

# WELCOME GUIDE 2023/2024

FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



**SÖDERTÖRN UNIVERSITY** | STOCKHOLM  
sh.se

# Welcome to Södertörn University!

AS THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, I am delighted to welcome all our new international students to Södertörn University!

As one of Sweden's youngest, most dynamic and modern universities, we offer our students a multidisciplinary and multicultural environment, where they not only learn, but also develop as individuals and as mindful citizens. Our university has grown rapidly since its foundation, and we currently have more than 12,000 students. Internationalisation is one of our key priorities, so we are continually increasing the number of programmes and courses offered in English.

We are extremely happy that you are joining our Södertörn family! You will be an indispensable and valuable member of our community, developing your ability to think independently and analytically and contributing to the academic and social life on campus. So, on behalf of all our staff and students – Welcome!

**Professor Gustav Amberg, Vice-Chancellor**



Photo by Anna Hartvig.  
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# Student life in Sweden

**In addition to offering high quality education, student life in Sweden makes your learning process more enjoyable and memorable. Being a student in Sweden has a number of advantages.**

## Sweden

Sweden is one of the largest countries in Europe comparable to Spain, the US state of California, or Thailand, in terms of surface area with very diverse nature and climate. Swedes love to spend time outdoors and many cultural and sporting activities take place across the country. Explore Sweden's stunning landscapes and varied activities during the weekends and holidays: see the northern lights in Kiruna, participate in the annual long-distance cross-country ski race Vasaloppet in Dalarna, or treat your taste buds at Christmas markets across Sweden.

## Weather

Spring, summer, autumn and winter have their own unique characteristics in Sweden,

but when each season starts and how long it lasts depend on what part of the country you live in. Sweden has a much milder climate than most other regions of the world that lie as far north, thanks to the Gulf Stream. July is the warmest month in Stockholm with an average temperature of 22°C (72°F) and the coldest is January at -8°C (22°F).

## Customs

Being punctual is important to Swedes, so arrive in "lagom tid" (neither too early nor too late). Also, a well-known national characteristic is respect for diversity and equality. Sweden is often associated with a good work-life balance. Fika (basically coffee and cake breaks) contributes to a better work-life balance.



Image by omersukrugoksu via Mediaportalen.

## Terms

- EU/EEA international student: a student being a citizen of one of the EU/EEA countries.

- Non-EU/EEA international student: a student being a citizen of the non-EU/EEA countries.

## Cost of living

The Swedish currency is the krona, which is abbreviated to SEK. SEK 100 is approximately EUR 8.6 or USD 9, but exchange rates may vary from time to time. Non-EU/EEA international students are required to have at least SEK 9,456 (or approximately EUR 816/USD 870) per month to meet the residence permit requirement for study according to the Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket). Based on actual living expenses, we recommend that you have an average of SEK 10,000 per month for living expenses in Stockholm.

## Banks, currency exchange, and payment

Sweden is a nearly cashless country. Most of the country's bank branches have stopped to address cash; many shops, museums and restaurants now only accept card or mobile payments. So please do not bring a large amount of cash with you to Sweden. Most in-store terminals support payments with contactless cards. You can get cash using your Visa, MasterCard or Maestro card at ATM. Please note that a small fee will be charged when using a card issued in a foreign country.

Students having a Swedish personal identity number can open a Swedish bank account. However, please note that students studying less than a year often do not allow to have a personal number, which makes it impossible to open a Swedish bank account theoretically.

## Transportation

Stockholms Lokaltrafik (SL) is responsible for buses, underground trains, commuter trains, trams and some ferry routes. The underground trains (Tunnelbana) is often the easiest and fastest way to commute within Stockholm city. Commuter trains (Pendeltåg) take you to the suburbs and neighbouring towns. Tickets can be purchased via SL app, the Kiosk (Pressbyrån) or the SL Centres. You cannot buy the ticket on buses in Stockholm. Failure to show a valid ticket will result in a penalty fee of SEK 1,500 (around EUR 130 or USD 138). Adult full-time students carrying a valid student ID with a SL logo can purchase SL tickets at a discount fare. If you do not have a valid student ID, you must pay the adult fare or risk a penalty fee. When you order a taxi, please make sure you use one of the major taxi companies and book them through the switchboard or an app.

## Healthcare

If you are an EU/EEA international student, you should register for a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) in your home country before coming to Sweden. This card gives you the right to medical care at the same cost as Swedes.

If you are Non-EU/EEA international student and enrolled in a degree programme longer than one year, you are entitled to the same health benefits as Swedes, provided that you have a Swedish personal identity number. Exchange students and fee-paying non-EU/EEA international students are covered by a student insurance policy via Sweden's Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency (Kammarkollegiet). See the section on Insurance.

# Studying at Södertörn University and in Stockholm

## Academic calendar

**Autumn semester 2023: 28 August 2023 - 14 January 2024**

**Spring semester 2024: 15 January 2024 - 2 June 2024**

## Credit system and Ladok

The number of credits tells you the length of a course or programme. A credit in Sweden is the same as an ECTS credit. One week of full-time study is worth 1.5 credits. One semester of full-time study is worth 30 credits. A whole academic year, which is 40 weeks, is worth 60 credits. The semester is divided into four periods. Each period lasts 4 to 5 weeks and there is an examination week at the end of each period. A student usually takes one full-time course per period and four consecutive full-time courses in each semester.

As a student at Södertörn University, you can use Student Ladok to check your personal details, course registrations and results. You can also print out the certificate of course registration and transcript, both at Södertörn and other universities in Sweden. Student Ladok is available via [www.student.ladok.se](http://www.student.ladok.se).

## Teaching, study methods and SH-StudyWeb

Teachers encourage students to participate in the form of questions and presentations in class, and welcome questions out of class.



A main campus building (Moas Båge). Photo by Anna Hartvig.

The emphasis on discussion and group work makes it important to attend classes, especially seminars. It is common to be only held 2-4 lectures and seminars per week. Students are expected to spend a lot of time reading and preparing for the lectures, group work and individual assignments on their own. In Sweden, group assignments and presentations are very common, as final assignments instead of a written examination.

SH-StudyWeb (<https://studiewebben.sh.se>) is the university's learning platform and is used for all courses and programmes. It has your course page, timetable, syllabus and reading lists. You can access through your SH-account.

### **Examinations**

At Södertörn University, you will encounter different kinds of exams. Some are given as written final exams, others as written assignments, essays or projects. They can also be individual or group presentations at seminars. Students who fail an examination the first time may re-take the exam at a later date. Cheating in exams is strictly forbidden. If any student is caught cheating, a special investigation is carried out and may lead to suspension from the university. Plagiarism (copying a part of assignment without crediting the source) causes severe consequences.

### **Grading**

Credits are awarded only when the course has been successfully completed.

For courses taught in Swedish and a few courses in English, a three-point grading scale is used:

Pass with distinction (VG)

Pass (G)

Fail (U)

For most courses taught in English, a six-point grading scale is used:

A - Excellent

B - Very Good

C - Good

D - Satisfactory

E - Sufficient

F - Fail

### **Equal opportunities**

Södertörn University has an equality plan that begins in the following statement:

“Södertörn University must be inclusive and utilise the abilities, commitment and competence of its employees and students.

The guiding principle is the equal rights and human dignity of all. The university rejects all forms of discrimination due to sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age.” You can approach any staff to get help, but primarily your teaching staff and the equal opportunities officer. The Student Support Services have special responsibility for equal treatment issues, so you can also turn to them for help.

### **Rights and obligations**

“Rights and obligations rules for studying at first- and second cycle level at Södertörn University” is a local set of rules that include decisions about the relationship between students and the university. You can search for and read the full document on our website ([www.sh.se/international](http://www.sh.se/international)).

### **Registration**

The International Office will register exchange students on the courses for which they have been accepted. If you are a student at our master's programme (hereafter international master student), please contact the department office.

## **Tuition fees**

Exchange students do not pay tuition fees at Södertörn University. EU/EEA international master students are also exempted from tuition fees.

Non-EU/EEA international master students need to pay tuition fees for their studies in Sweden. The tuition fees at Södertörn University during the academic year 2023/2024 are from SEK 92,000 to SEK 150,000 per year, depending on the subject area. Detailed information about the tuition fee is available on the university website and in the invoice. The tuition fee covers the course or programme to which you have been admitted, as well as the related academic administration and support services. For information about additional expenses, please read the section on Cost of living.

All students regardless their tuition fee status have the same services, rights and obligations such as study and careers counselling, student health care, access to library and university facilities, during their studies at Södertörn University. A priority for allocating rooms is given to fee-paying non-EU/EEA international master students.

## **Scholarships**

Södertörn University offers a limited number of tuition fee waivers/scholarships.

Non-EU/EEA international master students who have applied for a one or two-year masters programme as their first ranked choice, can apply for a tuition fee waiver during their application process. This scholarship currently covers 90% of the tuition fees. Thus, students need to pay 10% of their tuition fees and their own living cost. Study in Sweden has a list of other

scholarships available to international students ([www.studyinsweden.se/scholarships](http://www.studyinsweden.se/scholarships)).

## **Employment opportunities**

In Sweden, EU/EEA international students and non-EU/EEA international students with a valid residence permit for study can work while studying. Even though there is no official limit to the number of hours you can work, you will be expected to spend an average of 40 hours per week attending lectures, studying, reading, taking part in seminars and writing assignments.

If you are a non-EU/EEA international master student, you can apply for a permission to stay in Sweden for up to 12 months after programme completion to look for a job or to work, provided that you meet their requirements.

## **Family support**

If you are planning to bring your family to Sweden while you are studying, there are a few things to consider. Finding accommodation in Stockholm is very challenging for individuals, and even harder for a whole family. If you intend to travel to Sweden as a family, we strongly recommend that you start looking for accommodation well in advance. Södertörn University cannot offer accommodation for family.

If you are from a non-EU/EEA country and need a student visa or residence permit, your family members must also apply to the Swedish Migration Agency with you, or after you have received your visa or permit. Your family members (i.e. spouse, partner and underage children) can get a residence permit for the same period as you.



Stockholm offers many places to go swimming in Lake Mälaren or the Baltic Sea, near the city centre or in the surrounding archipelago. Image by Dougall\_Photoaphy via Mediaportalen.

If you are studying at Södertörn University and have a small child, your child has a right to attend a preschool (You need to provide a valid residence permit and personal number if you are a non-EU/EEA international student). You can apply for a place in childcare or at a family day-care six months before you need it; your child must be at least one year old to obtain a place based on where you live.

### **Activities in Stockholm**

According to the QS Best Student Cities ranking 2023, Stockholm recently ranked no.18 in the world for desirability, reflecting the city's high standards of living and its popularity amongst students.

Nearly everyone speaks English, so many international students enjoy the social life here. Stockholm's stages and arenas attract Swedish and international stars. Cultural events, exhibitions and concerts are always happening in the city. The Visit Stockholm is a good place to find more information ([www.visitstockholm.se](http://www.visitstockholm.se)).



# University services and facilities

## **Infocenter**

Infocenter's services are quick and easy, providing the help you need for your everyday activities as a student. You can receive help with your general questions, your SH-Card and topping up your printing card, loaning audio-visual equipment, collecting marked take-home exams and assignments and buying university products etc. You can also meet staff at the students union here. If you have an appointment with a study and careers guidance counsellor, an international officer or a counsellor, it will be held in one of the Infocenter's meeting rooms. The Infocenter is located on MD5 (entry level) of the Moa building and can be contacted via +46-(0)8-608-4000 or [info@sh.se](mailto:info@sh.se).

If you are going to hand in a take-home exam or assignment, put it in the academic schools letter box outside the main entrance

of the Moa building.

## **International Office**

The International Office is a unit that works strategically and operatively to guide, support and inform international students from their first contact with the university up to alumni level, providing tools and specialist knowledge for study related questions internally and externally. The International Office is located on MD5 (entry level) of the Moa building, next to the Infocenter. If you would like to meet one of our international officers, please contact [international@sh.se](mailto:international@sh.se).

## **Academic schools**

Södertörn University has five academic schools, which are responsible for education and research. The university also offers Teacher Education run by an academic head and is staffed by teachers from the universitys academic schools.

**HISTORICAL AND  
CONTEMPORARY STUDIES**

**CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

**TEACHER EDUCATION**

**NATURAL SCIENCES,  
TECHNOLOGY AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**

**POLICE STUDIES**

**SOCIAL SCIENCES**

## **University library**

Södertörn University's library provides various study environments meeting different needs and purposes. There are quiet areas where you can sit in peace, and other areas with group rooms where you can sit with a study group. If you are a student at Södertörn University, the library has desktop computers and laptops that you can borrow. There are two printing rooms where you can print from a library computer or your own, provided that you have a student account. The library also has the Study Support Unit, which offers guidance, courses and lectures in academic writing and speaking as well as tips for study techniques. The library also provides assistance with references and essay writing. Please check the library website for latest information ([www.sh.se/english/sodertorn-university/library](http://www.sh.se/english/sodertorn-university/library)).

## **Careers and study guidance**

We have study and careers guidance counsellors who can help you with everything from subject or programme selection to possible careers. A meeting with a counsellor could cover the following areas: the university's course and programme offering, choice of specialisation, how to put a degree together, eligibility, admissions, your study situation, planning your studies, study leave, and career planning. Please check the website for latest information on careers and study guidance and how to book an appointment with a counsellor.

## **Support for students with disabilities**

If you are a student at Södertörn University and have a permanent disability, you can apply for special educational support.

It is important that you contact [funka@sh.se](mailto:funka@sh.se) promptly, so that we could provide the best possible support. If you need help with specific talking books, please contact the library's talking book service. The university supports students with disabilities by providing services such as alternative examinations, adaptations for written exam, note-taking support, individual study plans, mentoring, PowerPoint and lecture notes, a resource room, technical and printing support, and extended supervision. Students can complete an application for disability support through the website.

## **Student Health Centre**

The Student Health Centre offers help if you have physical, mental or social problems while you are studying. It works to promote the students physical and psychosocial health throughout their studies and is a supplement to other healthcare services. We offer advice and consultations for all students, with a counsellor, psychologist or nurse and, when necessary, doctors and physiotherapists. You can contact the Student Health Centre via +46 (0)8 608 4384 or [kurator@sh.se](mailto:kurator@sh.se).

## **University Chaplaincy**

Södertörn University has a university chaplaincy. You are welcome to book a time to talk, whatever your faith or troubles. All appointments are free of charge and we treat everything as confidential. In addition to private appointments, we also offer other meetings and groups. We have the Room of Serenity in MC 339, and meditation sessions on Tuesdays at 13.30 in Infoverkstan, UB517, in the university library.

## Computers and Wi-Fi

There are two wireless networks at the university: Eduroam and SHguest. Eduroam is the student network. This is an international network that many higher education institutions (HEIs) are part of, so you can connect to Eduroam at all affiliated European HEIs. It is also available in some public spaces, such as airports and train stations. If you experience issues accessing the university Wi-Fi, please contact [info@sh.se](mailto:info@sh.se) or call +46 (0)8 608 40 00.

## Café and restaurants

The university has several restaurants/cafés where you can buy lunch and snacks: Restaurang Allé Elva Kök & Matsal on level 4 of the library and Arom Kaffe & Deli on level 5 of the Moa Building. Prego Södertörn

is on level 4 of the library and Prego Tolvan is on level 2 of Logos. There are also a number of other options nearby the campus, and several places on campus where students can heat food in microwave ovens.

## Buildings and rooms

When a lecture or seminar is held in room MA 648, you should be in Moas bäge, MA Building, level 6 and room MA 648. All room numbers are formed in the same way. This is true for the Moas Bäge Building (M), F Building (F), University Library (UB) and Primus (P), Logos (LO) and Praxis.



# Preparing for your studies

## Visa and residence permit

Non-EU/EEA international students (both exchange and master students) who are studying in Sweden for longer than three months must apply for a residence permit (uppehållstillstånd). For detailed information about the requirements and process, please contact the Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket) or Swedish Embassy. We strongly recommend that you submit a residence permit application as soon as possible, preferably three months before you expect to travel.

EU/EEA international students do not need to apply for a residence permit.

## Accommodation

Södertörn University offers student accommodation to international students.

If you are a non-EU/EEA international master student, please contact the accommodation department ([accommodation@sh.se](mailto:accommodation@sh.se)). If you are an exchange student, you will receive an application link through the application system (Mobility Online). If you are not eligible for accommodation from Södertörn University, you are responsible for finding your own housing. For detailed information, please visit [www.sh.se/accommodation](http://www.sh.se/accommodation).

## Telephone and internet

If you have a mobile number from another EU mobile operator, you should be able to “roam like at home”, depending on your operators terms and conditions. To decide the best option for you, please check with your mobile operator prior to leaving home.



Student's accommodation in Björnkulla. Photo by Anna Hartvig.

Roaming costs for non-EU operators are often high and we recommend that international students buy a local SIM card upon arrival. You can bring your mobile phone and simply buy a local SIM card prepaid or subscription in Sweden. There are many options available and you can order a SIM card online (depending on the operator, a Swedish personal number may be required) or buy one at a nearby Kiosk (Pressbyrån).

Depending on your mobile operator, mobile internet packages may be available. Wi-Fi internet is available throughout the campus and in some public areas in Stockholm.

### **Insurance**

Exchange students and fee-paying students are covered by a student insurance policy via Swedens Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency (Kammarkollegiet). This insurance provides coverage for the following:

- disability and death benefits
- medical and dental care
- home transport
- personal property coverage
- third party liability
- legal expenses

EU/EEA international students are not covered by Kammarkollegiets student insurance when they are not on campus and must purchase their own home insurance. All European students must bring their European Health Insurance Card. All students at Södertörn University are covered by insurance during working hours at the university and when commuting to and from it. You will need additional insurance cover during your free time and private trip.

### **Clothing**

Weather and temperature in Sweden differs between seasons. It can get very cold in the winter, which may start early and finish late. It is important to be prepared and have appropriate clothing, so please bring a warm windproof and waterproof coat and some warm and sturdy boots. Swedish homes, universities and public spaces are generally well heated and insulated, so you do not need to wear extra clothes indoors.

As the price of winter clothing can be high in Sweden, it may be smart to bring some warm clothes with you. But do not forget to pack some summer clothes and swim wear, so you are also prepared for beautiful Swedish summer times.

### **Emergency contacts**

The emergency number in Sweden is 112. It can be accessed via mobiles, landline phones and public telephones and offers emergency medical, police and fire and rescue services.

For non-emergency healthcare services and to find out where the nearest hospital is, please use the Swedish healthcare helpline service by calling 1177 or visiting [www.1177.se](http://www.1177.se) at any time.

# Arriving and settling in

## Travelling to Sweden

### Arlanda Airport, the main international airport

It is located 40 km north of Stockholm. From Arlanda, you can reach the city centre by commuter trains (Pendeltåg) and long-distance trains (SJ or Mälartåg), the Arlanda Express and airport coaches (Flygbusserna). The journey normally takes 20-45 minutes and costs SEK 132- 320, depending on your means of transport.

### Bromma airport

It is situated 8 km west of Stockholm. Airport coaches take about 20 minutes to and from the city centre, depending on traffic.

### Stockholm Skavsta Airport

This airport is located 100 km south of

Stockholm and also has an airport coaches, that takes about 80 minutes.

## Trains and boat

If you travel by train, the Swedish national train operator, SJ, has routes between Stockholm and Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark. The journey takes five to seven hours. You can also travel to Stockholm by sea from its neighbouring Baltic cities; Helsinki in Finland, Riga in Latvia, or Tallinn in Estonia.

## Orientation Week

Södertörn University organises an Orientation Week programme for international students. Here you will have the chance to attend information sessions on important topics, such as student accommodation, student rights and regulations, IT services and library facilities.



Image by stockstudioX via Mediaportalen.

If you miss the Orientation Week, arrangements will be made to facilitate digital access to the Orientation Week. More information on the Orientation Week will be provided via email by the International Office or the department office before the start of the semester.

### **Students' union**

The students' union at Södertörn University, SöderS works with issues related to higher education, as well as social and leisure activities, and is an important means of making the students voices heard. The membership of the students union is optional, but it allows you to participate in the students' unions activities and in the international committees activities. Participating in the students' union is often fun and gives international students the opportunity to meet Swedish students. SöderS can be reached via [info@soders.nu](mailto:info@soders.nu) or their website ([www.soders.nu](http://www.soders.nu)).

### **Student accounts and access to network and printers**

Every student at the university gets their own SH-Account for the university's IT environment. An SH-Account allows you to log in to SH-StudyWeb, the university computers, and also gives you access to the universitys wireless network. Please contact [info@sh.se](mailto:info@sh.se) if you need support with your student account.

### **Swedish personal identity number and registering in Sweden**

International students who study in Sweden for 12 months or longer can apply for the Swedish personal identity number (personnummer). The Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket) is the authority responsible for issuing personal identity numbers. Registration must be done in person at

one of the tax agency's offices. This number provides international students with access to healthcare, banking and many other essential services in Sweden. To learn more about registering in Sweden and acquiring a personal identity number, please visit the website ([www.skatteverket.se](http://www.skatteverket.se)).

### **Learning Swedish**

Exchange students are offered Swedish language courses free of charge. Academic credits are awarded upon successful completion of courses.

Swedish language courses at Södertörn University are not currently available to international freemover students. All EU/EEA students and other international students with a personal identity number can register for SFI (svenska för invandrare Swedish for immigrants) courses that the Swedish state offers for free. For more information about SFI courses, please visit the website ([www.stockholm.se](http://www.stockholm.se)).

### **Basic Swedish vocabulary**

Yes – Ja / No – Nej

Hello – Hej

How are you? – Hur mår du?

Good morning – God morgon

Good evening – God kväll

Good night – God natt Cheers! – Skål!

Thank you – Tack

You're welcome – Varsågod

Pleased to meet you – Trevligt att träffas

What's your name? – Vad heter du?

Sorry – Ursäkta or Förlåt

I only speak English – Jag talar bara engelska

## A few facts about Sweden and Stockholm-

- Sweden's borders have not been changed since 1905.
- Out of 10 million people in Sweden, 85% live in cities
- Forests cover 63% of the country
- Sweden has five official minority languages: Finnish, Meänkieli (also known as Tornionlaaksonsuomi or Tornedalians), the Sami languages, Romani Chib and Yiddish
- Homosexual relations have been legal since 1944, and gender-neutral marriage was legalised in 2009
- In 1979, Sweden was the first country in the world to ban corporal punishment
- With 25% as standard, Swedish VAT is among the highest in the world
- Only 1% of solid waste goes to landfill in Sweden the rest is recycled or used to generate heat, electricity or vehicle fuel, with 54% of energy being generated from renewables
- There are 95,700 lakes across the country
- Sweden is one of the few countries in the world that gives every person the right to roam in nature. The only exceptions are private gardens, near homes or farmland with crops. This is commonly referred to as "allemansrätten" in Sweden
- Stockholms underground has been considered to be the worlds longest art gallery due to the countless artworks displayed at its 90 stations? #stockholmmetro
- In Sweden relationships between students and teachers are relaxed and informal as a student in Sweden, you will be expected to address your teachers by their first names.