

Noah Mergendahl

UMEÅ, SWEDEN



Noah's Major: Linguistics & Scandinavian Studies, European Studies certificate

Year/Term Abroad: Academic Year 2008-2009

Academics: I directly enrolled at Umeå University and took courses in English alongside Swedish students and fellow international students. The typical class size was about 15-20 students. The Swedish university atmosphere is informal and laid-back. Students are usually on a first-name basis with their professors, and critical analysis through class discussion is highly encouraged.

Most Memorable Moment: One of the most memorable experiences from my time abroad in Sweden took place as part of my Sami history course at Umea University. Some other international students and I assisted the Sami people (indigenous peoples of Sweden) with their winter reindeer herding in northern Sweden. To see thousands upon thousands of reindeer was a striking example of both the beauty and the fury of nature and an experience that I will never forget.

Biggest Cultural Difference: Swedish people in general are more reserved and harder to get to know at first. The extremely outgoing nature of Americans can be hard to swallow for some Swedes, but not to worry. Swedes are extremely friendly overall, and almost the entire population speaks English. Don't give up on trying to make friends! Young Swedes enjoy meeting international students; they are just a little shy at first.

Advice to students considering study abroad: Unfortunately, Sweden is often overlooked when American students consider study abroad locations. However, it has an extremely positive reputation globally, and it is an amazing place for a young person to be. In addition, Umeå is a lively university city, and over 500 international students study at the university every semester. The fact that the city is driven in many ways by the university's presence creates an extremely positive environment for young people. It is a great place to be year-round.



Noah attended the IAP Exchange Program with Umea University.

“Studying abroad has made me a more globally aware individual and is such a unique experience. I would do it again in a heartbeat!”