

Study in Sweden

Sweden introduces tuition fees and offers scholarships for students from outside EU/EEA

by: Studyinsweden.se

The Swedish parliament has passed a law outlining tuition and application fees for students not from an EU/EEA country or Switzerland. These fees will apply from the 2011/2012 academic year but will be supplemented by scholarship programs.

More information on fees can now be found in the section [Fees and costs](#).

Up until now, Sweden has been one of the few countries in Europe that has not charged any types of fees. All students—regardless of nationality—have been funded by Swedish taxpayers. Global competition for talent is increasing sharply and the government wants Swedish universities to compete on equal terms with universities in other countries. In the last decade, the number of foreign students has more than tripled, totaling 36,000 in 2008/2009. The government now wants to reallocate some of this money to award higher education institutions that show particular excellence.



Photo: [Hans Bjurling/Image Bank Sweden](#)

As a member of the European Union, the rules for Swedes also apply to citizens of other EU or EEA countries, and Switzerland. Exchange students are also exempt from fees, as their studies are regulated by agreements between Swedish and foreign universities. Thus, the new rules apply only to free movers from outside the EU/EEA studying at the bachelor's or master's level. PhD programs will continue to be tuition-free.

As these non-EU/EEA students add value to the Swedish educational system and are an attractive talent base, the government will introduce two scholarship programs. These scholarships will be available to bachelor's and master's students.

Starting in 2011, one of the scholarship programs will be endowed with **SEK 30 million** per year, and is aimed at students from countries with which Sweden already has long-term development cooperations. These countries are **Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.**

Another scholarship program will be administered by universities directly and is open to all students from outside the EU/EEA. The budget will be SEK 30 million (€ 3 million) for 2011, and will be increased to SEK 60 million for 2012.

This will give qualified students who lack the appropriate funding the continued opportunity to study in Sweden. Additionally, foreign students subject to fees and with a residence permit of at least one year would be fully insured through the national health care system.

Moreover, the Swedish government recently introduced more liberal labor migration laws, making it much easier to move to Sweden for work—or stay in Sweden after studies. Students that have a job when their student permit expires can easily change this into a work permit. Also, there is no set quota for work permits for foreign citizens.

Below, we have collected what you should know about the new rules.

FAQ

Tuition and application fees

- Why is Sweden planning to introduce tuition fees?

A vast majority of the European Union's member countries charge tuition fees and the Swedish government wants Swedish higher education institutions to compete on equal terms. Also, the government wants to use some of the money that today finances foreign students' fees to award institutions that have shown particular excellence. In the long run, this will make Swedish higher education even more attractive in the increasing global competition.

- Will students who begin two-year studies in 2010 have to pay fees in their second year?

No, students who start a program before tuition fees are introduced will be able to complete their studies according to the rules of the old system.

- Will the fees apply to exchange students?

No, those students who take part in an exchange between a Swedish university and university in their home country will not be subject to Swedish tuition fees.

- How high will tuition fees be?

The fees will be set by the institutions themselves. They will cover the full cost of studies. Therefore the fee levels may vary depending on the type of course and institution, and in what part of Sweden the course is given. *See our information about **fees and costs.***

- Will there be application fees?

For students from outside the EU/EEA and Switzerland, there will be an application fee of **SEK 900** starting with autumn semester 2011.

- When will tuition fees need to be paid?

When applying for a residence permit for studies before coming to Sweden, students need to have paid at least for the first semester of their studies. As before, students need to show that they can support themselves during their stay in Sweden, see next question for details.

- What is the **cost of living** in Sweden?

The amount of money that you need to have to cover your cost of living is **SEK 7,300** per month. This amount is set by the Swedish Migration Board and you will need to show that you can cover this cost for the duration of your study permit.

- What will be the total cost for studying in Sweden?

The total cost will be one to three years of tuition fees (depending on the study program), plus one to three years of the required amount to cover your living expenses, i.e. **SEK 73,000** per year (calculated for ten months).

- Why don't students from EU countries have to pay fees?

Higher education in Sweden is funded by taxes and is therefore free for Swedish citizens. As a member of the European Union, the rules for Swedes also apply to citizens of other EU countries.

Scholarships

- Will there be scholarships?

Yes, the government plans to introduce a scholarship program for students from 12 developing countries (Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia) alongside a second scholarship program that is not geographically limited. As soon as more information is available it will be posted here.

Studying in Sweden

- How can I study for a **PhD**?

Gaining admission to PhD programs in Sweden is very competitive. Studying for a master's degree in Sweden gives you a chance to show that you can excel in your studies, which will make it easier for you to gain admission to a PhD program at a Swedish university.

- What is the language of instruction?

Most courses are taught in Swedish. However, a large number of courses and programs at master's level are taught entirely in English because institutions want to be able to attract foreign as well as national students.

Working

- Can I work in Sweden after my studies?

This depends very much on the subject you have studied. Students that have a job when their student permit expires can easily change this into a work permit. Also, there is no set quota for work permits for foreign citizens. See the current [labor shortage list](#) to find out which skills are in demand.

- Will I be able to [work during my studies](#) to cover some of the cost?

Yes, you are allowed to work alongside your studies. Please note, however, that for the visa application, you will need to show that you have sufficient funding to cover your living expenses for the duration of your study permit, excluding the summer break (SEK 7,300 per month, during the semester, i.e. SEK 73,000 per year). In other words, you cannot rely on being able to work alongside your studies to cover your living expenses.

Fees and costs

Knowing what costs await you can help you prepare and budget for your studies. Here we've collected the most common costs.

Tuition and application fees

Tuition fees apply to students who are not citizens of the EU, EEA or Switzerland. The fees apply only to bachelor's and master's programs and courses, while PhD programs are tuition-free. Universities set their own fees, and these vary between [SEK 80,000-140,000](#) per academic year for most subjects. However, programs in the fields of medicine and art have notably higher fees. The fee for the [Studera.nu](#) application to Swedish universities and colleges for fee paying students has been set to [SEK 900](#).

At the same time, scholarships are also available. The Swedish Institute (publisher of [Studyinsweden.se](#)) administers several of these. More information is available [here](#). Additionally, Swedish universities will offer scholarships directly to non-EU/EEA students from autumn 2011.

Nota bene: The above fees only apply to citizens of countries outside the EU, EEA and Switzerland, and if these students are not part of a bilateral agreement or exchange between universities. You can read more about in which cases fees are applicable at [Studera.nu](#).

Student union fees

Students usually join the local student union and pay a membership fee. Fees range from [SEK 50-350](#) per semester, depending on the union.

Literature and textbooks

The required reading is often extensive and students usually have to buy their own books as library copies are limited. Teachers also prepare and hand out their own compendiums.

On average, students can expect to spend [SEK 750](#) per month on books in an academic term. With some subjects such as law and natural sciences, this figure is likely to be higher. Many student unions organize book sales where students can buy used textbooks cheaply.

Living expenses

In addition to university fees, you will need to cover your [living expenses](#) during your study period, which amount to approximately [SEK 7,300](#) per month. This is a requirement for acquiring a [residence permit](#).

Waiting times for a decision

First-time applications

The Swedish Migration Board makes decisions about residence permits for studies within three months from the date that a Swedish mission abroad has received your application. In some cases the waiting time can be longer because we need to supplement or investigate your application further.

Extensions

The Migration Board needs to give priority to applications from students abroad. Therefore, you may have to wait for a decision if you are applying for an extension of your permit. Once you have submitted your application you may stay in Sweden until you have received your decision.

We will give you a decision within approximately four months. In some cases the waiting time can be longer because we need to supplement or investigate your application further.

Priority

Applications for permits are dealt with in application date order. In principle we do not grant any priorities, and cannot give you priority even though your education will start soon or you already have bought a ticket. Our priority is to make decisions upon first-time cases and it may therefore take some time before you get an answer on an e-mail request.

Fees

You must pay a fee when you apply for a Swedish residence permit for studies.

You must pay the fee, regardless of where you apply for your permit. The fee will not be refunded, regardless of whether your application is granted or rejected. As a rule, the fee is the same whether you are applying for the first time or applying to extend your permit.

Permit for studies	
	Fee
Adult	SEK 1,000
Child under the age of 18	SEK 500
Permit for relatives of persons who are applying for, or already have, a temporary permit for studies	
	Fee
Adult	SEK 1,000
Child under the age of 18	SEK 500
Permits for persons with long-term resident status in another EU country	

	Fee
Adult	SEK 1,000
Child under the age of 18	SEK 500

Payment for application at embassy or consulate

If you apply for a residence permit at an embassy or consulate, you pay the fee when you apply. The Migration Board and Swedish missions abroad do not adhere to exactly the same fee regulations. Further information can be obtained from the embassy or consulate to which you are submitting your application.

Payment on the Migration Board's website

If you apply on our website you must pay the fee at the same time as you apply. You can pay with credit cards or directly via certain Swedish Internet banks. For more information, we refer to our electronic applications.

Application to extend a permit

You pay either in person at one of the Migration Board's permit units or via plusgiro. If you pay via plusgiro, it is important to state the first and last names of the person to whom the application fee relates as well as their personal ID number and/or case number in the "Message to payment recipient [*Meddelande till betalningsmottagaren*]" box. If the fee is for several persons, then you must state all relevant personal ID numbers and/or case numbers.

Plusgiro number

The number of the Migration Board's plusgiro account for work and residence permits is 95 78 46-9. This postgiro account is also for family members of those who are applying for or who already have these permits.

State on your application form the method by which you paid the fee. Also state the date on which you paid it and enclose the receipt.

Exceptions

Not all applicants are required to pay the application fee. The following persons may apply for a residence and/or work permit without paying a fee:

- Family members of EU/EEA citizens
- EU/EEA citizens applying for a residence permit
- Citizens of Switzerland and their family members
- Citizens of Japan
- Students at the World Maritime University in Malmö
- Students who have been awarded scholarships by Sida or other Swedish or international organisations such as the EU or UNICEF.

If you are a citizen in a EU/EEA country, special rules apply; see page for EU citizens.

For studies that are shorter than three months, citizens in certain countries must have an entry visa; see link in the right column.

Residence permits for studies are temporary and can not lead to a permanent residence permit. Even if your stay has lasted for several years, you will normally not be allowed to reside in Sweden.

Those who receive a residence permit will be given a residence permit card. The card is proof of your residence permit. When you enter Sweden, you must therefore show your card along with a valid passport.

Requirements to be granted a residence permit

To be granted a residence permit you must intend to study and:

- be admitted to full-time studies
- be able to support yourself for the planned study period
- have comprehensive health insurance that covers the whole period you are in Sweden if you plan to study for less than one year
- have a valid passport.

You must be able to support yourself

You must show that you have funds for the whole of the planned study period the first time you apply for a residence permit. You must show that you have your support secured by means of verification of personal bank assets, a scholarship or similar means of support, such as a foreign study grant. You must enclose a bank statement showing that you have your own bank assets available in an account belonging to you. If you have a scholarship you must present a certificate proving this. We do not accept that a sponsor (such as a relative or a company) supports you during your stay in Sweden.

The support requirement is at present a minimum of 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. (See fact box below.)

If you can prove, for example, that you have free accommodation and/or food, this monthly figure can drop. The monthly amount drops by SEK 1,500 per month for free food and by SEK 1,500 per month for free accommodation.

Applying for a residence permit

You apply at a Swedish embassy or consulate in the country you are living in. You must use the form *Application for residence permit for students and doctoral students*, no. 105031.

In order for the Migration Board to be able to issue a residence permit card, you will be photographed and will need to submit fingerprints in connection with:

- submitting your application *or*
- when you receive your residence permit.

If you are citizen of a country whose citizens do not require a visa to enter Sweden you can apply online (see link in the right hand column). This also applies to family members who are applying with you. Chinese citizens can also use this electronic service if they personally can visit the Swedish embassy in Beijing.

Make sure your application is complete

Make sure that you answer all questions in the questionnaire on the application form. You must also enclose all necessary documents so that your application is complete, otherwise there is a risk that the processing of your application will be delayed and you will not receive a decision in time.

Enclose the following documents with your application:

- copies of the pages of your passport that show your identity, the validity period of your passport and whether you have permits to be in countries other than your native country
- two photographs in passport format, taken from the front and that are not more than six months old

- a certificate stating that you have been admitted to full-time study.
- if permission is required from a central bank or equivalent to move money out of your country, you must enclose the relevant certificate with your application
- receipt of paid application fee
- copy of the document that proves you have comprehensive health insurance that is valid in Sweden if you plan to study for less than one year.

In addition, you must enclose one or more documents proving you can support yourself:

- a bank statement showing that you have your own funds to support yourself (in English)
- a document showing that you have been awarded a scholarship or similar (such as a foreign study grant) with details of the amount and the period during which you will receive the money
- a document showing that you have been awarded a study grant or a wage (applies to doctoral students) with details of the amount and the period during which you will receive the money.

Check the requirements of Swedish missions abroad

Note that the embassy or consulate where you submit your application may require additional documents. You will find more information and contact information on the website of the relevant embassy. Click on the link in the right column to find the appropriate embassy.

If you are granted a residence permit

The decision will be sent to the embassy or consulate where you applied or that you specified when you applied via the website. If you have not previously been photographed and had your fingerprints taken, you will need to visit the embassy to do so. Once the residence permit card is ready, the embassy or consulate will issue, or in certain cases send, the card to you.

Application fee

Most people have to pay an application fee; see page on fees. If your application is refused, your money will not be returned. You must also pay a fee when you apply for an extension to your permit.

You may work

You may work over the same period as the residence permit. You do not need a special work permit.

Permit validity period

For studies that last longer than one year, you will be granted a residence permit covering one year at a time. You must then apply for an extended residence permit. If the period of study is less than one year you will be granted a residence permit which is valid for the length of the study period. If you need to stay longer, e.g. because you need to resit an exam, you can apply for an extension to your residence permit.

Extending a permit

Here you can read about how to apply for

We can cancel your permit

The Swedish Migration Board can cancel your residence permit if, for example, after entering Sweden:

- you have not commenced studies at the place of learning
- you discontinue your studies
- you do not satisfy the support requirement
- you deliberately provide incorrect information.

You then risk being deported from Sweden.

Permits for family members

Your husband/wife, common law spouse and unmarried children under 18 are eligible for residence permits for the same period as you providing their support is secured. The support requirement for the entire period of stay is SEK 3,500 per month for a husband/wife or common law spouse and SEK 2,100 per month for each child. (See fact box below.)

When your family applies for residence permits, they must use the application form *Application by co-applicants to students/doctoral students (DB)*, no. 135011. With their application your family members must also enclose documents that prove their family relationship. Your family members cannot apply on-line the first time they apply. They can not apply on-line even if this may be in connection with you extending your permit.

They will be granted residence permits for the same period as you. They are, however, not permitted to work.

Important to remember

People who stay in Sweden for a period that is shorter than one year are not entitled to the same welfare benefits as those who reside here. It is therefore important that you and your family have good insurance cover when you travel to Sweden.

Examples of support requirements

Study period	You must have at least	Your husband, wife or common law spouse must have at least	Support requirement per child
5 months	SEK 36,500 kronor (5 x SEK 7,300)	SEK 21,000 (5 x SEK 3,500)	SEK 10,500 (5 x SEK 2,100)
12 months	SEK 73,000 (10 x SEK 7,300)	SEK 42,000 (12 x SEK 3,500)	SEK 25,200 (12 x SEK 2,100)
18 months	SEK 109,500 (15 x SEK 7,300)	SEK 63,000 (18 x SEK 3,500)	SEK 25,200 (18 x SEK 2,100)