building, so students could go and talk to them at any time. Everyone was very accommodating. There was a library just down the street - getting a library card was easy to do and was free. There were computers in the library as well as in the building where the classes were held (those could be used for a fee). The teachers were great - the teachers were friendly and engaging. Everyone enjoyed their classes; other than workload, no one had any big complaints.

I'm a Swedish major, so the point of studying abroad in Sweden was to learn to speak the language more fluently and to experience Sweden first-hand.

3. HOUSING

There were three or four choices for housing. You could pick your own housing for the duration and pay only tuition, or you could pay for a student room in one of the dorm rooms of the Uppsala University. The student room could be a single room with a bathroom on a hallway with a shared kitchen and shower, or a shared area with two student rooms, a shared living room, kitchen, and bathroom. There was also a family option, which I believed cost more, that was intended for students with a spouse and a child (or children). I picked the single student room on a hallway, which worked well for me. I was responsible for my own cleaning, which I was grateful for (I helped another student clean up because the other student hadn't cleaned up after themselves...at all). There were other students from the program in the same hallway, so I could chat and visit.

4. PROGRAM / EXCHANGE SITE

I really liked Uppsala. It's one of the largest cities in Sweden, but it's nowhere near the size of Seattle. The main area of town is easy to walk around in - the main shopping area is on a road that is more walking pedestrians only (aside from the occasional confused taxi), and the buses are easily available.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY

I actually had no strong concerns about my health or safety while in Sweden. I did not need to visit any medical facilities, so I can't give any judgment calls on that. However, the city was very safe. I felt comfortable walking around alone, even during the night. Apparently it was common for bikes to be stolen, but I bought a bike while I was there and it was never stolen. To be honest, the only 'health' concern I had was that so many people smoked (Swedes as well as other students in my program).

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS

I met people by walking around town or by going to student pubs. I had very little trouble with cultural differences or challenges. I could speak the language well enough that there were no misunderstandings - plus, if I didn't catch what they

said the first time, many Swedes simply reverted to English if I asked them to repeat themselves.

7. FINANCIAL

I used a credit card, or I would withdraw money from a debit card to pay for things. On average, I spent about \$175 a week (this is not counting tuition), and this includes all the extra surprises where I ended up spending more money than I intended. I ended up taking an unplanned trip to the north of Sweden, as well as more trips to Stockholm than I'd planned. I did get some financial aid from the Scandinavian Dept., and there were no complications in using it.

8. PROGRAM / EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION

The programs administration was good - the people were helpful and made sure things got done. You could email or call the administrators at any time while in the US, and it was very easy to walk into the office and talk with them while in Sweden.

9. PROGRAM / STUDENT TYPE

The program is good for pretty much any student - from the very studious to the partiers. The student needs to be willing to sit in class for four hours (there are multiple breaks, don't worry), but the teachers don't fret too much over students who skip or miss class. They figure that you're paying for the program, so it's your loss if you don't come.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE

My goal was to speak Swedish more fluently and get a chance to explore Sweden, and I think those goals were met. I made plenty of friends along the way, as well. On the whole, I'm very satisfied with the program. If I can, I'd like to repeat the program.