

## Örebro Exchange 2016-2017

### Preparation

From August 2016 to January 2017, I studied at Örebro University in Sweden. Örebro is a fairly small city, about 2 hours from Stockholm. Preparation for this exchange is easy, because the university takes care of most things. Student housing is guaranteed for every exchange student that wants this, which they will ask during the application. During the application you will also have to immediately choose your courses, which is probably the most difficult part of the application, because this will take some research. Not every period has the same amount of courses, so I made a list of potential courses and which period they were in, and then decided which ones I would actually take. Besides this, the university takes care of everything, so all you have to do is get insurance and a way of transport. The easiest way is to fly to Stockholm and then take the train or bus to Örebro (if you book in advance the train is often cheaper! Make sure you check for student discount).

### Arrival

The room will be available a few days before the introduction period. I arrived the day before the "arrival days", but I would recommend to arrive on one of the arrival days. The rooms are big and have a private bathroom, but the first few days you won't have anything besides basic furniture, so no curtains or pillow for example. The housing office will let you know what you do and do not get from them. In the first week a trip to Ikea is provided, so you can get everything you need. If you can, get a bike as soon as you get there, because the good ones are sold quite fast. Ask one of the Swedish students where you can buy them, there are several second hand stores.

Everybody in Örebro lives on campus, which is really nice. There are a lot of buildings and these all have 4-6 corridors, where about 8 people live. This is both exchange students and Swedish students. You will all share a living room and kitchen, and have your own bedroom and bathroom. Laundry facilities are included.

With the arrival days, the introduction period starts, which lasts four weeks! This is probably the best thing of the Örebro exchange. The first two weeks, I had no classes yet, so we spent most of our time partying and playing games or visiting places around town. In the introduction period you get assigned a fadder group, so you can make your first new friends. This group has around 10 people, guided by three or four Swedish students. The second two weeks, classes will have started, so there are less activities, but still there will be many great things. The introduction period consists of the same things every year, with for example the pirate party, welcome dinner, visit to Bodaborg and Annaboda, ESN games and a lot of other activities, and is probably the best month of your exchange.

### Courses

The exchange period consists of four times five weeks. The courses I picked were:

1. International Management, 7.5 ects  
This course was easy and is only exchange students. It is a good course to start with, because the introduction is still ongoing and you still have to get used to everything in Sweden. I had about one lecture per week, so it is basically five weeks of relaxing.
2. Economic growth and income distribution, 7.5 ects  
I was the only exchange student in this course, so I don't know if I would recommend it. The course itself was interesting though, and was relatively difficult compared to the other courses. This course was about economic growth theories, literature and some statistics to do research yourself.

3. British and American Culture, 7.5 ects

I first chose Gender studies as my course, but because of some problems with my Lapland trip and the exam, I had to switch to British and American culture. This course was fun, especially because on the first day of class Trump got elected, but is again not much work. The lectures are mostly a discussion between students and outside of this there was barely any homework. I think gender studies was more interesting, because Sweden is very advanced in this, but British and American Culture is a good course too.

4. Supply chain management, 7.5 ects

I only chose this course, because in Sweden there is no official Christmas break for university students. Professors want to have a break too though, so they just schedule no classes for 2-3 weeks. This means that a lot of people go away during this period: Europeans often go home for Christmas and the non-Europeans travel. I was not looking forward to spending three weeks without classes when there was almost no one left in Örebro, so I switched my previous course (Swedish politics & policy) to supply chain management, which is fully online. In hindsight it turned out that Swedish politics also had a special assignment for people that were not there in the last week. I did not like supply chain management, because it is only online assignments that you have to do, which is mostly a lot of writing. The final assignment is some research on supply chain management, which takes a lot of time and was not very interesting. I would recommend choosing Swedish politics & policy, unless you really like the subject of supply chain management.

## Finances

If you go to Sweden, everybody will ask you if it is really that expensive. And it is. (For some things) Food and alcohol are a lot more expensive than in the Netherlands. This is why most people buy alcohol at Systembolaget before a party and then buy almost nothing at the bars/clubs, because this is often around 6 euros for one beer. Pre-parties are therefore a big thing in Örebro and often more fun than the actual party. Also, Karen (the club on campus) is relatively cheap and very popular. My expenses were:

Expenses	Amount (€) - approximately
Rent	1.650
Travel (flight, train)	170
Introduction	100
Trips (Lapland)	450
Bike	60
Furniture (Ikea)	120
Food, drinks	600
Clothing	150
Sports card (gym + classes)	100
Phone	25
<b>Total (5 months)</b>	<b>3.425</b>
<b>Per month</b>	<b>685</b>

## Daily life

Transport is mostly by bike or by bus. The bus costs a little over 2 euros per trip. I would recommend to buy a bike, because most exchange students have one and especially at night it is way easier than the bus. The bike paths are pretty good in Örebro. The train station from Örebro is about a 15 min drive by bike and it is about 2 hours to Stockholm and 2.5 hours to Goteborg, so if you want to make a trip, everything is very accessible.

A regular week in Örebro consists of classes and maybe having people over for dinner or go for fika (Swedish coffee break) on most days. Then on Thursdays there is always Timebeer at Karen, which means cheap beers, so expect to visit Timebeer a lot during your stay. On Friday it is Karen night, which is the student club on campus. A lot of introduction parties are here, and during the rest of the exchange these parties will stay on Friday. Beer and ciders will cost 35 SEK (around 3,50).

A lot of the exchange students in Örebro come from Germany, France and Austria. I think the downside of choosing a somewhat smaller city is that it is a bit less varied, because we had a lot of German speakers, which was sometimes inconvenient.

Supermarket is on walking distance. There is both ICA and Willy's. ICA is really big and has everything, but Willy's is cheaper, especially for fruits and vegetables. I can recommend to apply for a free ICA membership on their website, because they will give you discounts and sometimes free stuff (I got a free pizza and a free cake). Then there is also Max, which is like the Swedish McDonald's, but better. Great for midnight snacks.

During the exchange, there will be several trips organized by ESN, which I can really recommend. There were trips to Russia/Finland, Norway and Lapland. I went to Lapland and it was one of the best experiences ever, with the snowmobiles and sled dogs and the Ice Hotel!