

New country, new challenges

Once the excited facetime call with my mum ended and the adrenaline rush was over, the nerves kicked into overdrive. After applying for my exchange on a 'what if', the following months can only be described as a whirlwind of emotions.

Here are a few challenges I have faced and the solutions I applied, which will hopefully alleviate your worries and allow you to smoothly prepare for this wonderful adventure you're about to begin. The resources below may be specific to Malmo, but there will definitely be some equivalent to your host university!

Challenge 1: Homesick

After already beginning my university experience away from home, the idea of being in a different country from family and friends was still daunting. From experience, facetime and social media will become your best friend. Whether you're using it to check in with life at home or calling a friend to find out how to boil pasta, remember you're never completely isolated and home is always on the other side of the phone. That said, utilise this opportunity to broaden your circle and make connections from all around the world. Its natural to feel homesick, and there will always be someone willing to listen if you need support.

<https://www.ciee.org/go-abroad/high-school-study-abroad/semester/blog/introverts-guide-making-friends-abroad>

Challenge 2: Accommodation

With plenty students seizing the opportunity to study abroad, housing can be scarce. If, like me, you are unsuccessful with university housing, there is still solutions to be found! Facebook groups specific to your host university will be your first port of call. Here, you can see available accommodation or even find potential flatmates. If I could recommend one thing, it would be to ask your sending university to put you in contact with a student who has already attended the host university. I cannot emphasise how helpful this has been, including putting me in contact with someone looking to sublet their flat.

<https://www.student.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/LundUniversityInternationalExchangeStudents>

Challenge 3: Mental Health

Anxiety is a challenge I have faced for numerous years and one that I was worried would be heightened abroad. Instead of viewing this as a barrier, I have decided to utilise this opportunity and prove to myself that I am more than what my brain leads me to believe. I am excited to challenge myself in a new environment, surrounded by people of differing cultures and nationalities. However, it is important to remember that support from friends and family is always available. Your host university will also be more than happy to help you with any concerns and offer additional support, ensuring you are making the most out of your exchange.

With all the doubts that are currently running around your brain, just remember that you earned your spot for this wonderful opportunity and deserve the abundance of skills and memories that will come with it.

<https://www.mind.org.uk>

<https://www.headspace.com/>