Chalmers University of Technology (CU)

Useful websites:

- [www.chalmers.se](http://www.chalmers.se) (Official school website)
- [http://www.student.chalmers.se/sp/course_list](http://www.student.chalmers.se/sp/course_list) (School website for information on courses)
- [http://timeedit.ita.chalmers.se/4DACTION/WebShowSearch/1/2-0](http://timeedit.ita.chalmers.se/4DACTION/WebShowSearch/1/2-0) (Time table planning)
- [www.forex.se](http://www.forex.se) (Money changer in Sweden)
- [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net) (budget airlines services)

**Step 1: Choosing which SEP partner school to go to**

Depending on which course you are doing (ME, EEE, ISE, etc), check out the course websites of all the schools you are interested in and make sure that they have sufficient modules for you to map back to NUS. It would be helpful if you could ask your respective department's admin staff for the modules previously mapped by seniors and check if these modules are still offered by the SEP partner University.

For Chalmers, most (90%) of courses offered in English are of Masters level. You may be lucky to find one or two relevant undergraduate courses depending on which Semester you spend there. As a technological University, it may not be possible for you to find a suitable module to be mapped as your “breadth” or Arts General Elective module.
Step 2: Preparing to go to Chalmers

1. Air ticket and Visa
Once you have been allocated to Chalmers for your SEP, check out the air tickets first so you can book the cheapest flight over. I got mine about 3 months before I left for Sweden and most of the tickets were already sold out. If you are not familiar with Sweden, please make sure that the airport you are flying to is Gothenburg Landvetter airport. Do not fly to Stockholm and try to get to Chalmers from there.

As you will be in Europe for more than 3 months, you need to apply for a visa (resident permit). It costs about S$215 depending on the exchange rate. If you are staying expecting to stay in Europe (study + travel) for 6 months, it would be good to state a 7 months period in your visa application. Just in case you decide to extend your stay, you need not apply for an extension in Sweden which will cost you another S$215.

The Swedish Embassy is at the Singapore Power Building (as of 2007) near Youth Park. They only open from 9am to 12noon so please be there at the right time. Remember to bring your passport, Chalmers acceptance letter, and other documents they might need. Check the website.

2. Money
Sweden uses the Swedish Kronas (SEK). The exchange rate is about 1SGD : 4.5SEK. Many money changers in Singapore do not have Swedish Kronas. You can try Suntec or Mustafa. For better exchange rates, you can consider contacting seniors who have been to Sweden the previous semesters.

It is sufficient to bring about 10000SEK over and about S$2000. Exchange rates are better in Sweden when you are buying Swedish Kronas. You can check the exchange rate in the Forex website. If you are planning to travel to other parts of Europe, you might want to get a Citibank account so that you can get the home currency from Citibank ATMs. Citibank is not present in Sweden. You can check their website to see which countries they are present.

3. Accommodation
Remember to contact whoever is in charge of your accommodation to inform him/her of your arrival date and approximate time. Allocation is based on a first-come-first-serve basis, so you might consider going over earlier to get to choose your preferred room.

Most Singaporean students stay in Rotary which costs 3200SEK per month, with a personal WC and shower, and is just a 10 minutes walk away from campus (Johannesburg). I stayed in an apartment in Medicinaregatan with 2 friends. It is two tram stops away from campus (about 20 minutes walk) and costs 5100SEK. We had our own WC, shower and kitchen.
Step 3: Staying in Sweden

1. Getting a local prepaid card
For students going in Semester 2, there are no orientation programs. When school starts, you can go to the student union building and get a free prepaid card with 25SEK value for all international students. When you top-up your card, it is good to top up the lowest amount available as they usually have a first month special like free SMS/calls to subscribers of the same provider.

2. Transportation
Like all European cities, transportation around the cities is by zones. You would usually only need to travel within zone 2. If you pay by cash, it costs 20SEK per trip. Here are your alternative options:

   - 100SEK prepaid transportation card. Each trip costs 14.5SEK within zone 2 and lasts for 1 hour.
   - 995SEK quarterly student transportation card for unlimited travel within zone 2.

3. Groceries
The cheapest supermarket in Gothenburg is Willy's. There is one small Willy's near campus and another big one further away. You have to take tram no. 2 or 4 to that one. The same products are cheaper at the bigger outlet. Near the big Willy's outlet, you'll see ICA which has selected products on offer each week. You can apply for the ICA card to buy the offer items. The ICA card works like the NTUC link card which accumulates points but you will not be able to use the points because you do not have a personal number (like Singapore's NRIC number).

Plastic bags are not free. Its cost varies with size and type. You might consider bringing some plastic bags over and remember to carry them with you wherever you go. Just in case you decide to buy something.

All supermarkets are closed on Sundays and only open for half a day on Saturdays. Try not to do your grocery shopping on weekends and late in the evenings.

4. Studying in Chalmers
Sweden’s education system works in quarters instead of semesters. The recommended workload is to take 2 modules each quarter. Most of their modules are worth 5 MCs each. Please check [http://www.eng.nus.edu.sg/sep/mapping.htm](http://www.eng.nus.edu.sg/sep/mapping.htm) for module mapping approvals.

Chalmers has 2 campuses, one at Lindholmen and the other at Johannesburg. The Lindholmen campus is their IT University. Remember to check the venue of your classes before you register for them. The 2 campuses are connected by bus no. 16. You can purchase a special transport pass for unlimited travels on that bus route if you need to travel between the two campuses.
Examinations are 4 hours long and you are allowed to bring food and drinks in. If you are well-accommodated to NUS’s 2 hours long examinations, you can leave the examinations hall anytime after the first hour.

If you have to do group projects, I’d suggest you do with fellow exchange students instead of Masters students earning their degree there. I had my first 13 hours project meeting in Chalmers when we actually went through the grammar in every single sentence of our project report.

There are very few canteens on campus and they are usually packed during the lunch hours. Food is not cheap as well. The cheapest lunch set is available at the student union building at 35SEK per set. It is common for students to pack lunches to school and there are plenty of student lounges with microwave ovens and other kitchen appliances for students to cook their lunch.

5. Shopping and entertainment

Gothenburg is proud for having the largest shopping centre and shopping street in Scandinavia. Almost all the trams and buses will pass by these streets. Anyway, the shopping centre is called Nordstan and you can ask anyone in Gothenburg about it. It would be good for you to visit Nordstan when you first arrive as there is a tourist information booth there. You can ask them about the tourist spots and other information you might need. There is also a theatre by the sea called the Goteborg Operan but unless you understand Swedish, this place of interest might not be entertaining for you.

There is an amusement park in Gothenburg as well. However, it only opens in Spring and Summer. It is called Liseberg and you can check their opening times online. Like all European cities, Gothenburg also has its share of museums and cathedrals which you might be interested in visiting.

If you are a nocturnal creature, you may not be satisfied with the nightlife in Sweden. However, there are a few pubs which are open till midnight and are relatively popular among students. You can get more information from the local and/or fellow exchange students. Some pubs offer free dinner every Friday when you buy a drink from them.

Step 4: Traveling around

1. Transportation from one city to another

For air travel, you can check the skyscanner website for cheap airlines. If you intend to visit Finland, you can take a train to Stockholm and take the cruise over. There are also affordable cruises to the Baltic states. Travel by rail is the most convenient means of transportation in Europe. You can check out the Eurail passes available if you are willing to travel by rail from country to country.
2. Hostels
You might consider getting the Hostelling International Card in Singapore and bring it over with you. It will give you discounts when you stay in Youth Hostels in the various countries. Buying it in Singapore is cheaper than buying it abroad. It is good to ask friends and seniors who have gone backpacking in Europe for advice on hostels.

Step 5: Coming home
Lastly, if you need to change the return date of your air ticket, call the European branch of your airline. Based on my friends’ experiences, the Singapore office will charge for each change but not the European branch.

Have fun during your SEP! Don’t miss out on this chance of a lifetime! J

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