



2016-2017 Student Mobility/Exchange Program Returning Undergraduate Student Report

Student Name:

Host University: Malmo University

Host Country: Sweden

Faculty/Department at Host Institution: Culture and Society

Semester: Winter

Date of Report: August 14, 2017

1. OVERALL EVALUATION

How would you rate your exchange experience overall?

Poor

Excellent

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Why did you choose this host institution? What key factors or issues influenced your decision?

I knew that I wanted to study somewhere in Scandinavia, especially in Sweden. I had visited Malmo before where I had a chance to see an exhibition from the school. I thought it would be a good place to experience a different approach to design education, as well as a different culture.

Please share a few of your most positive experiences and a few of the biggest challenges you faced.

I really liked the professors and the way the program was structured. We always had multiple instructors that helped to give us different perspectives. Our week-by-week structure consisted of a lecture on Monday, a group supervision session in the middle of the week, and a presentation of progress at the end of the week. I enjoyed most of the content of the course and the facilities/resources were awesome - like free laser cutting. One challenge I found was that because the course was made of many 4 week modules, it was hard to go deeper and design something more meaningful. Another challenge was learning coding and arduino. We were fortunate to work with one of the founders of arduino; however, the module was very fast-paced and difficult for the length of time.

2. PREPARATION

Please describe your preparation for the exchange, including banking, travel documents and student visa application. In retrospect, would you have done anything differently?

I applied for my student residence permit online. It was fairly easy and I was given a temporary document that I could travel with along with my letter of acceptance. I also applied for student housing online; once I was assigned a room I had to fill out some paperwork and pay a deposit.

Are there any important items (e.g. art & design supplies, documents, specialty foods, health items) that a student should take to your host country?

Basic food and medication are fairly easy to get in Sweden. This program didn't really require too many supplies - the most important thing to have is a laptop, and an Arduino/electronics kit if you have them.

3. ARRIVAL

Was anyone at the airport, train station, etc. to meet you? Did you experience any difficulties upon arrival?

I flew to Copenhagen and took a train to Malmo. I was greeted and picked up from the central station and taken to the university for processing and to receive my keys.

When should students plan to arrive at the host university? When did you arrive? Would you have benefited from arriving earlier?

I arrived on the suggested arrival day and was able to move in right away. I think it would have been too difficult to stay somewhere else beforehand with all the luggage.

Was there an orientation session offered at your host university? If yes, did you attend and what did you learn?

There was a week of orientation which included presentations on how the school worked, its services, how to use the library, etc. We also had optional beginner Swedish classes and social events like dinners, sauna trip, and student pub night.

Is there a coordinating office for international students, including exchange students, at your host university? Is there a staff person you would recommend students approach with their questions?

Yes, there was one for each faculty. Åsa Ulemark was the person I primarily corresponded with.

4. ACCOMMODATION

Where did you live during your exchange? Were you happy with your accommodation?

I was going to live with a roommate in a flat, but I ended up opting for student housing. I was placed in Ronnen International which was a smart decision. I made lots of friends and we planned things like communal dinners for the floor. The room is huge and really nice, already furnished, and I liked having a communal kitchen and being able to share and borrow things from other students.

Did you have any difficulties arranging accommodation yourself? Did the host institution assist you in finding accommodation?

I was sent a link to apply online. It was easy for me but sometimes people don't get in.

5. STUDIES AT HOST INSTITUTION

To better understand the similarities and differences between academic studies at OCAD U and at your host university, please comment on the following:

Level of academic difficulty and challenge: Because it was a beginner course and standalone program, the deliverables were not as demanding; however, with each project you can and are encouraged to push the difficulty level with prototyping, etc. There was a lot more academic writing than there is for studio courses at OCAD.

Time spent in class (# of hours per week): 4-7 normally, coding month 15 hours

Time spent working on projects outside of class (# of hours per week): 10-15+

Studio-based work: Public space project, Intimate design project, Arduino project and Processing game design, Final project

Written assignments: Design frameworks analysis, group papers and individual reflections for every project

Interaction between students and professors:

There were different professors for different modules/sections, usually at least two. There was a lot of one on one interaction during supervisions and we had a lot of open discussions.

6. SERVICES

Were there any extracurricular activities/events scheduled for exchange/international students at your host university (cultural visits, trips, workshops, etc.)? Which ones would you recommend?

The ESN planned a lot of events like pub crawls in Copenhagen, trips to Russia and Lapland, cottage weekend, etc. I wanted to go to Lapland but it was an expensive trip and it didn't work with my class schedule. I got a student membership so I could get really cheap soup lunch and entry to the student pub. My favourite event was when we went to the sauna in the first week. I went back many times after.

What were the library and computer facilities like?

I didn't use computer facilities much, but the library is really nice and you could book rooms to work in. There weren't a lot of books in English though.

7. COST OF LIVING

How did you prepare yourself financially for your exchange? Did you pay for the experience entirely out of your own savings? Did you receive student or bank loans? Did you apply for / receive any financial awards (scholarships or bursaries)? Did you have help from parents / family / friends?

scholarship 5000, OSAP 3000, own savings for the rest

In general, was the cost of living in your host country higher, lower, or similar to that in Canada? Please explain.

It's similar to Toronto. Drinking and eating out is expensive, as well as buying meat. Fruits and vegetables from the farmers market are really cheap. The rent is a little cheaper than in Toronto, and with a bike, I was pretty much able to get around everywhere for free. The coffee is expensive, but really good.

8. EXPENSES

Exchange rate with host country: \$1 to 6.38 SEK

Time spent in host country (month/year - month/year): Jan/17 - June/17

Would you estimate that you spent more, less, or the same amount as an average, local student attending your host institution? Probably average

Please complete the following budget to give other students an idea of what they can expect to spend in the host country.

Basic Expenses in Canadian Dollars:

1. **Tuition and general fees (paid to OCAD U):** \$3716
2. **School supplies:** \$100
3. **Rent or university residence:** \$680 /month = \$3060 (4 ½ months)
4. **Rent-related expenses:**
 - A) **Electricity/Water:** included
 - B) **Telephone:** \$15 /month = \$75
 - C) **Cable:** included
 - D) **Other (specify) \$ /month**

5. **Groceries or Meal Plan:** \$200 /month = \$1000
6. **Personal expenses (toiletries/cosmetics, etc.):** \$20 /month = \$100
7. **Laundry:** free
8. **Transportation:** \$80 (bicycle + equipment) + \$100 (regional buses and trains) = \$180
9. **Leisure (Sports, Entertainment, etc.):** \$200
10. **Travel health insurance:** OCAD plan
11. **Medical expenses in host country:** \$0
12. **Round trip plane ticket:** \$800
13. **Travel/trips during exchange:** \$1000
14. **Student visa:** \$150
15. **Other expenses (please specify):** \$

Estimated Total Expenses: \$10 381

9. ADAPTING TO YOUR HOST COUNTRY

Did you experience any “culture shock” during your exchange? How did you deal with it? Do you have any advice for students on how to adapt to life in your host country?

I'd been there before and it's a really nice and welcoming city. People speak really good English and Malmo is small, diverse and easy to adapt to. I went swing dancing in Malmo and met a lot of local people. I recommend taking an interest class or continuing a hobby you have back home.

Was there a lot of interaction between local students and exchange/international students? What is the best way to develop friendships with students from your host institution?

My program had a lot of Swedish students and we all hung out and bonded over group assignments.

Did you have any unforeseen problems? Was there anything that you felt was strikingly different from what you expected?

I didn't have any real problems. I really liked living in Malmo and would consider moving to that part of the world in the future.

10. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Please email your report to International Student Services at international@ocadu.ca.

