



## STAP BACHELOR TERM ABROAD

Linnaeus University, Schweden

FALL TERM 2024/2025

**Bachelor Social Sciences**

Democratization

Human Mobility and Conflict

International Law and Human Rights

Perspectives on Globalization

Swedish

## Introduction

I'm currently studying Social Sciences with a focus on Political Science and spent my Erasmus semester abroad during my fifth semester. I chose to go to **Linnaeus University in Växjö, Sweden** – a small university town surrounded by lakes and forests, about an hour from Lund. What really drew me to Sweden was the idea of experiencing a true Scandinavian winter. Since my Erasmus took place during the winter semester, I saw it as the perfect opportunity to escape the usually snowless German winters.

Before leaving, I was filled with curiosity and ready to dive into the experience. Of course, I was a bit nervous too – but more than anything, I was excited to get to know a new culture, meet lots of new people, and challenge myself by stepping into unfamiliar situations.

## Application and Preparations

Once I had made up my mind to apply for an Erasmus semester, I attended an info session via Zoom, which I highly recommend. It provided a clear overview of the process and gave me a chance to ask questions. I applied during the first round of applications, but unfortunately didn't make it through because I had accidentally uploaded an incorrect English proficiency certificate. Luckily, I still managed to secure my first-choice destination in the second round, where leftover spots were allocated – and I was thrilled to be accepted by Linnaeus University in Sweden.

When it came to finding accommodation in Växjö, the opportunity to live **on campus**, much like at American universities is quite unique. Many student dorms are located directly on or near campus, and if you're interested in this option, I recommend signing up on the **Boplats Växjö** platform, which uses a points-based system to allocate rooms. In my case, I was fortunate to receive an email from the university offering accommodation that's usually reserved for non-European students, as they had a few rooms left – an offer I gladly accepted.

As for getting there, you have a few choices. Växjö is about 2.5 hours by train from Copenhagen, so it's fairly easy to fly or take the train to Copenhagen and then continue on to Sweden. I personally drove with my family, combining the journey with a little vacation.

## Arrival and Orientation

The university has **two official arrival days** during which they organize shuttle services both within Växjö and from Copenhagen. Upon arrival, you pick up your keys on-site, as housing representatives are also present.

The **ESN (Erasmus Student Network)** at Linnaeus is super active and organizes a ton of welcome events, especially during the first week. I highly recommend joining as many of these activities as possible – it's the best way to meet other international students and make friends right from the start.

## Academic Life

Linnaeus University organizes its academic calendar into **four teaching periods**, each lasting about four weeks. You take one course per period, and each ends with an exam or major assessment. Most of the time, these are **take-home exams**, sometimes followed by oral exams or group discussions.

I took the following courses: *Democratization, Human Mobility and Conflict, International Law and Human Rights* and *Perspectives on Globalization*. In addition, I enrolled in a Swedish language course that ran alongside the regular periods. I highly recommend taking it – not only do you learn the basics of Swedish, but the passionate instructors also teach you a lot about the local culture. Courses are generally small and emphasize **discussion, group work, and presentations**. There's quite a bit of required reading, most of which unfortunately needs to be purchased. I found the workload manageable: it was easier to pass the courses compared to my home university in Cologne, though getting an A was slightly more challenging.

## **Living in Växjö**

Växjö is often called “**the greenest city in Europe,**” and it's easy to see why. The natural surroundings are absolutely stunning, with countless lakes and hiking trails. The city center offers everything you need – cute cafés, useful shops, and a relaxed atmosphere. There's also a mall just outside the city that's easily accessible by bus.

While **living costs in Sweden are higher** than in Germany, with some planning and budgeting it's definitely manageable.

## **Travel and Free Time**

Thanks to the clear academic structure, it's easy to plan **weekend trips**. I recommend visiting nearby cities like **Lund or Kalmar**, and of course, a visit to **Stockholm** is a must. The ESN also organizes group trips – my personal highlight was an unforgettable journey to **Swedish Lapland**, where we saw the Northern Lights. It was a bit pricey, but absolutely worth it.

## **Conclusion**

Looking back, my Erasmus semester in Sweden was an incredibly enriching experience. I learned not only about politics and international relations but also about Swedish culture and myself. I became more confident, independent, and open-minded. Yes, there were challenges – from adapting to a new academic system to surviving the dark winter days – but each one made the experience more rewarding.

I would recommend an Erasmus semester to anyone considering it. If you have the chance to go to Sweden, take it – especially if you're ready for snow, nature, and a whole new perspective on life.