



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Stockholm School of Economics (SSE)
Semester & Year of Exchange	Fall semester 2022
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Commerce
Major(s)	Marketing and PPE

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
BE912 – Development Economics	English	ECON100
8065 – Business Model Innovation	English	MART100
BE918 – Sustainability Challenges: Business in Society	English	MART100

Total Otago credits gained: 54 points 72 points 108 points _____

Any comments about these papers?

BE912 examined some interesting research that had been carried out in developing countries and explored a wide range of topics related to development economics. This paper examined research that had been carried out in developing countries more than it did economic models. This paper had a lot of readings but they were mostly interesting.

8065 – Business Model Innovation was very collaborative. Students were arranged in groups and in each seminar the group would come together and use a new business model framework to refine their business idea. The paper was not about the business idea but about how the business idea evolved due to the application of various business model frameworks. The paper was conducted online on zoom.

BE918 was interesting and relevant to the world today. BE918 had quite a bit of group work and reading.

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

It was different as most papers only last 7/8 weeks meaning they can be more intense but for a shorter duration. I actually found the papers to be easier than the ones I did at Otago as they seemed to have less content and assessment. I can't say this is the same for all papers though. The teaching was of a similar standard to Otago. In my papers there was more emphasis on readings and group work than at Otago.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in Saltis. It was only a 1 minute walk from SSE and it was very central. Bars, cafes and supermarkets were all within a 1 minute walk as well. Saltis was all SSE exchange students so it was fun bumping into/meeting people around the building and hanging out in peoples rooms. A problem I found with Saltis was that there is no communal areas due to all the rooms being self-contained. The lack of communal area made it harder to meet people and it would have been nice if there was a communal space were everybody could hang out. The kitchenette in the rooms also only have one hot plate which can make cooking more difficult and time consuming. Overall, however, Saltis was great place to live due to its location and the people within it.

Money matters

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

Rent in Saltis was 6700 SEK per month + a 2500 SEK admin fee paid once. Flights to and from Europe cost about \$4000NZD all up, though I'm sure flights cheaper than this could be found if booked early. My visa cost about \$200NZD to obtain. All food and drink seemed to cost about 20% more than it does in NZ. Nights out can be expensive due to high door charges on clubs and expensive drinks in clubs. There are cheaper bars around, however. My insurance cost me about \$1000NZD using Studentsafe.

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

I didn't open a Swedish bank account as I was only in Sweden for four months. I used my NZ bank account but I got a Wise card which allowed me to cheaply convert NZD into Swedish Krona. A Wise card is a Visa card and was accepted everywhere. A Wise card is easy and cheap to obtain. Cash is rarely used in Stockholm. I would recommend just using Wise or something similar unless you are in Sweden for longer than four months.

Visas & Insurance

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

I did apply for a visa as I am only a citizen of NZ. I applied for a visa online on the Swedish migration website and once I had sent my application in, it didn't take too long to be approved. I then had my biometrics done in the Swedish embassy in London as I was there before my exchange. I do think you can have these biometrics done in Sweden though (double check this for yourself).

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

SASSE (the student executive) run lots of events for students. On the SASSE website there is a regularly updated calendar that outlines activities and events available to students. Keep an eye on this calendar. I would highly recommend joining the sports committee which gives you access to sports like tennis, basketball, bouldering and tough Viking. I played tennis and trained for tough Viking whilst in Stockholm and enjoyed both. There are also lots of clubs and societies to join.

What was the university/ city like?

The city is lovely. Down by the water it is very beautiful and nice to walk around. There is a very nice old town and palace in the city and a tonne of museums to go to. Not far outside of the city there is also lots of nature. Public transport in the city works very well so it is easy to get around. There is also lots of clubs and bars in the city which can be expensive but fun to go to if you have a good group with you. People in the city are generally nice and the city has a calm demeanour to it. SSE is a good university and the fact it is much smaller than other universities means you are constantly bumping into friends whilst there. The small nature of it also means it is easier to navigate and find your feet there. There is also an exchange student committee there who look after and put on events for the exchange students.

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

I would recommend having an explore around the old town and down by the water, it is stunning. The modern art museum also has some very cool artwork. There is a bar near SSE named Hirschenkeller which isn't special in itself but seems to be where SSE students go for a beer and it is relatively cheap. There is also some nice nature just outside of the city. The water around Stockholm is generally very clean so if it's warm go for swim. There is a place named Flatenbadet that has a fun jumping platform into the water. We also did a two night cruise to Helsinki which was cheap and very fun as we had a good group of us, these cruises go regularly to Helsinki, Tallinn and Riga.

Any tips for future students?

When you get to SSE make an effort to put yourself out there and greet all the other exchange students, you will have an opportunity to do this on orientation day. It can be daunting but everyone is in the same boat and is there to meet new people. All other exchange students I met were very nice. If other students ask you to go for a coffee, or for a beer or ask if you'd like to join them to do something, say yes. My advice is really just to throw yourself into it as much as you can.

Overall Experience

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

My overall exchange experience was incredible. I made so many good friends from all over the world and had so much fun exploring a new city. After my exchange I visited some of these friends in Cologne and Dublin and I plan to visit more when I am next in Europe. My friends and I had a lot of fun exploring Stockholm and going out together. Stockholm is a very accommodating, safe and beautiful city and it was interesting observing the way of life up there. I am now very interested in travelling, something I didn't know about myself before going on exchange. Before, after and whilst on exchange I also managed to do some very cool trips to other countries in Europe. Being situated in Europe for a period is a definite bonus to being on exchange at SSE. The exchange committee also organised a trip to Lapland for the exchange students where we did activities such as cross country skiing and saw the northern lights! This trip was a definite highlight for me. By going on exchange I have grown as a person and have made lifelong friends and memories. Going on exchange may seem daunting but SSE and Stockholm are both very welcoming. All the other exchange students I met were great and again, everyone is in the same boat and eager to meet people. Go on exchange, you won't regret it!

