



Handbook for Visiting Staff 2009/10



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

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Handbook for Visiting Staff 2009/10

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www.gu.se

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Handbook for
Visiting Staff 2009/10



Welcome to the University of Gothenburg!



The University has compiled a booklet with information and advice to make your everyday life here easier. Living in another country is always challenging, at least in the beginning. You can use this as a guide or handbook for practical matters.

I hope you will enjoy being here and that you will always remember your stay in Gothenburg as pleasant and rewarding.

Pam Fredman

VICE-CHANCELLOR

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pam Fredman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Learn more about Sweden and Gothenburg.

Explore the following websites:

www.gu.se

www.visit-sweden.com

www.sweden.se

www.goteborg.com

www.businessregion.se

www.researchinsweden.se

www.vasttrafik.se/en

www.monthly.se

www.swedenintouch.se

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Planning your stay

To enter Sweden, citizens of EU/EEA only need a valid passport or ID card clearly stating nationality. If you plan to remain here for more than three months, however, you must apply for a residence permit. A visa is normally required for non-EU/EEA citizens. For the latest updates, visit the website of the Swedish Migration Board: www.migrationsverket.se

Visiting researchers do not need a work permit but may only work as visiting researchers with the university that has employed them. Also citizens of the EU/EEA and their immediate families can work in Sweden without a work permit.

Residence permits for studies

From EU/EEA countries

For EU/EEA citizens and their immediate families residence permits may be granted them even after entering Sweden. If you are planning to study at the University for more than three months, you must have a residence permit.

From other countries

Normally, no residence permit is required if your stay is shorter than three months, but some foreign nationals must have visas even in such cases in order to enter Sweden. For all nationalities – except EU/EEA citizens – the residence permit must be stamped in one's passport before arrival in Sweden. Please note that you must pay a fee when you apply for a Swedish residence permit or long-term resident status.

What are the requirements for students/postgraduate students?

- You must be able to show that you have been granted university admission and you must study full time (special conditions apply to doctoral studies).
- You must be able to show that you have enough money to support yourself throughout the planned study period. Proof must be provided. The support requirement is at present at least SEK 7,300 per month. If you intend to study for one year or more you must show that you can support yourself for 10 months per year.
- You must have comprehensive health insurance which is valid in Sweden if you intend to study for a period of less than one year. Contact your host university department for information on special insurance issued by the university.

As a student you are granted a residence permit for the duration of your studies. You are entitled to work during this period. If the course exceeds one year in duration, you will be granted a residence permit for one year at a time. First-time applications from university students are processed by the permit unit in Norrköping. You can apply for an extension at the website of the Swedish Migration Board.

Related information: www.migrationsverket.se

Permits for Visiting Researchers

Visiting researchers do not need a work permit but may only work as visiting researchers with the research organisation (for example, university, institute or business) that has employed them.

Visiting researchers who will work in Sweden for a period exceeding three months must have a residence permit. The permit must be complete and entered into the passport before the visiting researcher enters Sweden.

What is required to be granted a permit?

In order to be granted a residence permit as a visiting

researcher in Sweden you must show that you have a hosting agreement with an approved research organisation.

What is a hosting agreement?

A hosting agreement shows that the visiting researcher has undertaken to conduct a research assignment and that the research organisation hosts the visiting researcher. It must be signed by both parties.

The hosting agreement must also contain details of:

- Purpose, duration and funding of the research project.
- The visiting researcher's qualifications to complete the assignment.
- The visiting researcher's terms and conditions of engagement.
- Comprehensive health insurance if the researcher will stay for less than one year in Sweden.
- Sufficient funds for maintenance of the visiting researcher during the stay in Sweden and for the return journey.

For more information about the amounts applicable, see the website of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education at www.hsv.se

What documents are required?

When you apply for a residence permit you should use the form Application for a residence permit for a visiting researcher, no. 127011.

Attach the following documents:

- Copies of your passport showing your identity, the term of validity of your passport and any permits to stay in any other country than your country of origin.
- Hosting agreement, form no. 231011.

You can apply on the website www.migrationsverket.se or at a Swedish embassy or Swedish consulate in your country of origin or in the country where you reside permanently.

No residence permit is required for work lasting less than three months. However, citizens of certain countries must have a visa in order to be allowed to enter Sweden.

If you wish to renew your permit, send your application to the Migration Board: Migrationsverket, Tillståndsenheten, SE-601 70 Norrköping. For further information, visit the website of the Migration Board, www.migrationsverket.se. Information is available in different languages.

Bona Fide visits

In certain cases, known as Bona Fide visits (which are less than 3 months in duration and solely for the purpose of lecturing) a visa can be issued directly by the Swedish embassy in your home country; the embassy should be shown the letter of invitation from the host university department. For further information, go to www.migrationsverket.se

Related information: For more information contact the Swedish embassy or Consulate General in your own country/city.

Accommodation

Visiting staff should contact their host department for help in finding accommodation. The department can apply via the Guest Housing Services (www.service.gf.gu.se/english/guestservices/), which has furnished accommodation for guest researchers available in various locations in the city.

You can also check with Boplats Göteborg, which is a marketplace for rental apartments in Gothenburg. Here landlords advertise their available apartments and you can find them all on the same web page, www.boplatsgbg.se. There are special offers for students.

Student housing

Students can apply for student housing, which is available in various forms ranging from furnished student rooms with shared kitchen facilities to apartments with two or three rooms. The waiting periods vary for different forms of housing, but as a rule you should apply at least six months in advance. For further information on student housing, contact SGS-Bostäder, see the website: www.sgsstudentbostader.se and

www.boplatsgbg.se (special information for students including PhD students is available here.)

Exchange students

Exchange students can contact Exchange Student Services at the University, which provides a limited number of student rooms for exchange students in the Erasmus and Linnaeus-Palme programmes or under university-wide bilateral agreements. Apply online at: <http://application.exchangestudent.gu.se>

Related information: Guest Services, www.service.gf.gu.se/english/guestservices

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Getting Settled

Insurance

Swedish and other Nordic citizens and resident foreign nationals are insured under Swedish social insurance legislation and are entitled to medical benefits. Foreign nationals are entitled to these benefits if their stay in Sweden exceeds one year. Foreign citizens staying in Sweden for less than one year are entitled to medical benefits on certain conditions.

EU citizens

Visiting staff entitled to social insurance in their home country and who are employed and salaried in Sweden are entitled to the benefits in question as of their first day of work, irrespective of the length of their stay. Members of the visitor's family are also covered by this insurance. A scholarship holder needs a certificate of social insurance from his/her own country in order to be entitled to Swedish medical benefits. EU citizens can normally prove valid insurance cover by bringing a European Health Insurance Card.

Special insurance scheme for visiting staff

The university has issued a group insurance policy that automatically covers visiting staff, PhD students and their families

staying for no more than one year (i.e. those who do not get a personal identity number and are not registered with the census office). It is valid 24 hrs/day and in the whole Schengen zone. It includes certain reasonable cover for medical and dental care. This insurance only applies to those who are not citizens of a Nordic country, an EU/EEA member state or Switzerland.

The special insurance scheme is offered by the university in cooperation with the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency (“Kammarkollegiet”) to foreign teachers and researchers temporarily employed at departments of the University of Gothenburg. The specific insurance policy is called “GIF-försäkring”. Please contact your host department for application forms and more information.

Insurance when travelling to work

All students and staff are covered against accidents at, or on the way to or from, classes or work.

Insurance for personal belongings

It is strongly recommended that you purchase home insurance. This may cover loss of or damage to your personal belongings. It may also cover injury to other persons caused by you. This insurance may pay compensation to you in the event of water leakage, damage, theft or fire in your apartment.

Economic security

In Sweden you need to be part of a trade union or an unemployment benefit fund in order to have economic security in case of unemployment.

The prerequisites for receiving full funding are that you

- have a minimum of 12 months membership in the union/fund
- register with your local job centre (Arbetsförmedling) on the first working day when you are unemployed
- present a completed application form “Anmälan om arbetslöshet” and your employer’s certificate “Arbetsgivarintyg”

The unemployment funding in Sweden, if you have been

working full time for more than 12 months, is 80% of your salary, and a maximum of 680 SEK/day (2009).

Taxation and income tax

If you receive your salary or stipend from a Swedish source, preliminary tax will automatically be withheld at source (“preliminär skatt”).

An income tax notice specifying your earned taxable income for the year will be sent to you. This is the information you need to complete the income tax return (“Självdokumentation”), which you must submit (on paper or electronically) to the Tax Office at the beginning of May each year, declaring the previous year’s income if you are staying for more than six months. If you are staying for less than six months, get in touch with the Tax Office to adjust the tax deduction from your salary accordingly.

When you have received written confirmation of tax adjustment, it should be handed in to the person responsible for the payment of salaries in your department.

The tax you pay in Sweden forms the basis of a pension that will be paid to you by the Swedish state. It is important to keep the tax office informed when you leave Sweden, so that they can have information and pension sent to you.

Foreign nationals who reside in Sweden and who are paid here usually pay Swedish income tax instead of paying taxes in their own country. In order to avoid double taxation, Sweden has negotiated agreements with many countries, and the nationals concerned will pay their taxes in their home countries. The content of these agreements varies considerably. Some apply to visits of up to two years, others to one-year visits only. Some agreements apply to studies, not research, some to professors only, others to anyone invited by a Swedish institution.

Information about these agreements may be obtained from the tax authorities in your own country or in Sweden. Foreign lecturers and research scholars who want to apply for tax relief in Sweden should do so at their host department, which has application forms and will assist in filling in the form and

returning it to the tax authorities. Please note that any income derived from sources other than those covered by a double taxation agreement is also taxable here.

Tax relief for foreign key personnel

Foreign key personnel – experts, researchers and others – may qualify for special tax relief when working in Sweden. The tax relief legislation provides a 25 per cent reduction of the person’s taxable income. This means that a foreign key individual’s income tax will be based on only 75 per cent of his or her income.

The reduction applies to the first three years of employment in Sweden. However, foreign key personnel may reside in Sweden for up to five years.

There is information in English available that can be downloaded from the website of the Tax Office.

Related information: Visit the website of the Swedish tax authorities: www.skatteverket.se

Civic registration

The civic registration means that you become part of the Swedish welfare system. If you intend to live here for a year or more, you are required to be registered in Sweden.

You must register with the Civic Registration Office, associated with the Local Tax Authorities. To be registered, you need to bring your passport, the contract for your flat or apartment, your residence permit or work permit (and, if applicable, your marriage certificate) to the Tax Office. At the Tax Office you will be given a form called “Application to move to Sweden”; this form is available in various languages and the staff at the office will help.

Will you be staying for a period less than a year? Get in touch with your local tax office to find out if you need to apply for a co-ordination number.

National registration number

After you have registered with the local tax office you will receive (after about two weeks) your civic registration number (“personnummer”) by post. The number is based on your date of birth (year (last two digits only), month, day) plus four extra digits.

Once you have received your official civic registration number, you are in general entitled to benefits from the Swedish National Public Health Insurance System (“Försäkringskassan”). The civic registration number is very important and is used for a number of purposes. People are registered by number rather than by their name at hospitals, banks etc. Learn your civic registration number, and always bring your insurance document with you when you consult a physician.

It is the responsibility of the Tax Office to inform the Swedish Social Insurance Office that you have a civic registration number, and the office is responsible for deciding whether or not you are eligible for social insurance benefits.

When you leave Sweden you are obliged to inform the Tax Office and to fill in the appropriate form, “Notification of leaving Sweden”. For more information, visit the website: www.skatteverket.se

Swedish ID card

To get a Swedish ID card you have to be registered as a resident.

Identity cards are issued by the banks. To apply for an ID card, bring the certificate with your civic registration number, a photo and a person with a valid Swedish ID card who can confirm your identity.

For further information, visit the website: www.skatteverket.se

Health and Medical Care

Health and medical care in Sweden is based on the principle that there should be a comprehensive range of publicly maintained services designed to help the individual to stay healthy and to provide effective and appropriate treatment and care when necessary.

The scale of private medical practice is small in relation to publicly maintained health care and medical services. Most private practitioners are included in the national social insurance scheme so that patients pay the same fee for treatment as they would for a doctor employed by the County. The difference in actual cost is regulated by the national social insurance scheme.

Medical care

Dial 112 in the event of an emergency! This is the emergency number for fire departments, ambulances and the police.

You will be asked to explain what has happened and state your location. There is also an emergency ward (“akutmottagning”) at each of the three branches of the University Hospital (Sahlgrenska Universitetssjukhuset) for adults, and an emergency ward for children (Drottning Silvias Barn- och ungdomssjukhus), telephone: 031 343 40 00). For a normal medical appointment, you will have the following options:

1. If you are taken ill, contact the District Health Centre (“vårdcentral”) serving your area. Addresses and telephone numbers are listed in the blue pages of the telephone directory. The blue pages will also direct you to emergency clinics open in the evenings and on weekends, and to hospital wards.
2. You can also go to an emergency primary hospital in the city centre. Address: Capio Axess Akuten, Medical Assistance, Södra Allégatan 6. Telephone: 031 725 00 00 www.capioaxessakuten.se/Goteborg. Bear in mind that the waiting time can be long.
3. You can also visit a private clinic. In this case, you will need to make an appointment. Private clinics are listed in the yellow pages under “Läkare”. However, some of them are not affiliated with the system, so make sure to ask about the fee when you call them.

Information and counselling

The Medical Information Service (“Sjukvårdsrådgivningen”), telephone: 1177, is a regional round-the-clock centre for free information and counselling. In an emergency, dial 112.

Need for an interpreter

If you need an interpreter in connection with medical care, please notify the receptionist when you make your appointment.

Child care

All medical districts have a child health clinic (“Barnvårdscentral”). These are public facilities for health care for all preschool-age children in Sweden. They provide advice to parents, offer regular checkups, and all the necessary vaccinations are provided. Addresses and telephone numbers are listed in the blue pages of the telephone directory.

Pharmacies

All medical prescriptions are sent by the prescribing physician to a pharmacy (“apotek”) by e-mail. The costs of medicines vary considerably. For frequent needs, a “high-cost” card gives progressively lower prices over a period of 12 months. For emergencies, there are a few pharmacies that are open in the evenings and on holidays and weekends. For more information, visit the website of Apoteket at www.apoteket.se.

Pharmacies are listed in the pink pages of the telephone directory, under “Apotek”. Two pharmacies have extended opening hours:

Apoteket Vasen, Götgatan 12 (Östra Nordstan, in the mall)

Open 8 am–10 pm every day

Apoteket Östra Sjukhuset (at the hospital)

Open 8 am–10 pm weekdays, 11 am–10 pm weekends.

Dentists

All medical districts also have a dental clinic (“folktandvården”), usually located in the same area as the health care

centre (“vårdcentralen”). There is also a wide range of private dentists listed in the telephone directory. Dental care costs are partially covered if you are registered in the Swedish social insurance system, i.e. if you have been registered with the Civic Registration Office (“folkbokförd”). Dental care is free of charge for young people under the age of 21 (i.e. who are covered by the social insurance system) and subsidized for young adults between the ages of 21 and 29. Be sure to bring your insurance card to show that you are covered by the standard health insurance. In the event of an emergency, contact Emergency Dental Care (“akuttandvården”), Odinsgatan 10, telephone: 031 80 78 00, which is open daily.

Health service at the university

The Student Health Centre serves as a complement to the public health system for students at the University of Gothenburg. Please turn to the Centre for treatment of any problems originating from or aggravated by your study situation. Also foreign students who are not entitled to public health care in Sweden can receive medical treatment via the Student Health Centre: www.akademihalsan.se

For work-related health concerns, employees at the University of Gothenburg may turn to Previa, address: Postgatan 28, 6th floor, telephone: 031 61 57 00.

Keep-fit activities

University staff are entitled to one free activity hour per week during working hours. In addition, those who are employed full time are entitled to subsidized keep-fit measures amounting to a maximum of SEK 1,500 from the university. Please note that you can buy a student membership card at the “Fysiken” physical fitness centre at a reduced price if you are employed by the university. Fysiken offers a wide range of activities: aerobics, dancing, weight lifting, etc. Visit the web site: www.fysiken.nu

The national social insurance scheme

Individuals covered by the national social insurance scheme who need medical treatment or consultation or have an appointment with a physician pay a patient's flat fee, which is SEK 120 if you go to a physician at a hospital or SEK 300 if you visit a specialist or an emergency ward. The national social insurance scheme pays the rest of the actual cost. If you visit the district health centre the fee is SEK 80. The same fee applies to an appointment with a private practitioner affiliated with the social insurance scheme.

If you visit a medical practitioner other than a physician, for instance a physiotherapist, you also pay a patient's fee. There are, however, physicians and physiotherapists who are not affiliated with the social insurance scheme. They charge higher fees than those who are affiliated. The Social Insurance Office has lists of physicians and physiotherapists who are affiliated with the scheme.

The social insurance scheme pays part of the cost of pharmaceuticals prescribed by a physician or dentist.

In general terms, the national social insurance scheme also includes the following welfare benefits (with the exception of researchers receiving scholarships; they are eligible for Swedish health care benefits but not for welfare benefits).

Child allowance

This is automatically paid to the parents of all children under the age of 16 in families duly registered in Sweden. At present (2009), the monthly amount is SEK 1,050 per child. For further information, contact the Swedish Social Insurance Agency ("Försäkringskassan"), telephone 0771 524 524, or www.forsakringskassan.se

Parental benefits upon the birth of a child

When a child is born, parental benefits are paid to the mother or father for a total of 480 days. These benefits can be claimed at any time before the child is eight years old. For further information, contact the Swedish Social Insurance Agency.

Temporary parental benefit

This benefit may be claimed by a parent for loss of income, for instance when a child is ill. Parents are entitled to this benefit for 60 days per child and year. For further details, contact the Swedish Social Insurance Agency. Anyone receiving this type of allowance must notify the Swedish Social Insurance Agency when the child leaves Sweden.

Illness benefit

In the event of an illness which reduces your working capacity, you receive an allowance of up to 80% of your salary. For the first two weeks (except for day 1, when nothing is paid), this allowance is paid by your employer. If you are still ill after 14 days, your employer will notify the Swedish Social Insurance Agency. For further information, please contact the secretary at your host department.

Special regulations for university staff

Certain special regulations for illness benefits, compensation for medical care and reimbursement of costs for prescription medicines apply to university employees. The secretary at your host department can provide you with further details.

Daycare centres/Preschools

Parents who work or study may apply for their child(ren), 12 months or older, to be at a local authority daycare centre/preschool (“förskola”), or a family day nursery (“familjedaghem”), at which a person is employed by the local authority to take care of children in his/her own home. Charges are imposed on a sliding scale based on the family income, but the maximum charge at present (2009) is SEK 1,260/month for a child aged 0–3. To apply for daycare, please contact your local Neighbourhood Council Office (“Stadsdelsförvaltningen”). Please note that there is usually a long waiting period for daycare. Applications should be submitted at least four months in advance of the period during which you need daycare for your child. Children in Sweden start school either the year they

turn six or the year they turn seven. Visit the website: www.goteborg.se

The school system

School is compulsory between the ages of 7 and 16. There are nine grades in all, and at the lower levels there is normally one class teacher for all subjects, whereas at the upper level there are normally different teachers for different subjects.

The school year runs for forty weeks starting in mid-August and consists of two terms and one 10-week summer holiday. Education and all teaching materials are provided free of charge and free school meals are served. For further information about enrolling a child, contact your local Neighbourhood Council Office (“Stadsdelsförvaltning”). For general information about the Swedish school system, please visit the website of the National Agency for Education, www.skolverket.se.

The school system in Sweden consists of:

1. Preschool class (“förskola”) for children up to 6 years of age. Preschool is offered to all children in Sweden.
2. Compulsory Comprehensive School (“grundskola”) for children 7–16 years of age, grades 1–9.
3. Upper Secondary School (“gymnasium”), grades 10–12, is not compulsory; however, it is a prerequisite if a student wants to go on to university-level studies.

Home language instruction

Immigrant children in the Swedish school system have the right to receive instruction in Swedish as a foreign language as well as separate instruction in their mother tongue if that language is spoken daily in their home.

International schools

For a list of schools please download the brochure BRG Expats Guide (the guide to living, working and studying in the Gothenburg region: www.businessregiongoteborg.com).

Useful information from A to Z

- Associations
- Banks
- Business hours
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- Language
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- News broadcasts on the radio
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- Public transport
- Religion
- Special import restrictions
- Telephone services
- Television
- Tourism
- Time
- Traditional festivities
- Transport
- Travels

Associations

The Gothenburg region offers many clubs and associations, bringing international visitors and residents together for the purpose of support, companionship and friendship.

- The International Friends of Gothenburg is a club for both foreigners and Swedes living in the Gothenburg region with the purpose of bringing people together for friendship, fun and cultural exchange.

Web: www.ifg.nu

- The International Women's Club welcomes English-speaking women and Swedish women married to a foreigner, or those returning after many years abroad.

Web: www.iwcgothenburg.com

- The American Women's Club welcomes all American women and/or women with a strong tie to the US.

Web: www.awcgothenburg.com

- Toastmasters are Scandinavian Speaking Clubs - Open to Everyone. There are 6 clubs in Gothenburg.

Web: www.toastmasters.se

- Anglo Swedish Society Göteborg promotes cultural and social understanding between Sweden and English speaking countries.

Web: www.angloswedish.se

Banks

Banks are generally open Monday to Friday between 10.00 am and 3 pm. Many branch offices have additional opening hours in the late afternoon at least once a week. Normally you will need a national civic registration number ("personnummer") to open a bank account, but most banks can issue an interim number (to set up the account) and then you will be able to apply for a cash card ("uttagskort") to enable you to make withdrawals from automatic teller machines (cashpoints) all over Sweden. As soon as you have received your civic registration number, notify your bank of your "real" civic registration number. Bring your passport and supporting documents you have received from the university.

If you receive your salary from the university, an account will be opened automatically in your name at the Nordea bank, into which your salary will be deposited around the 25th of each month. If you have an account with another bank, please notify Nordea, which will make a transfer.

Business hours

Shops: Standard opening hours in the city centre are Mon–Fri 9.30 am–6.00 pm, Sat 10.00 am–2.00 pm. Shopping malls and hypermarkets have more generous business hours, both on weekdays and at weekends (including Sundays). Most local shopping centres have grocery shops that are open until 10 pm or later every day (except on some public holidays).

Liquor stores (off-licences): Low-alcohol beer and cider can be purchased in grocery shops, while stronger alcoholic beverages are sold at the national wine and spirits monopoly, Systembolaget, open Monday -Friday 10.00 am–6.00 pm, Saturday 10.00 am–2.00 pm. There are a number of these stores in the city. Check the website: www.systembolaget.se.

The Swedish Post Office has been reorganised so that parcels can be picked up or sent from a number of places, including petrol stations, supermarkets and kiosks. Look for the blue and yellow sign above or by the entrance of outlets providing this service. You can also buy stamps and do most other postal errands at these outlets, many of which stay open late in the evening and on weekends.

Climate

The Swedish climate benefits from the warm Gulf Stream. For this reason, the weather is much milder than in many other places at corresponding latitudes. In July, the warmest month, Gothenburg has an average (day-and-night) temperature of about 63° F (+17° C), and in February, the coldest month, about 30° F (–1° C). Gothenburg has a typical coastal climate with predominantly mild winters (relatively few days with snow) and quite a lot of rain.

Clothing

The weather in the south of Sweden is cold from November to March. From November to February, you will need winter clothing (coat, gloves, warm shoes, etc.). Autumn, which begins in late September, may well seem like winter to people from more southern latitudes. Suitable spring and summer wear includes shorts and T-shirts. At the university the general dress code for most events is smart casual. One exception is the ceremony for the conferment of doctoral degrees.

Consumer rights

Municipal Consumer Guidance Office (“Konsument Göteborg”) provides free services and information to residents of Gothenburg on issues concerning the rights and obligations of consumers and energy planning. Ask the Municipal Consumer Guidance Office in case you have any questions before making a purchase or if you have a complaint. Web: www.goteborg.se/wps/portal/konsument.

Currency

The currency in Sweden is the Swedish krona (international abbreviation SEK, in Swedish abbreviated kr). There are coins of 1, 5 and 10 kronor. Banknotes have denominations of 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1,000 kronor. If you need to exchange money into other currencies, contact the exchange bureau FOREX at www.forex.se. They do not charge for their services and the exchange rates are good. There are several branches in Gothenburg, for example one at the railway station and one at Landvetter Airport.

Dates

Dates are often written in the following order: year, month, day, e.g. October 12, 2007 is written 2007-10-12 (or just 071012), or 12/10 2007. American visitors in particular should take note that the last-mentioned variant does not mean the 10th of December.

Driving in Sweden

Sweden, like most other European countries, has right-hand traffic. You must have your driving licence with you whenever you drive. Unless it has been issued in an EEA country, your driving licence will no longer be valid when you have been registered in Sweden for more than one year. You can apply at the County Administrative Board (“Länsstyrelsen”) for a Swedish licence before the end of this one-year period. Please note that Sweden’s anti-drink-and-drive legislation is strict. The police can stop a car at any time and have the driver take a breathalyzer test. Drinking and driving in Sweden is not tolerated. When driving in wooded areas, look out for wildlife on the road, particularly deer and elk.

Electricity

The voltage in Sweden is 230V AC, 50 Hz.

Emergency

In the event of an emergency, dial 112 and ask for ambulance services, the fire department, police, or a physician on call.

Language

The Swedish language belongs to the North Germanic branch of the Germanic languages, along with Danish, Norwegian, Icelandic and Faroese, and is the Nordic language with the greatest number of speakers. Swedish is spoken by the 9 million people living in Sweden today and by about 300,000 Finnish nationals in Finland.

English has been a compulsory subject in the Swedish school system since 1951, so most people speak and understand English. However, if you are going to stay in Sweden for several months, you will probably want to know some Swedish in order to communicate, read newspapers, watch television, etc. If you take the trouble to learn some Swedish, you will probably adapt more easily to the new culture where your work will be conducted.

The city of Gothenburg offers Swedish courses free of charge to newly arrived adult immigrants. For more information, please contact the municipality and ask for information on “Swedish for immigrants”. Web site: www.goteborg.se

Libraries

The Gothenburg City Library (“Göteborgs Stadsbibliotek”) consists of the Main Library (“Huvudbiblioteket”) and some 25 branch libraries. Opening hours vary. For addresses and telephone numbers, look in the yellow pages of the telephone directory under “Bibliotek”, or contact the Main Library of Göteborgs Stadsbibliotek. Visiting address: Götaplatsen. Web: www.goteborg.se/wps/portal/stadsbiblioteket

Research libraries

The University Library of Gothenburg (Göteborgs universitetsbibliotek) consists of seven separate libraries (www.ub.gu.se). Its library facilities are open to anyone over the age of 15; university affiliation is not required. When registering for a library card, you will need to show your passport or some other valid proof of identity.

- Central Library

Visiting address: Renströmsgatan 4.

- Biomedical Library

(Medicine, Dentistry, Biosciences and Health Care Sciences).

Visiting address: Medicinargatan 4.

- Learning Centre Hälsovetarbacken

This centre houses textbooks, literature for supplementary reading and other library materials in the field of health care sciences. Visiting address: Arwid Wallgrens Backe 5.

- Botanical and Environmental Library

(Botany, Marine Ecology and Environmental Sciences). Visiting address: Carl Skottsbergs gata 22 B.

- Earth Sciences library

(Geology, Marine Geology, Physical Geography and Oceanography). Visiting address: Guldhedsgatan 5 A.

- Economics Library

(Economics, Business Administration, Economic History, Informatics, Law, Human and Economic Geography, Statistics). Visiting address: Vasagatan 1.

- Education Library

(Pedagogy, Teacher Education, Home Economics and special collections: school textbooks). Visiting address: Pedagogen A, Utsikten, Västra Hamngatan 25.

- Undergraduate and Newspaper Library

(This library is primarily intended for undergraduate students at the School of Business, Economics and Law). Visiting address: Vasagatan 2 A.

- Chalmers University of Technology library

Chalmers University of Technology is administratively independent of the University of Gothenburg, but the departments of physics, chemistry and mathematics are integrated with their counterparts on the Chalmers campus. The Chalmers Library is responsible for providing library services within these basic subjects for both universities, in addition to serving its own university in the fields of technology and applied science. For further information, contact: Chalmers University Library. Visiting address: Chalmers tvärgata 1.

Web: www.chalmers.se

Departmental library

- Library of the School for Art & Design

Visiting address: Kristinelundsgatan 6–8

E-mail: biblioteket@hdk.gu.se

Motor vehicles

Insurance companies are listed in the yellow pages of the telephone directory under “Försäkringar”. For further information on importing and registration of imported vehicles, contact the Swedish Transport Agency, telephone: 0771 503 503.

Web: www.transportstyrelsen.se

News broadcasts on the radio

For news in English, German and a few other languages, contact Sveriges Radio for information about frequencies for different languages. SR International is the international and multicultural service of the Swedish radio. Web: www.sr.se/international. For news about Sweden in English see: www.thelocal.se

Pastime activities

Shopping: Sweden is known for high-quality ceramics, glass, crystal, textiles and clothing.

Eating out: Swedish cuisine is influenced by the proximity to the seas and forests. Traditional Swedish home cooking relies on fish, meat, potatoes and vegetables. In recent years, Sweden has gained an international reputation for its culinary excellence. International cuisine is served in a number of African, American, Italian, Spanish, British, French and Persian restaurants, and there are around 1,500 restaurants in Gothenburg. In addition, a number of restaurants specialise in vegetarian food. Gothenburg offers a great variety of cuisine and price ranges. Most restaurants serve meals until 10 pm. The service charge is included in the price, but a small gratuity is appreciated for evening meals. For more information, see:

www.restaurangguiden.se

Entertainment and culture: Gothenburg offers a great variety of entertainment. See: www.goteborg.com

“*Allemansrätten*”: The right of public access, “*Allemansrätten*” stipulates that there is free access for all to forests and fields: you are allowed to pick berries, mushrooms and such flowers as are not protected by law; to camp one night without permission from the land owner, but not, however, too close to a built-up area; to bathe, row, sail, paddle and drive motorboats on lakes and rivers and in archipelagos; to light a campfire but only at certain prepared sites. In windy or very dry weather, the lighting of fires is absolutely forbidden everywhere.

“*Allemansrätten*” also stipulates that we must never damage

growing trees or bushes, walk over planted fields or through newly planted forest areas or touch birds' eggs or birds' nests. *Sports:* Football and ice hockey are the two biggest seasonal sports and there are several venues available for those interested in watching live matches. For those who want to train or practise, there are a number of facilities all over the city, for swimming, athletics, ball games, fitness or winter sports such as skating and skiing. There is a deep forest ("Delsjöområdet") close to the city for those who like hiking, and the sea and archipelago are within easy reach from the city.

Public holidays

A list of important Swedish holiday observances is provided below. Note that the eve of a holiday is often as important as the holiday itself. Most Swedes have the holidays off, including many civil servants, bank employees, public transport workers, hospital staff, shop assistants and media workers. The Swedish national holiday is celebrated on 6 June in memory of King Gustav Vasa's ascension to the throne in 1523 and the signing of the Government Act of 1809.

Official Public Holidays

"Nyårsdagen", New Year's Day (1 January)

"Trettondedag jul", Epiphany (6 January)

"Långfredagen", Good Friday (the Friday at the beginning of Easter)

"Påskdagen", Easter Sunday

"Annandag påsk", Easter Monday

"Första maj", May Day (1 May)

"Kristi Himmelsfärdsdag", Ascension Day (40 days after Easter)

"Pingstdagen", Whit Sunday (the seventh Sunday after Easter)

"Sveriges Nationaldag", 6 June – The Swedish national holiday

"Midsommardagen", Midsummer Day (the Saturday of the period 20 – 26 June)

"Alla Helgons dag", All Saints' Day (the Saturday of the period 31 Oct – 6 Nov)

“Juldagen”, Christmas Day (25 December)

“Annandag Jul”, Boxing Day (26 December)

Public transport

Public transport, including bus, train, and airport services, is quite good all over Sweden. Gothenburg has a big international airport (Landvetter) east of the city and a smaller one (Göteborg City Airport) to the north-northwest. In and around the city, tram, bus, train and boat services are available. The most efficient means of public transport in Gothenburg are city buses and trams.

There are many ways to buy tickets. You cannot buy tickets from the driver in Göteborg, Mölndal or Partille. For further information, contact: Västtrafik, phone: 0771 41 43 00, www.vasttrafik.se

Religion

More than 80% of the population of Sweden belong to the Lutheran Church. Different churches are represented in Gothenburg. There are also Muslim and Buddhist congregations and more than 30 of these congregations offer worship in languages other than Swedish, such as English, Romanian, Finnish, Croatian, Slovenian, Polish, Arabic and Urdu. For more information regarding the Church of Sweden in the Gothenburg region, please visit: www.svenskakyrkan.se/goteborg. For a list of churches in Gothenburg, please consult the yellow pages of the telephone directory or the online telephone directory at www.gulasidorna.se under “kyrkor”.

University Chaplains

The university chaplains (student priests) work with students and staff at the University of Gothenburg and Chalmers University. Everyone, of any faith or none, is welcome to all activities, or if you would like to meet to discuss in confidence any matter of concern. For up-to-date details: www.studentprasterna.se (English version available on site)
Phone: 031 731 61 77.

E-mail: gbg.studentpraster@svenskakyrkan.se

Chaplain to English-speaking staff and students

Revd Barbara Moss is Chaplain to English-speaking staff and students at the University of Gothenburg, and also priest-in-charge at St Andrew's Church, part of the Church of England Diocese in Europe, where visitors from all countries are always welcome.

Address: St Andrew's Church, Hvitfeldsplatsen 2

www.svenskakyrkan.se/goteborg/st.andrews

Tel: 031 711 19 15. Cell: 073 734 5517.

E-mail: st.andrews.got@telia.com

Special import restrictions

Live animals may be imported into Sweden, provided certain requirements are fulfilled depending on the animal's species and country of origin. For example, a rabies vaccination is required for dogs and cats. Within EU member states, an import licence is no longer required for bringing a pet dog or cat into Sweden. For further information, contact The Swedish Board of Agriculture ("Jordbruksverket") well in advance of entry into Sweden. Address: Jordbruksverket, SE-551 82 Jönköping. Web: www.jordbruksverket.se

For information concerning the import of meat and other foodstuffs, canned food, medicines, etc., and the export of certain goods, e.g. antiques, please contact the Customs and Excise Department: Tullverket västra regionen, SE-404 85 Göteborg. Web: www.tullverket.se

Telephone services

The international country code for Sweden is +46. The area code for Gothenburg is (0)31. To call abroad from Sweden dial 00 followed by the country code. It is possible to obtain a conventional telephone for your apartment, but installation is expensive. For more information, contact Telia at www.telia.se (telephone: 90 200). Cheaper alternatives include prepaid cards for mobile phones, cash cards ("kontantkort").

Television

If you buy or rent a TV during your stay in Sweden, Radiotjänst i Kiruna AB must be notified. The licence fee is approximately SEK 2 000 per year. For further information, contact: Radiotjänst i Kiruna AB, www.radiotjanst.se

Tourism

If you are interested in sightseeing and tourism, visit the Tourist Office in Gothenburg (Göteborgs Turistbyrå). There you will find detailed information about places of interest, exhibitions, museums, theatres, concerts, etc. in Gothenburg and environs. For further information, contact: Göteborgs Turistbyrå, Kungsportsplatsen 2. www.goteborg.com

Time

GMT +1. Time is written according to the European system, e.g. 2 pm is written 14.00. Daylight saving time is used, i.e. the clock goes forward 1 hour at 2 am on the last Sunday of March and back to normal time at 2 am on the last Sunday of October.

Traditional festivities

Easter (Påsk)

Easter in Sweden encompasses traces of pagan rites of spring: painted Easter eggs, symbolising the return of life, and witches flying to “Blåkulla” on broomsticks. Manufactured paper eggs are filled with sweets and bunches of birch twigs bedecked with wildly coloured feathers brighten open markets.

Walpurgis Eve (Valborgsmässoafton). In the evening of 30 April, the arrival of spring in Sweden is celebrated with bonfires and choir singing.

1st May (första maj)

1 May is characterised by trade unions’ and left-wing political parties’ parades and students’ traditional celebration of spring.

Midsummer (midsommar)

At midsummer, in late June, nighttime lasts for only a few hours. Dancing around the flower-bedecked Maypole is a remnant of ancient fertility rites.

Crayfish party (kräftskiva)

On warm August evenings, many people eat boiled crayfish and wash it down with Swedish “snaps”, a culinary custom illuminated by colourful paper lanterns.

Lucia

Early in the morning of 13 December, Swedes are awakened by a girl dressed in white with a crown of candles on her head, who has come to serve very early morning coffee with “Lussekatte” (Lucia buns, which are sweet wheat buns, fragrant with saffron). Lucia is a symbol of hope that the light will return after the long winter darkness.

Transport

After your stay in Sweden you will probably have a lot of things you would like to bring home. There are different ways of doing this:

1. You can carry your belongings as excess luggage (this is the most costly alternative).
2. Passengers carrying baggage in excess of the free baggage allowance may forward such baggage as cargo. Cargo rates are often lower than excess baggage rates. Unaccompanied baggage may only contain personal belongings. For more information, contact your airline.
3. Professional movers/packers of personal belongings: these companies can help you with insurance, documentation, cost estimates, and advice about packing and means of transportation. For further information, please contact one of the following:

Sky Transport Sweden, web: www.skytrans.se
Alfa Quality Moving, web: www.alfa-moving.se

Travels

There are good train connections between major cities in Sweden and the rest of Europe. Train tickets and timetables are most easily accessed via the Internet at www.sj.se (this website is available in English; click on the link in the upper right-hand corner of the window) or by phone (which will make the ticket slightly more expensive). Prices depend on the speed and comfort of the train. The express train to Stockholm (X2000) takes around three hours. If you travel on the slower intercity train (around 5 hours) and not during rush hours, the cheapest ticket would be around SEK 150.

The cheapest way to travel in Sweden and the rest of Europe is by bus. For timetables of companies offering frequent buses to Copenhagen, Stockholm and Oslo, www.safflebussen.se and www.sj.se. You can order tickets from their websites if you have a credit card.

Gothenburg is situated closer to the capitals of Norway and Denmark (with a distance of around 300 km each) than to Stockholm (around 500 km). Gothenburg is quite close to the Continent with a flight time to Amsterdam, Brussels and London of around 1 hour and 45 minutes, and to Paris of about 2 hours and 15 minutes. There are several direct flights every day.



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG