
Personal Report of a Semester Abroad at Lund University

Erasmus Programme 2016 / 2017

Preparation

The idea of spending a semester abroad came up to me relatively late but I thought better late than never. There were times at the beginning that I was overwhelmed by the paper work I had to do and requirements and what ifs in my mind. After all Sweden is known for its dark cold climate and high living standards. This was completely different what I was familiar with nice and warmer weather in Turkey and modest and casual life I have experienced in Germany. But for me this was the whole purpose of Erasmus to experience something totally new. I was also curious about Scandinavian culture and life over there. I believe the quality of education at Lund University besides the good reputation of the university also affected my choice. To be prepared academically I checked up the Lund University webpage and found a very rich curriculum for Erasmus students. There was a group of courses named SAS (Special Area Studies) consisted of diverse topics like gender, environment, equality as well as courses like *Viking Age Scandinavia*. Due to my study course, of course I was interested in environment related subjects but I was fascinated to see modules such as *Gastronomy, Sustainable Eating*. Just by seeing this I remember feeling even more excited for my upcoming time in Lund.

Accommodation

I think accommodation part was the most stressful part of my Erasmus process. I was told by former students who had already been in Sweden that it can be quite challenging when it comes to find an affordable place at the beginning of semester. I contacted with some ERM students through facebook and they sent me some links about Lund University and accommodation which was very useful. I started searching and collecting the information I need to do my applications. There seemed to be couple of accommodation platforms in Lund, namely, Bostäder AF, Bopoolen.nu and LU (Lund accommodation). The average rent range was in between 2500-4000 SEK. I was told to apply all of those even outside of Lund unless I want stay in a tent outside (!) So I did. I have to admit that I found one of the accommodation platforms particularly peculiar: Bostader AF. Their application system was basically based on a booking system that you wait for your online queue with other applicants and from what I have heard you had to be lucky to get one housing. It was a lottery. You were given some number for every housing that you applied for, if I am not mistaken you had the right to apply max. 4, but strange thing was the numbers were changing everyday! To sum up, I couldn't have an accommodation offered by Bostader AF. I

thought it was okay because I was relying on LU, but soon after that I got a rejection letter from LU. They were saying they were not able to place me somewhere but I was in their waiting list and they were referring to Bostäder for such cases. I believe I had some bad luck at the start but everything turned out to be fine at last. After a month from this mail, Lund Accommodation finally placed me at Spoletorp North. I got a room in a corridor which I shared with people from all over the world: China, Japan, Albania, Holland, Venezuela, Africa and America, Indonesia. We had 2 common kitchens and bathrooms and 1 common living room in our flat. It was crowded, very loud at times but surely a colorful experience. My accommodation was just couple of minutes away from train station and also very close to campus and supermarkets.

Life in Lund and University

At the very first weeks I got my bike to 600 SEK from a bike auction which is a ok price for Swedish standards as aforesaid expenses are almost double almost in everything compared to Germany. But my bike didnt have chains so it costed me around 750 SEK at the end.

For public transportation JoJo card is used through the Skåne region and there is a monthly student version of it which costs around 600 SEK (Lund- Malmö) but if you want to see whole Skåne that would cost 875 SEK/month for a student. Considering at BTU our semester tickets cost almost nothing, except our semester fee, I have to say I found these prices discouraging. But of course this didnt stop from me from visiting Malmö, Ven, Helsingborg, Lomma, Mölle, Söderåsen National Park. Copenhagen is a must-see and its right across the bridge. Travelling to Stockholm is comparably pricey from Lund, if you could get your train tickets 1, 2 months before, it becomes quite affordable.

I think the most beautiful thing about Lund is the architecture and the medieval spirit of the city with its small colorful brick buildings and narrow streets. Lund is also full of recreation grounds like Stadsparken and Botanical Garden, my favorite bike routes in sunny days. For sport activities Gerdahallen is a really good center with reasonable student prices, offering almost everything from gym to different classes like yoga, pilates, core, aerobic and so on.

I arrived a little late to Lund. In the first two weeks I got very sick, due to change of weather/environment maybe, and because of these I partly missed the orientation week, I tried to attend as much as I can but first days were not so active for me despite the nice sunny weather. Later on, I have realised that I was not assigned to a Mentor Group which seemed to be important thing from what I've heard from other internationals.

I picked Greening the Economy, Lesson from Scandinavia (7,5 credit), Swedish for Exchange Students Level 1 (7,5 credit) and Environmental Issues also with 7,5 credit but the last one was especially demanding, lasting for two semesters with detailed individual

and group assignments plus written exam. Classes are overall so interactive, professors are very competent. I found the quality of education in Lunds very meticulous with its regular and carefully chosen assignments and feedbacks. Feedbacks and peer reviews contribute a lot to the quality of the work and Swedes do care about the high standards. They also have a very friendly atmosphere in classes, students are able to call the Professors with their names.

In a nutshell, Swedish climate may be intimidating at first but Swedes are smiling and very kind people and Sweden is a beautiful country. I would recommend everyone to experience this. Only downside would be the fact that everything is more expensive than Germany and the money I spent around for everything (rent, shopping, social life, travel cards etc.) was around 700-800 Euro monthly.