



## My Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<b>Host University</b>	Uppsala University
<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b>	S1, 2025
<b>Otago degree(s)</b>	BA
<b>Major(s)</b>	Major in Philosophy, Politics and Economics

### Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

<b>Course title</b>	<b>Language of instruction</b>	<b>Otago equivalent</b>
Why Some Countries are Rich: An Economic History of the World	English	ECON300
Development and Political Institutions	English	POLS300
Comparative Welfare States	English	POLS300
Gender and Economic Development	English	ECON300
Basic Swedish I	English	HUMS100

Total Otago credits gained:  90 points

Any comments about these papers?

I would recommend Basic Swedish to everyone coming to Uppsala as it was free to take and only included a couple classes per week. It was a fun class and good way to meet other exchange students, additionally it was helpful and interesting to learn some Swedish.

How did the academic experience/ workload/ style of teaching differ from Otago?

The paper structure was different from Otago as it would involve only taking one paper at a time normally spread over six weeks each. This meant that it was a more relaxed workload, usually consisting of a few lectures per week which were 2 hours long with a short break in the middle. Seminars were similar to tutorials in Otago as they were compulsory and involved group participation. Overall the different teaching style and workload allowed me to have more free time which was nice.

## Accommodation

*What accommodation did you stay in? What were the pros and cons of your accommodation?*

I stayed in Flogsta accommodation which consisted of corridors made up of around 12 other exchange students this meant that it was easy to meet other people. My room had an ensuite and was fairly big, there was also a shared kitchen which overall was kept clean. Pros was there is supermarket just down the road and since most exchange students lived around the same area so it was easy to catch up with friends. Cons include that it is a bit far away from the university campus and city centre, around a 15 minute bike/ bus ride or 40 minute walk.

## Money matters

*Please detail your basic costs, e.g. accommodation, flights, visa, food, insurance*

Accommodation cost for Flogsta did go up while I was there which was a bit annoying so the total was around \$220 NZD a week this included power, heating and Wi-Fi. Also you do need to buy a router once you arrive in order to access the WIFI which can be a bit expensive (~\$40 NZD).

One-way flights to Stockholm from Auckland was around \$2,000 NZD and then I flew back from Barcelona to Auckland for around the same price.

The cost for a residence permit application was around \$260 NZD and insurance was ~\$500 NZD Food shopping in the supermarket was around the same as NZ but the cost of going out to a restaurant is quite a bit more expensive. The average cost for 'Fika' (coffee and pastry) was around 100 SEK (\$17 NZD) so a bit more expensive than NZ. However if you go to student nations for lunch it is generally cheaper and you can also get some good deals if you are a member.

Transport around \$15 NZD for a one-way train to Stockholm and catching the bus was also quite expensive of around \$140 NZD for a student 30-day pass. This is why most people get a bike.

However you can often get some really cheap flight costs if you want to travel to other countries in Europe which I would totally recommend taking advantage of.

*What means did you use to access your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, Cash passport, foreign bank account, etc.)*

I used WISE which I would really recommend as I was easily able to send \$NZD to Swedish Krona (SEK) as well as track the exchange rate. Sweden is essentially cashless so it was very helpful that transfers came through quickly and I was also able to convert NZD into other currencies (like Euros) for when I went on my travels. I would say this is probably the easiest options as you are not able to set up a Swedish bank account if you are only staying for a semester.

## Visas & Insurance

*Did you have to apply for a visa? What was the process?*

You have to apply for a residence permit if you don't have an EU passport. This was rather complicated and involved a lot of waiting around. Additionally as NZ doesn't have a Swedish embassy it is necessary to visit the migration agency in Uppsala (or Stockholm) to have a photo and biometrics taken.

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

Comprehensive health insurance is mandatory for most non-EU/EEA citizens applying for a Swedish residence permit for stays longer than 90 days, especially for studies or work.

## Extra-curricular/Social Activities

*What organised activities were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?*

Uppsala is a great city for students as it holds lots of social events all throughout the year. The best of which is Valborg which is a major celebration on the last day of April, celebrating the beginning of spring. The best way to get the most out of the activities is to join a 'student nation' there are 14 of these to choose from and each have their own unique activities and highlights so there is something there for everyone.

*What was the university/ city like?*

A super pretty campus with lots of parks and nature reserves close by. It is easy to get to Stockholm and Arlanda airport from the central station. Most of my classes were located close to the centre of town so it is easy to get a sense of the city.

*Any recommendations for things to do, places to visit, places to eat etc.?*

Stockholm is definitely worth regular visits as it is only 40 minutes by train. Additionally I took a weekend trip to Öregrund (about 1.5hr bus from Uppsala) at the beginning of the year which was really nice. There are additionally many local lakes and parks which are good to go in summer or anytime it is warmer.

For places to eat there are plenty of great cafes around Uppsala which ties into the Swedish tradition of Fika which is essentially having a coffee and pastry with friends. Some of my favourite cafes include UNO, Landings Konditori, Güntherska and Ofvandahls Hovkonditori. Additionally all of the nation's offer lunch deals which can be quite nice as you also get further discounts if you are members of that nation too.

*Any tips for future students?*

Make the most of being in Europe and go on as many trips as you can. I would also recommend going for the spring semester (Otago Semester 1) as you are able to really see the lovely transition of the seasons from winter to summer. Although Uppsala is a beautiful city and campus in general the whole city really comes alive when the sun is out which is so nice to see especially after experiencing the colder and darker months. A final tip I would give is if you are going to the airport from Uppsala Central station I would recommend taking the UL Bus to Arlanda airport rather than the train as, although it takes a little longer, it is typically cheaper.

## Overall Experience

*Please write one paragraph (or more) about your exchange experience. Please include some photos!*

Going on exchange was such a fantastic opportunity. It was definitely challenging at first coming from NZ summer and arriving to the snow with the sun setting at 4pm but once you get past the initial surprise (and get over jet lag) it is such a fun time. I met so many other exchange students even at the airport on the arrival day who I stayed in contact with the whole time and everyone in all my class were friendly.

Sweden is definitely a good location for exchange as everyone speaks English at a high level so that can take away from the stress when trying to sort everything out when you first arrive. However I also really enjoyed learning some Swedish so I could get by with basic conversation like ordering at a coffee shop, which you may have noticed is a strong theme throughout my time there.

I loved being able to travel so freely to other countries which really enabled me to become more independent and increase my world view. Overall I really enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity and would truly recommend an exchange to anyone considering it.