

**Lund Exchange 360°**  
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Introduction .....	3
Why Lund.....	3
1. The City of Lund.....	3
2. Lund University.....	4
Get Ready .....	6
1. Course Selection.....	6
2. Residence Application .....	8
3. Visa Application.....	8
4. Equipment Purchase .....	8
5. Plane Ticket.....	9
Upon Arrival.....	10
1. First Day .....	10
2. Day of Registration.....	11
3. Buying a Bike.....	12
Don't Miss .....	13
1. Orientation Week .....	13
2. Nations.....	13
3. Europe.....	14
Conclusion .....	15

# Introduction

I'm someone who loves traveling, meeting new people, experiencing a new culture. It was during my 1B term when I first heard about the International Studies Option, which requires an academic exchange term overseas, an international work term, six very interesting courses and this GENE 303 report. I worked in China during W2006 and went to Lund Universitet, Sweden for exchange in fall 2006. I had the most amazing term there, which I would like to share with you in this report.

I will be talking about why you should consider Lund, what you need for preparation, what you shouldn't miss while you are there. A lot of the information in this report is based on personal experience. This would be different from reading an instruction manual or a travel guide. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [fgong@engmail.uwaterloo.ca](mailto:fgong@engmail.uwaterloo.ca).

## Why Lund

### ***1. The City of Lund***

The city of Lund is founded around 990 and located in southern Sweden. It hosts the home to about 100,000 inhabitants, as well as Lund University, which is one of Scandinavia's largest institutions for education and research. It's about 30 minutes away from Malmö, Sweden's third largest city and an hour away from Copenhagen, Denmark's capital city.

The main transportation method of entering Lund is by train. Train runs frequently between Lund and Malmo, as well as between Lund and Copenhagen. Lund train station is located in the city centre. The moment you step out of the train station and take a first glance of the city, you'll be able to feel the history and the artistry. The streets are paved with cobblestones and the red-bricked buildings are covered with ivy leaves. The city centre is very pedestrian friendly. In the city centre, there are no traffic lights and the cars yield to pedestrians and bikers on the streets. Figure 1 gives you an overall view of Lund city centre from the train station.



**Figure 1 View of Lund city centre from the train station.**

## ***2. Lund University***

As soon as you start selecting a school go to on exchange, you'll quickly find out that countries such as UK, Australia are very popular because they are English speaking countries. UK was my very first choice for a long time but once I started looking into class schedules, I realized that the school term scheduling in UK is very different from that in Canada. Going to UK for four months would require completely giving up a co-op term in order to compensate their schedule. Same problems exist for Australia as well. When I consulted Professor Roe, the Director of International Exchange Program, he mentioned the possible exchange options at Lund University in southern Sweden. I was told that most of the courses there are offered in English and it's very easy to find matching courses for the ones offered in UW. Also the schedule coincides with UW terms perfectly.

This option really caught my attention thus I started my research. I found out that Lund University is located in the city Lund, which is a city in southern Sweden about one

hour train ride from Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark. It was founded in 1666 and currently the largest unit for research and education in Sweden. The faculty of Engineering belongs to Lunds Tekniska Högskola (LTH), which is a sub-unit of Lund University, located on the northern campus. Lund University attracts many exchange students from all over the world. Many European students attend Lund University for exchange program called ERASMUS. This is the school where you can meet a wide variety of students and get to know the Swedish as well as European culture. The more research I did, the more Lund University attracted me.

As a major component of the city, the university is seated north to the city centre. The engineering campus, LTH, is farther north on campus. The main building of LTH is called Karhuset (shown in Figure 2), which is the location of LTH's great hall where the annual opening ceremony and welcome party take place in September. In addition to the university's main library, Studiecentrum is the engineering library and the administration office within the engineering faculty. LTH campus is composed of many different buildings, assigned to different sections such as section D and E etc within LTH. The division of the sections is based on your specific program and somewhat arbitrary. All I know is that Electrical Engineering belongs to section E and building E-huset. The sections are also associated with your student account in LTH. Your account and password are only valid on the computers that belong to your section.

The entire campus feels more like a small town rather than a university. There are small coffee shops, restaurants, and bars along the streets. Residences are located all around the campus. The main residences include Delphi, Spoletorp, Ostra Torn etc.

Lund University is very different from University of Waterloo, in terms of its structure of education, administration, and campus.



**Figure 2 LTH main building, Karhuset**

## **Get Ready**

The application procedure is very lengthy and took about a year but trust me, Lund is worth the hassle. Once you get all the applications submitted, courses arranged and step out of the train station in Lund, you'll realize that you would never regret this experience. The preparation can be divided into a few different phases: course selection, residence application, visa application, equipment purchase, and plane ticket booking. I'm going to go through them one by one in this section.

### **1. Course Selection**

For engineering students, especially Electrical Engineering, LTH offers many excellent equivalent courses but you need to search carefully. The LTH exchange website ([http://www.lth.se/english/international\\_relations/exchangestudents/course](http://www.lth.se/english/international_relations/exchangestudents/course)) is a very integrated source in English that lists all the courses offered by LTH among all Engineering faculties. The courses in Lund are offered differently than UW. From September to December, the term is divided into two periods: first period from

September to mid-October and second period from mid-October to mid-December. Most courses consist of labs, homework assignment and final exam. Midterm Exams are not very common and final exam is the most important component. All courses are assigned different number of university credits. Check with your home department and see what is the minimum required number of credits before you sign up for any course. You should also check the period when the course is offered and try to spread out all your courses evenly over the two periods. Usually, a course given more credits is more demanding.

A lot of the courses are offered in English but some in Swedish. Don't be scared because the professors and TAs in Sweden are very helpful. We registered in the Basic Automatic Control course FRT010 as an equivalent course to ECE380 and found out that it was offered in Swedish. The final exam was written in both Swedish and English. The TA gave us much help throughout the term. He provided us with an English textbook and study notes. He was very approachable and knowledgeable. We passed the course with no problem.

To find more courses, you can also check the course calendar from other departments. The links can easily be found from the LTH websites. You should pay attention, although, about their second period's end time. LTH courses usually end in mid December but some other department courses may be extended to January, which might affect your return to Canada. For the faculty of engineering, one person you should talk to in Lund is Anna Skarman. She's in charge of the administration of exchange students from overseas and she was extremely helpful to us. Her responses were always fast and accurate. Table 1 below gives a list of the course I took during my term in Lund and their corresponding equivalent UW courses.

**Table 1 Courses taken in Lund and their equivalent courses at UW**

<b>UW Courses</b>	<b>Lund Courses</b>
ECE 318 – Communication Systems	ETT 051 - Digital Communications
ECE 380 – Analog Control Systems	FRT 010 - Automatic Control
ECE 438 – Digital Integrated Circuits	ETT 130 – Digital IC Design
ECE 427 – Digital Systems Engineering	EIT 120 – Introduction to Structured VLSI Design
Elective	SAS 006 – Swedish Social Policy

## **2. Residence Application**

Once your courses are settled, Lund will direct you to an online residence selection. Housing will probably be the most stressful application process during your preparation because their housing office is generally very slow. Also, unlike University of Waterloo, housing is not guaranteed for newcomers. Therefore, you should apply early to reserve a spot. There are many different residences to choose from. <http://www.lu.se/o.o.i.s/9145> is the Lund website that provides you a map of the locations of different residences, as well as their costs. You will notice that the rent in Lund is much more expensive than UW residences. However, kitchen supplies are all included. Pillow and blanket can also be purchased at a fair price from the housing office at the beginning of the term. We stayed at Östra Torn residence, which is one of the newest and priciest residences. Instead of dormitory style, it consists of a few buildings with single room or double room apartments. Single room has its own kitchen and bathroom and the two students in the double rooms share the kitchen and bathroom. A friend of mine and I shared a double room and it was definitely a fantastic experience. The room was much more spacious than that of UW and all the students living in Östra Torn are either exchange or international students. You don't ever have to worry about people speaking Swedish around you. English is the most commonly used language. Everybody was very friendly and we always invite each other to dinner or tea and go out together.

## **3. Visa Application**

A visitor's visa is not necessary for Canadian citizens to land in Sweden. However, since your stay will be longer than 90 days (or three months), you are required to apply for a student visa prior to departure. The Swedish consulate is located in Toronto. You can download and fill out the application form from the Swedish embassy website.

## **4. Equipment Purchase**

Lund University is very considerate about exchange students. You don't have to worry about bringing your blankets or pillows there because on the first day of school, you will have a chance to purchase a set of brand new blanket and pillow at a fair price. Beddings such as sheets and blanket covers can be easily found in IKEA, to which you



will realize how attached your life in Sweden can be. Since you will likely be there for the fall term, mostly winter clothes are needed. You don't necessarily need a down jacket because it usually doesn't snow much until Feb and by then you'll be back to the bitter winter in Canada already. However, what you might want to consider is the wet weather in Sweden. It rains a lot and I mean, a lot. Umbrella will be essential and you should also consider buying a waterproof jacket. A down jacket is very bad when it rains as the water soaks in very easily. Therefore, you don't need a thick jacket that blocks the wind, but it is recommended to get something that will protect you from the rain. You will, very likely, to get a bike in Sweden and therefore, you can consider purchasing a bike lock before you leave. Bike stealing is very common in Sweden, so I don't recommend getting a really fancy bike and I'll be talking about the details in the Upon Arrival section.

Since you will be in Europe, traveling will definitely be part of your stay there. You might want to consider preparing some traveling equipments such as backpacks, daypacks, and travel books. We purchased our backpacks at Mountain Equipment Co-op and they were very durable. I also highly recommend a money belt, which is basically a very thin waist bag that allows u to keep important documents such as passport, backup credit cards while traveling. You might also want to bring a few small locks for your backpacks and lockers sometimes. An outlet plug adapter is also very necessary. Most European countries share the same two-pin power outlet and you should bring at least two of them. If you plan to travel to UK, a special converter is required as well. It's cheaper to bring them than to purchase them once you land in Europe.

## **5. *Plane Ticket***

I purchased my plane ticket to Copenhagen using my cumulated Aeroplan points. If you are planning to do so, book your ticket early because Air Canada seems to have more restrictions on these point-purchased tickets. We had to first fly to Newark in New York by Air Canada from Toronto, then to Frankfurt, Germany by Lufthansa and finally to Copenhagen, Denmark by Scandanavian Airline. There are no direct flights from North America to Copenhagen and it is your option to choose where you want it to be your transfer point, also the first stop, in Europe. Main transfer cities include London Heathrow, UK, Paris Charles de Gaulle, France, and Frankfurt, Germany. My personal

suggestion is to avoid London Heathrow because it's almost analogous to Chicago Airport in North America. Planes always get delayed there due to their increased level of security. We flew back to Toronto from London Heathrow in January and we missed our flight from London to Toronto and had to stay overnight at London. Copenhagen is the closest airport to Lund you can get to. From Copenhagen airport, you will need to take the train to Lund. The trains to Lund are very frequent and you will see the ticket counter once you come out of the luggage claim area. Throughout our entire trip to Copenhagen, we never had any problems with luggage or security check. Swedish visa wasn't checked during our first trip to Sweden either. But do make sure to get to the airport early in order to avoid any delays; it is a long journey after all.

## **Upon Arrival**

### **1. *First Day***

I still vividly remember my first glance of Lund from the train. Three of us were sitting on six big luggage on the train because there was no other seats, exhausted after an almost day-long trip but extremely excited at the same time. My first impression of Lund was its peaceful and relaxing feeling. There weren't any high rises like Toronto, which, at times, make me feel out of breath. I could feel that Lund would be a very safe, enjoyable place to live in and very different from anywhere I've ever lived. The smell of history also hit me. Every building seems to all have its own story that can be trace back a few hundred years. The roads are paved with cobblestones and everywhere seems very clean and well organized.

Most likely, you will arrive in Lund in the afternoon. We flew there the day before the registration day of the university. Therefore, we had our first hostel staying experience. There's a hostel right beside the train station. It's very unique since it is built on a section of an old train that is not in use any more. It was a bit crowded but definitely very convenient and attracted a lot of exchange students that were attending the same registration session the next day. This could also be the first time you meet some exchange students from all over the world.

Once we dropped our luggage in our cabin rooms, we couldn't wait to take an adventure around the city. The train hostel is located in the city centre and we didn't walk too far in case we couldn't find the way back. I was surprised to see many bikes on the street. Unlike in Waterloo, bicycle is the primary transportation tool in Lund. There are bike shops all around the city; however, new bikes can be very costly. Second hand bike shops are frequently seen and the prices are more acceptable. Another first impression I had was the high price everywhere. We walked into 7-eleven hoping to get some "cheap" bottled water and it turned out to be 25 Crowns (Kr) for a 500ml bottle, which is equivalent to about 4 Canadian dollars. Tax is included in all the prices in Sweden and it was very high. Sweden is probably one of the countries with the best welfare system and everyone there is well off but the negative effect it brought was their high tax everywhere. By the way, there is no need to purchase water in Lund because you can drink straight from the tap and trust me, it tastes better than Brita water. We also saw a very big H&M store and later realized how popular H&M is in Sweden. Store hours are relatively much shorter than those of in Toronto, which also reflected their relaxing lifestyle.

## ***2. Day of Registration***

Our second day in Lund was the registration day to the university. In the morning, there was a group of orientation leaders from Lund who came to meet us at the train station. They were in red vests and spoke very good English. They drove us to the AF building (shown in Figure 3), which has similar function as Needles Hall. This is where you'll get your class schedule, meet all the wonderful coordinators you've been contacting through emails, find out where you'll be living, purchase beddings if needed, also get information about your beginner Swedish class. This is also the chance for you to sign up for a number of activities such as welcome party and excursions organized by the school. I suggest to sign up for all of them. This will be a great opportunity to meet other students and get to know the Swedish culture.



**Figure 3 AF building in Lund University**

After registration, based on your residences, you will be directed to different spots in the parking lot to wait for vans to come and drive you to your residence. And this will be the first time you meet your corridor mates.

### **3. *Buying a Bike***

As I mentioned earlier, biking is necessary in Lund and buying a bike can be tricky and very headachy. New bikes are extremely expensive and almost equivalent to the price of a used car in Canada. Second hand bikes are usually the solution. You'll frequently see trucks outside of AF building that sell second hand bikes but the condition of the bikes are very bad. A decent one can cost easily over 1000Kr (160 CDN) and by decent I mean, the wheels are only half rusty, there's only one gear, one brake and it's only about 10 years old. We were told later on about this underground shop where a Peruvian guy sells bikes. They are cheaper and in better conditions. I got my bike for about 500Kr in a decent condition. However, the bike started breaking down towards the end of the term

and I ended up spending about 300Kr to fix it. I think this is entirely based on luck because my friends who bought similar priced bike at the same place never had these many problems.

## **Don't Miss**

### **1. Orientation Week**

You will have the option to register for an orientation week, as well as a mandatory Swedish class sometimes towards the end of your application process. They are the truly wonderful experiences. The amount of Swedish you'll learn from the class will not allow you to speak fluently and English will still be your primary language for communication. However, the two weeks of Swedish lessons are basically like frosh weeks where you meet a large group of exchange students and have some real fun. One of the main events during these two weeks is the welcome party. We'd heard about this legendary welcome party before we got to Lund and it turned out to be a wonderful event.

Also, you will be assigned to be in an orientation group and the group leaders usually organize events among its members, such as games, night out or barbeques. Sometimes, your group leaders can be a bit lazy and you can always ask your friends to join their groups.

### **2. Nations**

It was shortly after we arrived in Lund that we found out that in Europe, all the students are organized into nations and the same happens in Sweden. Every student has to be part of a nation. There are a large number of different nations but they don't make many differences. However, you do have to join a nation during your stay in Lund in order to be part of the student life there. Nations organize many events, such as sittnings, which are formal dinners and clubbing nights. It really doesn't matter which nation you join because once you are part of one nation, you are eligible to attend any nation's event and enjoy the discounted price for nation members. Big nations in Lund include Malmo nation, Lunds nation, Hallands nation and Västgöta nation. I joined the Västgöta nation simply because it had the largest number of exchange students and because I went to their

party night event very frequently and being part of the nation allowed me to have discounted cover fee at the club. Nation is also a place to find delicious and budget meals. Compared to the restaurants in the city, their meals are much cheaper and have become a main appeal to students.

### **3. Europe**

One of the aspects of exchange I cannot emphasize enough is touring around Europe. I highly recommend you to stay behind a bit after school ends in December to take the chance to backpack in Europe. It was a true extraordinary experience we had traveling around Europe and makes our dreams come true. A good travel book would be very helpful. The one I used was Lonely Planet – Western Europe and it was a very integrated resource of all the major cities and attractions in Western Europe. My favourite cities include Barcelona, Spain, Amsterdam, Netherlands, Nice, France, Venice, Italy and the entire Switzerland. And don't forget about the Scandinavian countries. Usually, the idea of backpacking in Europe only involves the Western European countries but Scandinavian is very worth going. Actually, Oslo, Norway was one of my favourite cities in Europe and living there really appeals me. We also had a very great opportunity to go up north in Sweden and enter the Arctic Circle and saw northern lights. If you have the chance, hit Eastern Europe as well because they have very different culture.

Both train and flying are good ideas for transportation. Eurail (<http://www.eurail.com>) offers many good deals to foreign visitors but to get their discounted tickets, they have to be ordered when you are not presently in Europe. What my friends and I did was, we asked the tickets to be shipped to our address in Canada and our parents mailed it over to us in Lund. Budget airlines are also very common in Europe. The trick is to book early. The earlier you have a plan, the cheaper your flight tickets are going to be. We once flew from London to Malmo for 16 pounds (30CDN), tax included. These budget airlines usually use airports that are a bit far from the city centre hence you should always account for the commuting time to the airport. The biggest benefit of these budget airlines is that the flights are generally always on time. During our stay in Sweden, we never had problem with connecting flights. [www.whichbudget.com](http://www.whichbudget.com) is a great search engine for all the budget flight tickets.

Traveling isn't a primary focus of my report and I'm not going to discuss in detail. It's very easy to plan trips in Europe and they are always very exciting.

## **Conclusion**

It has been a pleasure to write down my memorable exchange experience in Lund, Sweden. I think it's one of the best decisions I made during my undergraduate studies. I really enjoyed it and I believe all of you will have a wonderful time even there might be times, during your application process, you get stressed out about the amount of paper work etc. Sharing this experience with you here has been very enjoyable. Whether you are just considering going on exchange, or choosing which school to go to, or need some encouragement for your application, best luck to you all.