

Student experience report  
Master Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability (MSLS) at the  
Blekinge Institute for Technology, Sweden

- Preparation

The preparation was a long process, as this experience consists of at least 10 months outside of Oldenburg. It should be taken into account that the programme starts in September and that in Oldenburg it may coincide with exams and final projects of the summer semester. You should also look for a house in advance. Fortunately the programme has an excel file where you can see detailed information about the rooms rented by the students. I highly recommend first looking for a room through this list, as you can contact students who have previously stayed in that accommodation and can share their experiences. As for the accreditation of subjects in Oldenburg, it was a simple process and is well advised. I also highly recommend practicing and improving your English beforehand, as it can be challenging to start the experience in such a diverse and international group if you have not previously had experience using English for a long period. Finally I must mention that it is important to look for extra funding, as Sweden is an expensive country compared to Germany and the support from the Erasmus programme is an excellent help but not sufficient to cover the costs during the stay in Karlskrona.



*Students of the program on a walk through the historical center of Karlskrona during the introductory week*

- Accommodation

The city is surrounded by the sea, so it is a very nice place to live and at the same time it is a small place to find a house at a good price. Fortunately I was able to find a house in the city centre at an excellent price and this was thanks to the MSLS Facebook group, where you can find the excel with information about the houses previously rented by students of the programme. I don't recommend staying in student residences like JOTAC, although they are residences where other Erasmus students who come to study only for

a semester live, but they are neither cheap nor nice. Some students lived on the island of Aspö, which is a very different experience from what I saw, but of course you have to consider that you would be living close to the sea and nature but far away from the city.



*Typical residential house in Karlskrona*

- Studying at the host university

The programme is based on the concept of learning in a safe space with a great sense of community. At the beginning of the programme the teachers explain how the next few months will be and at first it may sound challenging and intimidating that one has to live with and open oneself to a group of about 40 people from different countries and academic backgrounds, but it is worth it to let oneself go and be part of the process. The student-teacher relationship is very close and during the programme there are many guest lecturers from different countries and sectors. The programme puts a lot of emphasis on the development of personal leadership skills, it is a great opportunity for personal development and reflection on personal development and the relationship with sustainability. The programme may seem light at times but there are peaks where there is a lot of work to do, as you have different projects running in parallel and you have to organise yourself well so you don't get overloaded. One of the most crucial moments of the programme was the thesis selection, as you choose not only a topic but also the team you will work with for the next 5 months of the programme. My recommendation is to find a balance between a topic that interests you, it can be totally new to what we study in SEM but there is also the opportunity to complement your SEM studies. Also the team you will be working with is a fundamental part of the programme, as it is a collective learning experience and you will learn as much from them as they learn from you. The last month of the programme may seem very demanding with thesis submissions and reflections from other courses, but it is definitely worth the sacrifice.



*Master's thesis team.*

*Nigel (Aruba), Mariana (Brasil), Lisa (the Netherlands), Carlos (Mexico)*



- Everyday life and leisure time

Life in the city of Karlskrona is very quiet and slow compared to medium or big cities. The first obstacle to find things is the language because at the beginning I was not very well oriented to the events happening in the city or at the university itself. But as time goes by you can make friends outside the programme and also with the Erasmus students. There are some options for work out such as kayak clubs, Judo and Karate classes. Also the offer of gyms is good (we went to Friskis & Sveltis and they have different classes). The city has a decent swimming pool. The cultural offer is smaller and limited by the language. With the students of the MSLS programme we organised different parties like the Mexican Day of the Dead, an Asian night hosted by the students coming from this continent, also the Dutch night, a German night with a lot of good beer. In autumn we went on excursions to a nearby nature reserve and in summer we cycled on different islands and went camping. At the end of the programme the connection with the students becomes very strong and you spend a lot of time with them.



*Kayaking in front of the main Campus of the University*

- General experience

The programme allowed me to grow not only academically, but also as a person and to broaden my horizons in different directions. The master means a great investment of time, choices, thoughts, which makes it a very powerful and intense experience, in a positive sense. It has been an incredible year in my life, with new friends, new cultural experiences, new language, unforgettable sunsets, a colourful autumn, a cozy winter, a slow spring and a summer full of light and joy. Although the city is small, it is an ideal environment for so much learning to take place without many distractions. To students who are hesitating about this option because of the intensity, I would say that this experience is worthwhile, there is not much to regret and it complements what you learn in SEM.



