

## Experience report – ERASMUS Uppsala

### Before the stay

The information events organized by Gabriele Klumpp are very helpful and serve as a good guideline for everyone who thinks about studying abroad for a while.

I spent the most time searching for universities that offer courses that are suitable for me. Experience reports can help to get a rough idea where to go as they are sorted by study program. Furthermore, you can go on the website of the universities and search for study programs that are similar to yours. Often, universities also have a page to search for courses directly.

### University

SLU is about 6 km south of town, so it takes ca. 30 min by bike or bus. I took the bus (get yourself a monthly student bus ticket at a vending machine at Central station which doesn't require a proof of being a student) in the winter months and changed to the bike once it got warmer. The market for used bikes in Uppsala is big and you shouldn't have a problem to find a bike through one of the many Facebook groups. Unfortunately, the number of stolen bikes that are sold is high. So, make sure that you have proof that you bought the bike legally. Otherwise, it might happen that the legal owner of the bike bumps into you and confronts you as it happened to a friend of mine.

The University itself is very modern and the courses are smaller compared to Germany. The atmosphere is more relaxing and sometimes the lectures are rather a conversation among students and the professor which I liked a lot. Moreover, it seems that the distance between students and professor is not as big as in Germany and professors care a lot about a good relationship with the students.

Since I am a Food scientist the obvious choices for me were "Plant Food Science" and "Animal Food Science" both worth 15 ECTS. Both courses weren't that difficult and when you have a proper background in food science they should be easily doable. We had less lecture than in Hohenheim but were supposed to read more on our own. Furthermore, we had to prepare a lecture, write abstracts and lab reports which was a really nice change from having lectures only. The "Plant Food Science" course ended with an open-book examination so the focus was rather to get the whole picture instead of just memorizing stuff which I preferred. The course "Animal Food Science" was sectioned into two parts: The dairy part and the meat part which closed with an examination on their own. Unfortunately, these were not open-book exams. I made the experience that the academic level of food science in Uppsala is not comparable to Hohenheim. Some professors and lecturers are not as good as I expected them to be which reflected itself on the lectures. As this means that the courses in general are easier I was totally fine with that but if you are looking for a scientific

challenge, SLU shouldn't be your choice in my opinion. This, however, does not apply for other study programs as many of the other exchange students said that their courses are more difficult.

Another thing that shouldn't be unmentioned is the fact that Swedes love to bring their own lunch which they heat up in one of the hundreds of microwaves at SLU. This makes sense as the cafeteria is expensive (ca. 6 € for a dish) and you should also do so.

### Accommodation

I lived in Rackarbergsgatan as most of the international students from SLU did and I was really glad about it since it's the best accommodation in terms of location (10 min walk to the center). My room was quite big (ca. 16 m<sup>2</sup>) and well furnished (sink, bed, chair, armchair, table, shelf). I shared the kitchen with 13 other people which went surprisingly well. There was an ICA right next to my house although I preferred to do the big grocery shopping at LIDL as it is tremendously cheaper.

If you have the chance to choose where to live, I can highly recommend Rackarbergsgatan. Some people might think in the beginning that it is better to live close to University (Lilla Sunnersta), but in my opinion it makes more sense to live in the city since there are only few events at SLU.

### Student life/Nations

Uppsala itself is not what we would call a big city, anyhow it is still the fourth biggest city in Sweden. I really liked the size of Uppsala since it is small enough to get everywhere very comfortably but still big enough to not bump into the same people every time. The heart of student (night)life are definitely the 13 Nations in Uppsala which are all located within a radius of 1 km more or less. You can join any nation (also more than one) which gives you access to all other nations, so your choice isn't that important as it seems to be. I chose to join "Snerikes" and "Stockholms" as you get free entrance for their clubbing when being a member on Tuesday and Thursday, respectively. A bunch of other internationals also joined "Kalmar Nation" which is known as the international nation. Some international students, me included, even worked there from time to time. This is however not to earn big money, but rather to get in contact with other people and have a free dish from time to time.

Otherwise, the student life is not that different from Hohenheim. Parties start and end early and during the weekend there is less going on within town.

Another recommendation I can give you is to join some of the Facebook groups as most of the communication about selling, partying and so happens there.

## Travels

Sweden in general is a magnificent country to travel and so are its neighbor countries. And I am convinced that seeing other places than Uppsala should definitely be part of your stay. Here's a list of the places I went to with some recommendations:

- Lapland: This is a must-do, for sure. I organized the trip on my own which worked out totally fine. However, most students went with an organization called "Scanbalt" and they reported good things about it. You should be early with the booking as these trips are very popular.
- Fairy trips: There are plenty of fairy trips taking you to Helsinki, Tallin, Riga or even St. Petersburg. Some of them are known as "booze cruises" and the main purpose is to get drunk on the ferry, go sightseeing in a town for a couple of hours completely hung over, get back on the ferry and start drinking again. This might sound awful for some, but it is certainly great fun. If you want to focus more on sightseeing itself it is of course up to you how long you want to stay in a city. I myself did a ferry trip to St. Petersburg via Helsinki and Tallin which was absolutely amazing. The trip was organized by an organization called "Open your Russia" which is run by Russian students. The trip might seem a bit sketchy in the beginning as you don't have to pay in advance, but I can warmly recommend those guys, which will make your stay in St. Petersburg interesting, funny and unforgettable.
- Lakes: Sweden is a country with lots of lakes and rivers. The closest lake is in the South of Uppsala and very suitable to go for a swim after University in the summer or even in the winter if you are keen enough ;). We also went to another lake by bus which took approximately one hour. Unfortunately, I do not remember the name, but it should be easy to find out. We rented canoes there and it was great fun to enjoy the sun, the water and the stunning landscape of Sweden
- Stockholm: Obviously, a good choice to go there a couple of times. The FlixBus is much cheaper than the train.

## Summary

All in all, I really loved my 5 months in Sweden. I find the ERASMUS program in general a great opportunity to meet interesting people from all over the world, to broaden your horizon and to have a great time at new places. If you have any specific questions that I left unmentioned, don't hesitate to write a mail .