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## Exchange in KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden

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### Place and University for Exchange

Hej! If you have been to IKEA in Hong Kong, you must have seen this word before. It is a Swedish meaning “Hi”. Sweden has lots of international companies, not only IKEA but also H&M, Volvo, SAAB, etc.. IT companies such as Ericsson, and Spotify are also from Sweden. KTH is the top university in Sweden. It attracts students from Scandinavia, other parts of Europe and all over the world. It is a good experience for me to study in Stockholm.

### Unforgettable Experience

I treasured every single moment there. The greatest experience was having sauna under amazing aurora. I joined a student tour to Swedish Lapland. I did not know that Abisko is one of the famous places for watching aurora until I visited there. We could not wait any longer to jump into a lake after sauna. The pink aurora filled the sky giving a rare scene. Although I did not take any pictures, the beautiful scene still lingers always in my mind.

### My Studies

Courses for exchange students are taught in English of master level. They are therefore much difficult than in Hong Kong. Some classmates were part time students. They got full-time jobs mostly in IT field. Some students were offered internships in Facebook, Google, Ericsson or Spotify. Many classmates had lots of hands-on and real work experience. They shared with me their thoughts and prospects of IT and technology development of Sweden. It was really a great experience to me.

People might always think that exchange students visit a place for leisure while study experience is not their focus. It is a false perception totally! I took four courses there. Taking the course “Operating System” as an example, I noticed that almost all students were using Linux/Unix based operating system. When the teacher asked whether anyone did not have Linux/Unix installed, I was the only one raising my hand. The scene was quite embarrassing. The “Operating System” course is very practical. The assignment provided option to either use a programming language Rust to create a small OS or create a process ring with C and Erlang. Erlang

is a programming language developed by Ericsson and is good for distributing. Whatsapp builds its service on Erlang too. This course had expanded my knowledge on operating system. It was noted that local students would always buy reference books for self-study. Lecture notes from classes presented only core concepts and questions. The professor prepared several self-study exercises for us. In another course about computer security, each laboratory took up 6 hours. Without receiving much tutoring advice, we had to search for solutions and we found ourselves always lagging behind the locals. Student learning there puts much focuses on practicing and observation which is quite different from Hong Kong.

### Student Orientation and Student Activities

The Student Union of KTH organized different kinds of activities for new international students and exchange students. We had to apply them before departure. Rowing is a must-do thing in Sweden during summer. A member from the Student Union rowed with me. It was really fun!

### School life

In KTH, a bar can be found in every department. Students can enjoy alcohol after classes. Coffee and alcohol are essential drinks for Swedish. My Swedish groupmate always required a “Fika” when doing project. “Fika” is a coffee break served with bread or cakes. The most popular bun is cinnamon roll. “Fika” always gave our team time to chat and relax, which is good to build the team and gather ideas. I got used to have a “Fika” when sucked in an assignment.

### Friendship

KTH is an international university. There is a mix of students from different nations. It was a big surprise that my first groupmate was Hong Konger who migrated to Sweden. She speaks native Swedish, and is proficient in Cantonese. I was excited to speak Cantonese to a local Swede. We had lunch together after classes and she advised me where to travel and explore.

I met also some Asian exchange students. They came from Japan, Singapore and Korea. We held dinner gathering twice a month. Hong Kong students made BBQ pork, Japanese made sushi and Singapore cooked Bak Kut Teh (肉骨茶). Every gathering was filled with chats and laughter. Some of them have decided to visit Hong Kong in late 2017. We feel good that our friendship stays

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outside Sweden.

### **My Sharing**

Exchange study is not the only way to explore the world. Travelling is also an option. However, I would say that experience given by student exchange is something more than travelling. You can taste and experience different cultures when you are still a student. Travelling for a certain would not be that flexible in your work life. University would provide unique experience and more excitements to you. Take this opportunity to explore the world. Don't get yourself regret on losing the chance!

