

Exchange Fall Semester at the University of Gothenburg – 2016

General information

My name is Gaoyi Fang and I'm currently a third year IBEB student at the ESE. For the fall semester 2016 I studied at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, from the period September until December. More specifically, I followed courses at the Business, Economics and Law faculty. The reason I chose Gothenburg was because of their good reputation and having the opportunity to explore Scandinavia!

Preparation

Just like any for any other exchange the first thing you have to do is write a motivation letter and send your transcript of records to the exchange coordinator. Once you are granted the Exchange spot by both your university and host university you will receive several e-mails containing all the necessary steps you have to take before travelling to Sweden. If you are travelling within Europe you can apply for the Erasmus Grant. The amount you receive depends which country you are going to, but because Sweden is quite expensive, the amount I got per month was €270. Furthermore, don't forget to request a refund for your Dutch public transport card, as you will not be using that during your exchange. Also, what is very convenient is that the University of Gothenburg provides housing for exchange students. I highly recommend you to use this service, as it is quite difficult to find accommodation in Gothenburg. I had a room in Olöfshojd, which is a nicely located student compound. It is closely located to the University and city centre, which are both easily reachable by tram and bus. You will have your own private bathroom and a kitchen you share with other students in your building. Another student compound next to Olöfshojd is called Helmutsgatan, which is also a really nice place to live. You will have your own little studio, in a flat building with other students, but it is way more expensive compared to Olöfs.

Arrival

The University of Gothenburg provides a two day service where they pick you up at the airport and guide you to your accommodation. First they will bring you to their office by bus where you will be given your keys and contract. During the ride you can already meet some of your fellow exchange students.

If you have a room in Olöfshojd one of the first things you probably do after arriving in your room is go to the grocery stores to get some food and cleaning supplies. There are several grocery stores at walking distance where you get your necessities for the first day. The Handels faculty will organize a trip to IKEA in the first week where you can get additional stuff. Also, Olöfshojd has a free shop, where past students leave their stuff for current students to use (such as clothes hangers, pillows ect).

Somewhere during the end of August the Handels Faculty, which is the faculty of Business, Economics and Law, will organize an introduction week with lots of activities for the

international students to meet. I would strongly advise you to plan your flight in such a way that you will be able to attend this week. This is the time you will meet most of your friends in a relaxing environment.

Courses

I took the following four 7.5 ECTS courses

Course	ECTS
The East and Central European Experience	7.5
Modern Scandinavian Economic Theory	7.5
The Swedish Model and Equality: Family Policy and Gender Relations	7.5
The Swedish model in the Labour Market	7.5

The courses were all about the economic history of Europe and mostly Scandinavia. You will learn about economic differences between the Scandinavian countries how the Swedish system has become one of the best in the world. Grading for these courses usually include a mixture of presentations, essays and take home exams, where the take home exams are open essay questions as well. These courses require a lot of reading and writing. All my courses were finished before Christmas, but there are some that are until January. In this case, usually the university will let you do the exam in your home country so you don't have to come back after Christmas break. However, I would have a look at this before you choose your courses. Overall, the subjects are less intensive and difficult compared to what you are used to at the ESE. Additionally, you only have about two classes per subject per week. This means you will have quite some free time left to travel and do fun activities with your friends.



Entrance at the faculty of Economics, Business & Law

Finances

You have to take into account that the costs of living are higher compared to the Netherlands. Below is a rough overview of my average spending per month

Type of spending	Average Spending per month
Rent	€370
Food	€170
Social activities	€150
Travel	€350
Phone	€10
Public transport	€40
Other	€50
Total:	€1140

You will get a sim-card in you welcome pack which gives you 500 MB per month. However, this was not enough for me so I bought an additional 2GB per month for a total of €30. I would say your first month will be the most expensive since you probably will have to buy additional stuff for your room and you don't know the best places to shop yet. Also, as I travelled a lot my monthly expenses increased quite, but this was totally worth it! For groceries, I would recommend you to go to the Lidl. Also, cooking and eating together helps to keep the costs at a minimum and is also very fun!

Daily life

The daily life in Gothenburg is very nice. The atmosphere of the city is comparable to a big city like Rotterdam, but at the same time it has a very cozy vibe with a lot of cafés and

restaurants. The Swedish people have this tradition called Fika, where you go get some coffee and cake (or something else) with friends and chat. During my exchange I didn't have a lot of interaction with the locals, as my classes mostly consisted of international students. You probably will also notice that Swedish people are quite introvert compared to the Dutch. However, they are very willing you help you if you have a question and their level of English is amazing. Furthermore, you can get practically anywhere by public transportation. During August or September, when the weather is still warm and nice, I recommend you to check out the Archipelago where you can go by ferry. It's a bunch of small Islands next to Gothenburg with beautiful surroundings. I would also recommend you to check out the famous amusement park Liseberg, which is only one tram stop away from Olöfshofjd!

The nightlife in Sweden was not that great in my opinion. There are several clubs, but for most of them you need to be 21+ and pay an entrance fee of around 20 euro's. However, the faculty does organize lots of student parties throughout the semester and every Wednesday there is the Handelspub at the university where a lot of students go to. Drinks here are cheap compared to other places ;)

Also, Gothenburg is a very convenient location to travel from. I travelled a lot during my exchange and it made my time there unforgettable. I went to Denmark, Stockholm, Iceland, Norway and Lapland. Especially Stockholm is very easy to go to by train, bus or plane. Norway's nature is absolutely breathtaking. Together with a group of friends we rented a car and drove ourselves to Oslo and further into the Fjords. This is also a good way so safe money. Lastly, the Lapland trip is really a must if you go to Sweden. This trip is organized by an organization called Scanbalt Experience. They have limited tickets which are sold out quite fast, so keep an eye out on those! You will have the chance to see the northern lights and ride a dog sledge.



Dog sledging in Lapland ☺