

# Student Exchange Questionnaire

**Name:** Cameron Dickie

**Massey Degree:** Bachelor of Arts; Maj Psychology and Anthropology

**Host University:** Uppsala University

**Semester and year of exchange:** Semester 1, 2016

## **Why did you choose this particular university and/or country for exchange?**

Interested in Scandinavia, never been to Europe, opposite side of the planet, no friends/family there, and Uppsala was the only university to offer psychology in English.

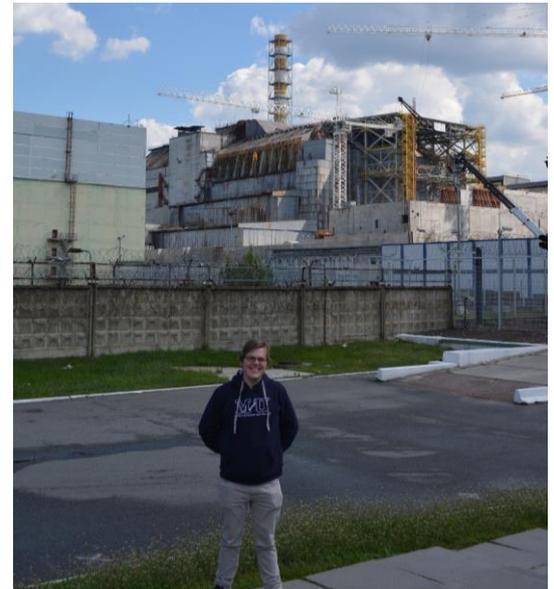
## **Did it meet your expectations?**

Met and far exceeded. Absolutely awesome university town and community.

## **What papers did you study while on exchange? Would you recommend them?**

I took four papers, Cognition and Learning (internal), Brain and Behaviour (extramural), Abnormal Psychology in Film (internal), and Sex, Gender, and Ethnicity in Psychology (internal). All were great and had very supportive staff.

Psychology in Film was very very good, a fun way to learn about mental health disorders.



## **Were there differences in the teaching methods and academic environment at your host university, compared to Massey University? If so, what kind of differences?**

The Swedes have a very person-focussed and relaxed nature to teaching and learning at tertiary level. As a result, most of my classes were focussed on learning in the lessons rather than preparing for an exam. Many of the class lecturers seemed sceptical regarding the actual effectiveness of exams and one of my classes didn't even have an exam. Additionally, students were given plenty of support and notification for upcoming exams, and if you failed, you had the option of retaking the same exam **two more times**.

I get the feeling that Uppsala University may begin to phase out exams altogether. I think this would probably be a good step as I feel I learned just as much, if not more, knowing that exams were not a big deal and central to study life.

## **Did you stay on-campus or off-campus? What was the accommodation like?**

Student accommodation was off-campus but arranged by the university. Students lived in several apartment blocks dotted around the town. Apartments all varied based on cost. Cheaper apartments had communal bathrooms and kitchens, shared by up to 10 or so people. The more higher-end apartments have all that included in them.

I stayed in a middle-range apartment, with a private washroom, but shared shower and kitchen shared between 5 people. It was good and supported all I needed to live. The buildings were all very warm, the Swedes have mastered indoor heating I think.

**How did living expenses compare to in New Zealand?**

It was fairly similar overall. As far as I could tell alcohol was **very** expensive, but I don't drink so I didn't care. Food and necessities seemed to cost about the same as NZ. Public transport was great, but I walked everywhere anyway.

**What extra-curricular activities did you participate in at the host university?**

Honestly not much that was organised by the university. I didn't really care for many of the things that they had organised to be frank. There were some things that were interesting but I preferred forging my own path.

I had a group of friends that I travelled much of Northern and Eastern Europe with. I also joined the local Rotaract club. Additionally I got involved with Uppsala city's local board gaming and geek clubs. Joining these clubs gave me a great perspective on the life of Swedes not involved with the University.

**What's one thing you learnt about your host country or culture?**

The Swedes value personal space, independence, and are quietly proud of their country. They also put a lot of emphasis on 'living life' so study and work should never get in the way of having a chance to bond with friends and family.

**What were some of the highlights of your exchange experience?**

There were many many highlights. Making awesome life-long friends, Seeing Russia and Ukraine, travel in general.

**What did you find challenging?**

Leaving my new home and going back to New Zealand.

**What do you feel you have learnt or gained from going on exchange?**

Knowing that I can make good friends wherever I go in the world. Practical knowledge of learning new languages. More self-confidence.

**Do you have any tips for future students intending to travel to the same country or university?**

Don't worry if you don't make any Swedish friends quickly, they are hard to get to know because they are quite a shy people. It took literally 5 months before I got invited to watch a movie at my Swedish flat-mate's apartment, and this was after hanging out a lot outside of the apartment block. If you need fast friends, get involved with the international student events, loads of people in the same boat as you.

**Do you have any comments on the support provided to you by Massey University and/or by the host university before/during/after your exchange?**

Really liked the quick check-ups after the tragic terrorist attacks in Europe. I also liked knowing that I could quickly be in contact and supported by the International Office if I needed it.