

Field Report University of Skövde (WS 23/24)

I am studying international business (PO 2016) in my bachelor at the Trier University of Applied Sciences, and I went to Sweden in my first semester abroad. I chose the Högskolan i Skövde since I wanted to study in Scandinavia and I had heard many good things about the school and the general experience there from multiple friends of mine (from my home institution as well as from other universities).

Since university starts a bit earlier in Scandinavia the semester began on the 28th of August and ended on the 14th of January. The orientation week took place a week before the official start of the semester and I strongly recommend taking advantage of this week to everyone interested in going abroad in general since you can meet fellow international students, get to know the campus and city you study in, and take part in some fun welcoming activities.

1. Preparing for the semester abroad

After submitting your ranking of partner universities and thereafter being picked and nominated for one of them you will have to start filling out multiple forms. You will need a Learning Agreement (in the case of Skövde we used an online learning agreement (OLA)), the Grant Agreement, as well as multiple smaller documents thereafter.

Throughout this process you will be guided by Mrs Schätz- Al Mahamid and Mr. Lex as well as the Högskolan i Skövde.

After you have been fully admitted at the university in Skövde you can start the search and application for student housing (more on that in part 3).

2. University

There was a big selection of English courses I could choose from in my field of study which is economy/international business. I had to get 30 ECTS for my semester, that is why I chose the following courses in the sector marketing and management:

- Marketing Management II (7.5 Credits)
- Knowledge and Innovation Management (7.5 Credits)
- International Marketing (15 Credits)

It is also common to choose the Swedish Language course (7.5 Credits) and the Swedish Culture and Society course (3 Credits).

In Sweden the semester is split into two parts with one week of vacation in between. My 15 Credits course took place throughout the entire semester whereas my 7.5 Credits courses only took place in one half (one in the first, the other in the second half). You will be able to see in which half of the semester your courses will take place when selecting and applying for them in the beginning.

From what I heard and experienced, in most of the courses the final grade will consist out of a group essay, a group presentation and a written exam. Depending on the number of credits you will get for the course you might also have more essays to write and more presentations (as in the case of a 15 Credits course).

All in all, I enjoyed my time at the Högskolan i Skövde. The teachers were kind and supporting as they gave plenty of opportunities to ask questions and they were also willing to change a date of a mandatory class (for presentations etc.) if it was possible to arrange. The buildings were well organized and because of the orientation week you knew where everything was or where to ask for help if needed.

3. Dorms

When going to Skövde you can decide whether you want to find your own accommodation, or you want to live in one of the four student dorms. The process of applying is very easy, you will fill out an online document with a ranking of your favourite dorms (you can find information on the dorms on the website of the university before) and after a fixed date you will be informed which dorm you will live in. IMPORTANT: whether you will get into your first choice or not is based on the principle "first come, first serve".

The dorms to choose from are Xenia (my dorm), Perenius, Hasslum and Norra. Most of the apartments are furnished and have private bathroom and shared kitchens. Usually, you will only live with other exchange students since the Swedish students have their own dorms. In Xenia you live on one floor with 14 other people sharing one kitchen and one common room. In total there are 6 floors so 90 people are living in the building which is equipped with an elevator. In the bottom of the building there is a bakery and a Thai restaurant. By foot you can reach the University in ten minutes, so it is close to the campus.

Perenius is located a bit further away from campus, around 20 minutes, and closer to mountain Billingen. Here you will live with 48 other students, sharing three kitchens and having one big and one smaller common room. Since the building used to be a Motel there only are two floors and you will have a double bed.

The dorm Norra is closely located to the campus whereas the dorm Hasslum is further outside in the east of the city (25 minutes by foot to the campus).

More information can be found on the website of the university.

4. What to do in Skövde?

Skövde is a rather small city situated in the middle of Sweden between the two biggest lakes, Vänern and Vättern. You can easily visit Gothenburg (1,5 hours) and Stockholm (2,5 hours) by train as well as take a hike through the beautiful nature around Skövde (for example on the mountain Billingen).

If you want to do sports or at least watch them you can go to the "Arena Skövde" where you can swim and sauna or watch handball games, at "Billingeöv" you can watch Ice hockey games, and on the mountain Billingen you can choose between multiple hikes with places to barbeque on the way or ice skate in the winter. There are also multiple gyms around the city, the most popular to my knowledge being "Nordic Wellness" which also offers a student discount.

For shopping you can decide between going to Lidl (in the south, cheap), ICA (multiple locations), Hemköp (city centre) and Coop (expensive). In the north of Skövde you will find

“Elins Esplanad” which is a shopping centre with a big ICA as well as many clothing shops and cafés.

If you want to go out, you can go to the city centre where there are multiple bars and clubs (but it is expensive) or you can go to the student bar/club “Kårhuset Boulogner” or short KB which is a bar on Wednesdays and a club on Fridays/Saturdays (hint: you will get in for free within the first hour of opening). Here the drinks are a bit more affordable. It is located in the Boulogner park close to the university and the dorm Xenia. If you want to get updates on the different events happening there you can follow them on Instagram @skovdesexmasteri, this is the student union caring for the KB.

5. Traveling

If you want to see more than Skövde, there are many nice smaller cities around it as well, for example Lidköping and Mariestad next to the lake Vänern and Hjo, Jönköping and Karlsborg at the lake Vättern. These are reachable by bus or car within less than 1 to 1.5 hours.

Bigger cities to see are Malmö, Gothenburg, and Stockholm. My friends and I also travelled to Copenhagen by train and Flixbus and we did the ESN Seabattle which is a three-day cruise from Stockholm to Tallin and back. Here, students from all over Sweden and other countries come together to have fun day activities on deck and party in the evening and night (two nights total). On the second day you will have time to walk around Tallin (morning until afternoon). Make sure that you get an ESN card before booking your trip since it will save you some money. This card will also give you a discount if you want to travel to Lapland or other destinations offered by “Timetravels”. This organization offers trips to multiple destinations in Scandinavia, starting their trips from different cities. I also did a trip to Finnish Lapland with them and gained some great experiences (husky safari, northern lights, snowshoe hike and night sauna with bathing in the arctic ocean).

Finally, if you want to see more of Sweden’s nature, I recommend visiting at least one of the national parks. If you have a car you can travel to the Tiveden National Park which is located about 1h15min north of Skövde. There are multiple tours to choose from with different lengths surrounding a lake (one round around the lake is about 10km).

6. Apps

School:

Canvas:	Platform where you can find your different courses and their contents
Mecenat:	Student card (you can get many discounts with this card, i.e. Flixbus; you need to show this card when travelling with student discount on trains etc.)
Orbi:	Event app (dates and tickets for events of different student unions)
Hitract:	Event app of student union Safir (economics)

Travel:

Omio:	Compare prices when traveling (Train, Bus, Plane)
Västtrafik:	Transport in and around Skövde (you can also buy tickets for Gothenburg)

SL: Public transport in Stockholm

Flygbussarna: Airport transport (a bus will take you from the central station to the airport, or the other way around, in many big cities in Sweden; Flixbus might also be an option and is cheaper but not that flexible)

When travelling by train you can choose between trains from SJ (rather expensive), MTRX (good prices), Flixbus (cheap) and sometimes Västtrafik. Most of the time when booking you can choose a student or youth discount.

Other:

Espresso House: Scandinavian Starbucks (can get discounts in the app)

TooGoodToGo: Leftover food from restaurants for cheaper prices

Liseberg: Ticket app for amusement park in Gothenburg

Aurora: Northern lights tracker (more helpful when traveling in the north)

7. Conclusion

I loved my semester abroad in Skövde so much! I learned new things at the university, met so many lovely people from all over the world and gained a lot of wonderful experiences when traveling the country. I can only recommend spending your semester abroad here as well, even though you must be aware of the prices in Sweden which are higher than in Germany. Nonetheless, in my opinion it is very much worth it coming here and learning new skills, getting more independent, and gaining all these experiences with new friends in a new culture!