



Study *in* Sweden



a guide for
International
Students

Study in Sweden!

Stretching over 1500 kilometers, Sweden is home to white beaches in the south, snow-covered mountains in the north, and beautiful lakes and forests between. Nature is a very important part of life in Sweden, and is always within close proximity for both those living in rural areas as well as in the cities. Temperatures in Sweden drop in the frigid winters, but are pleasant and warm in the summer, drawing almost every Swede outside to soak up the long hours of sunlight.

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1. Study in Sweden

1.1 Sweden in Short Facts & Figures

Capital: Stockholm

Official language: Swedish

Government: Constitutional monarchy, parliamentary democracy

Area: 174,000 square miles/ 450,000 square kilometers (3rd largest country in Western Europe)

Population: 9.4 million

Life expectancy: Men 79 years, women 83 years

Currency: Swedish krona (SEK)

Calling code: +46

1.2 About Sweden

Sweden has a rich history stemming back to the infamous Vikings, the first people to travel the world. Throughout Sweden are artifacts from this time, including rune stones (Viking writings) and rebuilt Viking villages. Since Sweden was neutral throughout the World Wars, the country has not suffered the war injuries that other European countries have, and the historical architecture from different eras is still intact.

Today, the people of Sweden are early adopters of international trends with world-renowned, innovative art, music, and design industries. Great companies such as IKEA and H&M were developed here and still have their headquarters in Sweden.





1.3 In this Study in Sweden guide

Sweden is known for its openness toward the international community – and the education system is no exception. Around 30,000 foreign students from all over the world study in Sweden, where schools maintain a high education standard. Read on through this Study in Sweden guide for all the in's and out's of education in Sweden, including the different types of higher educational institutes in Sweden and a few practical details you should consider during your preparations for studying in Sweden.



2. Education in Sweden

2.1 Higher Education Institutes in Sweden

Higher education institutes in Sweden aim to conduct training and research, and to provide students the opportunity to interact with the community. Most courses require full-time study, or 40 hours every week. The majority of these study hours are completed independently.

Högskola

In Sweden, students can pursue a higher education at Universities or University Colleges (called “högskola” in Swedish). There are 14 universities and 21 university colleges in Sweden. The difference between these two options is that formally universities have the full right to award Licentiate and PhD degrees. However, the Swedish government can decide to grant this right to university colleges within specific fields of study.

Yrkesutbildningar

Students may also choose to attend private higher education institutions, called yrkesutbildningar, which provide vocational training. These education programs may range from a few weeks to several years in duration. Class structures vary, from typical academic training to alternative theoretical and practice-oriented learning. Internships are often a required aspect of these education courses.

Students enrolled in private higher education institutions earn certificates or licenses directly for such professions as make up artist, hair stylist, or bartender. When applying for these education programs, consider whether the school has been approved by a trade organization of that profession, and whether the certification earned by students is nationally or internationally recognized.

Folkhögskolor

These higher education schools are intended for adult learners from age 18. There are 150 folkhögskolor in Sweden, each of which determines their education courses independently. No academic credit is offered, although some courses provide eligibility for universities/ colleges. These schools have varying entry requirements, and usually accept students by rolling admission.

The folkhögskolor education emphasizes the progress and development of the individual, and attempts to provide useful information to the student for further study or work. Students are encouraged to actively participate in and manage their curriculum, as it is designed specifically to help them. Most classes of the Folkhögskolor are conducted in Swedish.

Komvux

Komvux schools are designed to provide a curriculum which complements any knowledge students have missed from high school. It is common for Komvux students to study toward completing or improving their high school grades in order to gain university admission. Course material may also be focused on employment training, skills in the workplace, or adult education.

Students may apply for Komvux courses as early as either the autumn of the year they turn 20, or after 3 years of high school. Students in Komvux decide their own pace and the number of subjects covered. They may study either full- or part-time, during the day or the evenings, or even through distance learning.

Eligibility

To be eligible for higher education in Sweden, students must have completed 90% of required high school programs; 90% of required adult education programs; or the foreign equivalent of either of these education programs.

2.2 The Bologna System in Sweden

Since 2007, the education system in Sweden has been regulated by the Bologna Declaration. The Bologna process was first initiated in 1999 when the Ministers of Education from 29 European countries signed the Bologna Declaration in the Italian city of Bologna.

The purpose of the Bologna process is to improve the overall quality of European higher education by creating educational standards for academic degrees and quality assurance. This makes it easier for students to move from one European country to another for their education. The education system also incorporates aspects of the American higher education system and thus simplifies comparison between Europe and the US. The Bologna System uses the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) to measure the amount of higher education credits.



The Bologna system has been the higher education system of Sweden since 2007, and follows the Bachelor/ Master system:

Bachelors Degree

3 years (180 ECTS credits) towards a professional bachelors degree or an academic bachelors degree. Offers students core teaching in the chosen discipline, as well as a broad general education. The academic bachelors degree gives access to masters studies.

Masters Degree

1 or 2 years (60 or 120 ECTS credits), the masters degree provides specialized content whilst allowing for further development of the scientific research process.

After obtaining a masters degree, students can choose to pursue research projects leading to a Doctorate degree (PhD). PhDs are only awarded by Universities.



3. Practicalities when you study in Sweden

3.1 Student Accommodation in Sweden

Accommodation options for students vary considerably by city in Sweden. There are usually plenty of accommodation options for students at schools in smaller or mid-sized towns, but larger cities like Stockholm and Gothenburg often lack vacancies for student living and have long waiting lists. This problem is being addressed now as more housing is built. In the meantime, students may contact student housing providers directly, or check local newspapers and noticeboards in search of accommodation. Students can also rent a flat privately, although university housing is often cheaper and allows students to meet others more easily.

If students are not provided accommodation by their education program, it is crucial that they approach the student union at their university as soon as possible. In addition, most schools have an international student department which can provide additional assistance to ensure that students find the best possible place to live based on their individual needs. Student accommodation assistance is also available through the Swedish Student Accommodation Association.

3.2 Cost of Study in Sweden

Up until 2011, there were no tuition fees at Swedish higher education institutions. However, Sweden has recently instated costs for non-EU/EEA and Swiss citizens who study there. These costs vary depending on the education course, and start at around SEK 70,000 per year.

All students in Sweden need to buy their own literature and should budget for about 800 SEK/month for this purpose. Living costs depend on the location of study (bigger cities are generally more expensive) but are approximately 7000 SEK (€750) including rent.

3.3 Visa to Study in Sweden

Students from within the European Union do not need a Swedish visa to study in Sweden, but must have a national identity card.

Students from outside the European Union must apply for a visa or residence permit depending on the length of time they plan to stay in Sweden. If the student wants to be in Sweden for three months or less, he/she needs to apply for a visa; if the stay extends for more than three months, a residence permit is required.

Students can get their visa or residence permit for Sweden at the Swedish diplomatic or consular representation in their country of origin. In order to receive a residence permit, students must have been admitted to full-time studies, have sufficient funds, and have a valid passport. More information can be found on the Swedish Migration Board that issues visas to students.

3.4 Language in Sweden

The official language of Sweden is Swedish, but everyone studies English from a young age, and television shows and movies are subtitled, not dubbed. Hence, the Swedes speak very good English and foreigners are able to get very far without speaking the national language. If you do want to learn Swedish, most Universities offer language courses for international students. Learning Swedish can be helpful in fully engraining oneself in the Swedish experience and becoming more a part of the culture, but are by no means necessary.

3.5 Food in Sweden

Swedes are early adopters of new trends, which is why their kitchens are not dominated by traditional Swedish food. The Swedes eat all types of food, from Japanese to Lebanese, but there are still some classics to try when visiting. Everyone has heard of Swedish meatballs, which are traditionally served with potatoes, lingonberry jam and a brown, creamy sauce. Another Swedish food favorite is the cheesecake served with cream and cloudberry jam.

As expected, with their close proximity to water, Swedes eat a good deal of seafood, namely the pickled herring, called *sill* in Swedish. This is a traditional food is eaten on the holiday Midsommar in late June and is usually accompanied by a strong alcoholic beverage called snaps.



4. City Guides in Sweden

4.1 City Guide: Stockholm

Stockholm is the capital of Sweden, and the largest city in Scandinavia. But this modern metropolis has much more going for it than size: Stockholm is one of the world's most beautiful capitals. Often called the Venice of the North, Stockholm is spread over 14 islands connected by 57 bridges. In fact, one third of the city is covered in water. Another third of Stockholm is made up of green areas, providing Stockholmers with plenty of space to relax in nature.

Stockholm was first founded in the 13th century by Birger Jarl, and strategically built on an island where Lake Mälaren meets the Baltic Sea. The idea was for Stockholm to protect cities situated further inland on the Lake from invasions by foreign navies. The original historical center of Stockholm is now referred to as Gamla Stan with its picturesque cobblestoned streets, Royal Palace, and Riksdag (Swedish Parliament).

Today, Stockholm has grown enormously from its beginnings in Gamla Stan. 1.9 million people live in the greater Stockholm area, and the number is increasing every year. The inner city of Stockholm is divided into 4 main sections:

- * Norrmalm: the absolute center of Stockholm, a commercial district with lots of shopping

- * Östermalm: an affluent commercial and residential area bordering Norrmalm

- * Kungsholmen: an island in the western part of the inner city, Stockholm's impressive City Hall is located here

- * Södermalm: Söder for short, was once a working-class district; today it is a hip, vibrant area; the bohemian area south of Folkungagatan is called SoFo

Unlike many other European cities, Stockholm remained untouched during the World Wars, so many of its buildings were preserved. However, several decades later, during a modernization movement, a number of ancient buildings in the city center were destroyed. Since then, Stockholm has remained largely untouched.

Despite its 750 years, Stockholm is a lively, modern, forward-thinking cosmopolitan. It is renowned for its beauty, and also for its thriving culture. With over 70 museums, such as the Museum of Modern Art, Vasa Museum, and National Museum, there is something interesting for everyone. There are also a wealth of theatres, attractions, sights, and events in Stockholm. From the amusement park of Gröna Lund to one of the 30,000 islands in the archipelago; a dip in the clean water of Lake Mälaren or a stroll through the park Djurgården; a meal at one of the fine restaurants in town or shopping in the many fine-quality stores, Stockholm has so much to offer. Even Stockholm's subway system – called the tunnelbana – is interesting, full of art: “the world's longest art exhibition”.

Stockholm is one of Sweden's cultural, media, economic, and political centers, and is an exciting and beautiful city to experience.



4.2 City Guide: Luleå

The city of Luleå is situated in northern Sweden just south of the Arctic Circle. Luleå is known as the town by the sea, and is a place of many contrasts. Its cold winters give way to warm, sunny summers (for a few weeks each year, the sun never sets!). Luleå draws a number of international people, but also has the feel of a close-knit community. Life in Luleå has the excitement of a city, but at the same time offers the serene peace and beauty of nature.

With a population of 75,000, there is always activity in Luleå. The city has a vibrant cultural scene, and a number of entertainment and sport activities. Just outside Luleå are rivers, lakes, forests, mountains, and over 700 islands in Luleå's archipelago. The city is located just on the sea, providing a wide range of water activities. And some of the best ski resorts in all of Scandinavia are just a short drive or train ride from Luleå.

The harbor of Luleå has been an important commercial hub for the maritime transport since the 13th century. The town was officially chartered in 1621 around the medieval church in Gammelstad. 18 years later, Luleå was moved to a more accessible location just 10 kilometers away by the edge of the sea.

Luleå grew slowly for several centuries, maintaining its size as a village-like town. Several major fires as well as ravages by Russian Cossacks may have contributed to maintaining its small population. Fate changed for Luleå when shipbuilders from the south invested in several shipyards in the city. Then a railroad was built, opening up iron ore mining outside Luleå and drawing more people to this northern destination.

Since then, Luleå has been made the capital of Norrbotten County, and is now a technological center in the north of Sweden. Luleå is known for its high quality education and research, and has 13,500 students living within its borders. This unique city is unlike any other place in the world: the Northern Lights, Midnight sun, and archipelago draw thousands of visitors every year to the northern city on the edge of the sea.

4. About *Educations.com*



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