

FEB 12 2014

1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

a. *Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.*

I arrived very late in August after most of the other exchange students had already arrived. This was okay for me since I had already lived in Sweden in high school, spoke Swedish and had decided to spend some time with old host families and friends before I came to Uppsala. However, it would have been easier to meet people if I had arrived in mid-August when it was recommended, but still didn't play that much of a role in my specific situation.

b. *If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?*

Since I didn't arrive on time, I actually didn't go to the orientation, I just met with an exchange counselor about a week or two after I arrived. She didn't provide the best information, but I was able to figure everything out by talking to some Swedes as well as other exchange students.

2. ACADEMICS:

a. *Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:*

- *classroom structure*

This was extremely similar to my classes at the University of Washington. There were approximately 30 or so students in my classroom and the teacher held lectures as well as group discussions.

- *instruction*

The instruction was okay depending on the class. The Swedish History, Music, and Literature instructors were all very well-versed and knew what they were talking about. My Swedish Art teacher on the other hand was a graduate student who didn't really know what she was talking about and didn't really follow the syllabus that she had given out. The lack of organization made the class frustrating and confusing.

- *teacher/student relations*

Teacher/student relations were rather informal. Teachers gave out their emails and phone numbers to students and you called the professors by the first name as is standard in Sweden. There was one teacher who instructed Swedish History and Swedish Literature who was really terrible at communicating. It took me emailing him every other day for a month to get a response from him regarding an assignment, which he didn't respond to until after the assignment was due. I'm afraid that my grade may have not as been as good as it could have been because of his lack of communication which was very frustrating.

- *grading/exams*

In Sweden, you only take one class at a time, so you never have a "finals week" like you do in the United States. In Sweden there are only three grades fail, pass, and pass with distinction. It's actually impossible to fail, however, because you're allowed to retake the exams as many times as you need to pass.

- *administration*

I don't know anything about them. They were not at all involved in student life.

- *library, computer, and classroom facilities*

I never went to the library, I only studied in my room. There were computers in the building, but I never used them. The classroom facilities were clean and nice. There wasn't really a campus, however, so the University buildings were actually just scattered around the town.

b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

Look under "Instruction" and "Teacher and Student Relations" above.

c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?

I had a great Music History teacher named Linus Johansson.

d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?

It did not even compare. Uppsala was like a vacation compared to UW, however I believe this is because there were only exchange students in my courses. I think it's much more difficult for Swedish students.

3. HOUSING:

a. What housing options were available to you?

I had about 10 different housing options.

b. Which did you choose, and why?

I choose Flogsta on Sernanders väg because it was the least expensive and the most social of all the student housing options.

c. What would you recommend?

If you want nice living conditions, do not live in Flogsta. The living spaces are run-down, cold, messy, the kitchen appliances don't work, it's far from classes and the city. It received the name "the student ghetto". However, it is inexpensive (compared to the other options, not Seattle living standards) and very social, so it's a good place to meet people.

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

Uppsala is one of the oldest towns in Sweden and dates back to the Viking Age. It actually used to be the capital of Sweden before it was moved to Stockholm. The University has been there since 1477 and has a strong tradition. The town itself consists mainly of students and is very old, beautiful, and quaint. It is in my opinion, one of the most beautiful places I have ever been.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

I was never concerned about my health or safety in Sweden. Sweden has an extremely high standard of living. It's easy to go to the doctor, if you need to and I felt so much safer everywhere in Sweden (including Stockholm late at night by myself) than I have ever felt at UW or in Seattle in general. In other words, it's VERY safe.

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?

I met people through one of the many nations in Uppsala. Nations are kind of like fraternities and sororities except they're not exclusive and you don't live there. You can however work, get cheap food, go to pub/club nights there which are relatively inexpensive. They also put on formal balls multiple times a semester.

b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them.

I really didn't have much of a cultural shock from living in Sweden previously, but Swedes tend to be very shy and passive aggressive. If you talk to them, they'll almost always be very kind and put a little alcohol in them and they'll be your best friend. Sweden is a very gender-equal and sexually liberated country as well as very liberal as far as political ideology. However they would never talk politics with anyone but their close friends since they are an extremely non-confrontational culture.

7. FINANCIAL:

a. *What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?*

Banks in Sweden are very strict and won't let you open an account unless you have a steady income. I recommend getting a credit card with a digital chip on it (all cards in Sweden have chips on them and don't swipe) and a pin code (all credit cards (not debit) have pin codes on them) otherwise you may find they won't work in Sweden. Use any ATM to withdraw cash from your account at home.

b. *How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.*
Sweden is very expensive compared to other places in Europe. I recommend having an allowance of \$3000 a month if you are going to live at the Swedish standard of living.

c. *Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.*

There weren't any unexpected expenses.

d. *If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any complications?*

Not applicable.

8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:

a. *If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?*

I had very good service through IP&E. The purchasing of insurance was pretty difficult however. I could only buy insurance through one month and had to buy the rest later. It was very confusing.

b. *If the IP&E did not administer your program, please evaluate the program's administration, both in the U.S. and abroad.*

Not applicable

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

You definitely need to be outgoing. One thing I saw is that many of the exchange students were only friends with other exchange students and didn't make friends with very many Swedes because they were too shy to go up and talk to them.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

Overall the experience was incredible. I met some of the best friends I could ask for, spent a little bit too much money and had one of the most memorable experiences of my life. It was very positive and I have no regrets.

OCT 13 2011

1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

I arrived in Uppsala a day early and stayed at the STF Vandrarhem. It was a good hostel with many other students my age staying there. Had internet access and buffet breakfast the next morning.

b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?

The university had a number of events and activities that students could partake in and meet other people. In particular, things to do regarding the student nations: fika, pub crawls, dinners. Only on one occasion, all the international student meet up in a lecture hall and someone gave advice on where to buy food, bicycle laws, and paying rent, etc... This lecture helped me to get a sense of what was required of us as international students but I felt like the "meet and greet" activities were more worthwhile because you made friends and connections.

2. ACADEMICS:

a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:

- classroom structure

The classroom structure was somewhat different to the structure at UW. My largest class only had about 25 students in it so there was more student teacher interaction. However, many classes met only once or twice a week (with occasional off-weeks) Also, some entry level courses are distance-courses so the class doesn't meet until the final.

- instruction

I took classes in English (instead of in Swedish) and the instructors spoke English very well. The lectures were organized and contributed greatly to the topics we were learning.

- teacher/student relations

Class sizes were relatively small so you got to know the teachers 1 on 1. The relationships with my teachers were positive and I wasn't intimidated to ask questions or anything. However, there wasn't any office hours available but instead they gave their email addresses to contact them if you have questions.

- grading/exams

The grading is different than the 4.0 scale that the UW imposes. Many classes grade on a U – fail, G – pass, and VG – pass with distinction scale. Midterms and papers had a similar grading scale as well.

- administration

For the most part the administration was helpful and positive. However, I remember in the first few weeks feeling like things were a little slow and disorganized (students didn't get internet in their rooms for a couple weeks and one of the classes I was supposed to take wasn't being offered so I had to figure out an alternative).

- library, computer, and classroom facilities

The facilities were all upkept and in good working order. You get a password when you arrive and can use the printers, copiers and computers at any of the libraries.

b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

Excellent quality and content for the most part. Very similar to how professors instruct at the UW.

c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?

How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?

3. HOUSING:

.. What housing options were available to you?

The only housing options that I was aware were the dorms.

b. Which did you choose, and why?

I chose a dorm called Dobelnskatan because it had the cheapest rent and I would be living with many other international students.

c. What would you recommend?

I would recommend Dobelnskatan to anyone who wants to meet people because there is a large common room, and shared kitchens and bathrooms so there are plenty of opportunities to interact. The only other dorm that I had any affiliation with was called Flogsta. My impression of this dorm is that it had a lot of parties (every Saturday) and was mostly students. It would probably also be a good choice if you wanted to meet people though.

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

Describe the campus and surrounding community.

The campus was fairly large but easy enough to get around on foot or by bike. However, there are long winters in Sweden and the roads/sidewalks may be icy for extended periods. Uppsala University is known for its student nations which are the core of student life at the university. It definitely felt like a university town during my entire stay.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study abroad experience.

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?

(e.g., clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)

There are many clubs that you can join and take part in within the student nations (sports teams, choirs, etc.) I joined a gym (Campus 1477) which was right on campus and played indoor soccer with many of the Swedes. Also, each nation has a club night and pub nights where many of the students go to hang out. I worked at the pub for Varmlands Nation serving food and drinks. You don't have to have any experience to work but you don't get paid much. You do get food and meet a bunch of people though.

b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them.

(e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

I didn't encounter too many cultural challenges. The only thing I can think of is that Swedes tend to keep to themselves initially but will warm up to you quick if you talk to them.

7. FINANCIAL:

a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?

What's recommended is to open a bank account at Nordea Bank (there is one in the main market area (Stora Torget) and they can help you with any transfers and rent payments etc..

b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.

I spent about \$700 per month. (I am a light spender)

c. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.

A multi-day trip/excursion up to Lapland, buying a bike.

d. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any complications?

If so, how did you address them?

8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:

a. If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?

I think that the IPE did a great job administering my exchange. They made sure that I had everything squared away and prepared before I left and were easy to get a hold of if I had any questions.

b. If the IP&E did not administer your program, please evaluate the program's administration, both in the U.S. and abroad.

PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.

This program is suited for someone who is independent and doesn't mind taking initial steps and figuring things out by themselves.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

Academically, I was surprised how little time is spent in the classroom and the variation in the amount of work assigned for some classes compared to others. Nothing was too crazy though and I was able to complete everything that was assigned and learned a lot.

One personal expectation that I had, was to gain a firm grasp on the Swedish language. Coming into Sweden I knew that it would be hard since Swedes could speak better English than I could Swedish. However, I didn't realize how hard it actually was. If Swedes detect a hint of an American accent they will most always start speaking English with you instead of Swedish. I found myself trying hard to focus on using Swedish instead of English in everyday conversations. Also, living with other international students, I figured that they would be trying to learn Swedish as well and we could all learn together. However, I soon discovered that many of them came to Sweden to actually learn English instead of Swedish. Since I lived with these students I talked to them daily and we became friends but I never got a chance to be completely immersed in the language. If given the choice again to live with other international students or with Swedes, I would choose to live with Swedes.

Uppsala University, Sweden

AUG 19 2009

DB

Academic Year 2008-2009

1. Arrival Overseas/Onsite Orientation:

a. The housing offices give you a range of days for move-in, so if you want to arrive in Sweden and move in the same day that is possible. Just make sure you take sheets with you if you choose to do so, because you probably won't feel up to making an IKEA run when you first get there. I would stay in a hotel the first night if you plan on buying your bedding upon arrival. Some rooms have sheets in them from previous residents but I wouldn't count on it.

b. There was a week-long orientation and I think it would have been very useful for a student who has never been to Uppsala before and doesn't know anyone! I didn't participate in many of the activities since this was my second time studying there.

2. Academics:

a. The classes I experienced were comparable to UW classes. Instruction was mainly lectures, though you always call your professors by their first names. Exams were different in that they were longer and you could retake them if you failed. Semester structure was different, however. Different classes can start at different times during the semester. For example: fall semester I took two classes that lasted the entire semester and one that only lasted two months. Spring semester I took two classes for the first half of the semester and one class during the second half. You don't always have information about what times the classes will start and where they will be held when you are signing up which is hard to deal with from my perspective. But you get used to it and it generally works out OK. There are computers and libraries available for student use.

b. The quality of instruction was comparable to UW.

c. If you have taken at least two years of Swedish at UW I would suggest the SVUS courses during the fall semester. The second semester I took two public speaking classes that were very helpful, and also a composition class (in Swedish), which was like UW's composition courses. All three of my spring semester classes were for Swedish students which made it challenging, but I learned a lot!

d. I had basically completed all of my UW coursework before I left, I wanted to use this year to become fluent in Swedish. And I can say with confidence now that I am! It took a lot of blood, sweat, and tears but it was SO worth it. You do not need to speak a word of Swedish to study there though...

3. Housing:

Uppsala University, Sweden

a. Many different housing options are available to exchange students, Uppsala University will send you a list of everything after you are accepted.

b. I chose to live in Flogsta because you lived in a community with a lot of exchange students, but also a majority of Swedes. I had my own room and my own bathroom in the room which was amazing! The only downside was having to share a kitchen with 11 other people. They had cleaners come once a week but it would get seriously disgusting if you lived in a korridor with a dirty person.

c. I would recommend Flogsta if you are a social person and not a germaphobe. I liked it well enough because of the size of my room and having my own bathroom. Flogsta is more social than Rackarberget is, which I preferred. Rackarberget is closer to the city and the korridors only have about six people in them, but you have to share a bathroom. I preferred riding my bike to town everyday than having to share a bathroom.

4. Program/Exchange Site:

a. Uppsala is a city within a campus. There is no real "campus" like we are used to here. The university has offices and buildings all over the city. It is a beautiful city in a beautiful country. Being 45 minutes from Stockholm makes for easy day trips to the capitol of Scandinavia and easy access to airports!

5. Health and Safety:

a. Uppsala, and Sweden in general, is a very safe, progressive country. All incoming exchange students get health insurance from the state. When I had to go to the doctor for antibiotics I had to pay out of pocket (which was very expensive), but got refunded in full. Keep all your receipts!

6. Cultural Aspects:

a. JOIN A NATION AND GET INVOLVED!!! The student nations are the reason Uppsala is the BEST place to study abroad in the world!! I'm not exaggerating. The nations are social networking tools started centuries ago here in Uppsala. They began as a way for Swedes to meet and socialize with people from their area of the country. Today Swedes still can join the nation that represents where they are from, but it is now more common to join a nation that "fits" your personality. They are co-ed organizations that have large houses with restaurants and bars in them. They have choirs, photography clubs, dance teams, board game clubs... you name it, they have it. They also organize pub crawls, huge AMAZING dinner parties called gasques, club nights, and so on. You can work at the nation and make a little extra money while you are abroad, and it is a great way to meet Swedes and other exchange students! The American Greek system is the closest thing I can get to a comparison, but whereas Greek systems are inherently exclusive, the nations in Uppsala are a relaxed, inclusive system. It is required to join a

Uppsala University, Sweden

nation, (though you can choose how involved you become), and there is no stigma about going to other nations. Nobody cares which nation you join, and if you choose to hang out at other nations nobody cares about that either. b. As for cultural differences, they are minute but apparent when you've been in Sweden for awhile. It's a lot like Seattle, only more socialist- in a good way. Pedestrians and bicyclists have the right of way, people follow rules to a T, and the government has a monopoly on alcohol sales. This means any alcohol you buy is expensive to accommodate for the government tax. Which is one more reason to get involved in a nation- TAX FREE FOOD AND ALCOHOL! In a land where eating and drinking is expensive, this really helps the budget.

7. Financial:

- a. If you are studying abroad for the year you can get a bank account. That is what I did, and it made my life so much easier! I had money wired into my Swedish account every month, and then was able to pay rent online and I never had to worry about them not accepting my card at stores. If you are only going for one semester they will not let you open a bank account (as of January 2009- yes, the banking crisis came to Sweden too). So my friends that were in that boat would take the maximum amount of cash allowed out of the ATM at one time, and pay cash for everything- even rent. Hopefully they will open up their policies again soon and allow one-semester students bank accounts also.
- b. I was able to limit my spending to \$1000 USD every month, which includes rent, food, phone, local transportation, and some social activities. That was hard but doable. It doesn't allow for much travel, shopping, or going out. If you want to be doing a lot of the three aforementioned things, plan to spend more than \$1000 per month.
- c. Textbooks are, like textbooks anywhere, expensive. I was able to get by with mostly checking out books from the library, but did have to buy some at the bookstore. Transportation can also be a little pricey, ride your bike as much as possible, and buy a bus card for days you don't want to cycle. That brings the price per ride down to 15 kr instead of the 30 kr it costs if you pay in cash.
- d. Due to problems with FAFSA etc I did not use financial aid to fund my program. Wish I could have. I was forced to take out a private loan. As soon as you get the acceptance letter you need to work on the loan, you need approximately \$1000 USD per month you will be there in your bank account in order to get a visa to study in Sweden. So I had to have \$13,000 in an account in my name in July in order to get my visa on time...

8. Program/Exchange Administration:

Anni Fuller was a great go-between for me. She is Danish so she understands the Scandinavian school systems and is a great help.

9. Program/Student Type:

Uppsala University, Sweden

This program is best suited for people who either a) want to learn more Swedish, or b) don't speak much of a foreign language but don't want to go to an English speaking country. You don't need to speak a word of Swedish to get by here. Everyone speaks really good English. It helps if you are an extrovert, because Swedes tend to be more introverted. They just need a little help making new friends ☺. No one I have talked to has liked their study abroad site as much as the people who study in Uppsala, so beware if you want a place that will be easy to leave! Everyone falls in love with this country, with this Uppsala community.

10. Overall Experience:

a. My expectations were realistic, as I had studied and lived there a year or so prior. But the summer I spent doing Uppsala International Summer Session was NOTHING compared to the year I spent there! It was the best decision I ever made. I just got home two months ago and already I am itching to go back... Do yourself a favor and study for a year in Uppsala. One semester just goes by too fast.

I realize in writing this I sound like I have stock in Uppsala or something, I just want everyone to have as wonderful an experience as I had!