

My time in Gothenburg, Sweden

General Information

I am a bachelor 3 Economics student who went to Gothenburg for the exchange programme. I visited and resided in Gothenburg during the autumn semester 2015. The university that I attended while I was in Sweden was the University of Gothenburg, specifically the Business, Economics & Law faculty.

Preparation

In order to go on exchange you will need to make some arrangements that will help you while you are staying abroad. Once you are granted an exchange to Gothenburg and accepted by the University of Gothenburg you will receive an email containing all the steps that you have to go through before you are able to go to Sweden. You have to provide them a transcript of records, personal information etc. Later on, once you are accepted, you can apply for housing and select courses that you wish to attend. There's a small chance of not being granted housing but I haven't heard anything from Erasmus students not getting a room. This process was all very conveniently handled by the University. If you have problems with something, an email to the international office will most likely help you.

There are options to aid you financially, since it costs quite a lot of money going on exchange. If you are still living with your parents you can request a student financing option for students living away from home if you are still in the old system of 'Studiefinanciering'. You can also request a refund for the months of not using the free public transport in the Netherlands while you are abroad. Lastly, you can also apply for Erasmus+ grant provided by the Erasmus University to all students going on exchange within the EU. I would highly recommend to make use of these financing options to make the financial cost a lot more bearable.

Arrival

Before departing to Sweden you have to make sure that you have all the necessary documents with you, passport, flight ticket, letter of acceptance etc. Once you have arrived at the Landvetter airport you can make use of the pick up service provided by the University. I'd highly recommend making use of this as a cab ride to the city centre is very expensive. The pick up service also takes you to the necessary locations where you sign your housing contract, obtain your keys and get all the information needed.

After you signed your housing contract and got your keys, you are taken to your residence. You have time to get settled in for a couple of days until the courses start, during these days there are plenty of introductory activities to get to know other exchange students. I would recommend to join the facebook group for your semester to be up to date on events and stay in touch.

Courses

I took 4 courses of 7,5 ECTS each during my time in Gothenburg. Listed below are the courses I took and incorporated into my elective space.

Course	ECTS	Description
Financial history	7.5	Course about the history and evolution of financial markets, institutions and financial theory
Industrial management	7.5	Describes the microeconomics and processes that involve production within a corporation
G.I.S.	7.5	Course about the application of geographical software
The Swedish model in the labour market	7.5	Discusses how the labour market is organised in Sweden
	28*	* ESE only uses whole credits so the 7.5 ECTS is rounded down to 7 ECTS

Overall I'd say that the courses are not that difficult in comparison to what you get at ESE, these courses are after all adapted to all international students. The faculty is smaller compared to the ESE and thus education is given at a smaller scale as well. Lectures are given in smaller lecture rooms and almost every course has seminars held in groups of around 20-30. My courses all had assignments/projects in groups with accompanying presentations. Lastly, examinations are either done by a traditional exam or done by uploading a home exam. Home exams are usually a couple of questions where you have to discuss some concepts extensively in a few pages. This requires a lot of reading on academic articles or books.

Finances

Daily life in Sweden is quite expensive compared to the Netherlands. The exchange rate was not favourable as well during my time in Sweden. Estimates are presented below.

Category	Costs/month
Food&Drinks	160
Rent	400
Public transport	40
Phone	0
Gym subscription	35
Social life	100
Books	60
Miscellaneous	50
	845

Phone costs are low if you activate a subscription by purchasing a one time MB bundle for 5 euro's. You get 500 MB internet per month for 6 months onwards. Gym subscription is of course optional and social expenses can greatly differ per month and per person as well since beer and other alcoholic beverages are very expensive. Furthermore, trips to other places in Scandinavia can cost you a lot of money. Organised trips by the faculty student unions are much cheaper. This number (845) is a rough estimate as monthly expenses greatly differ in the semester. Your first month is the most expensive month since you do not know what the best places are to shop and to do social activities.

Daily life

Gothenburg is a very pleasant place to live, it has very warm and cozy atmosphere. It is not a big city like London or Paris. There are plenty of places to have dinner or to go out during the night. The Swedish people are friendly and welcoming but at the same time cautious and introvert. People do not greet each other in the morning for example like we mostly do in the Netherlands. Conveniently, most people (90%) speak English in Sweden so communicating with the natives shouldn't be a problem. Getting around in Gothenburg isn't difficult with public transport as you can get almost everywhere by tram. I highly recommend taking a tram to the ferries (part of public transport) that take you the archipel. Personally, I haven't visited many cultural places like museums, parks etc but there are opportunities to do so.