

National EMN Conference 2012: Entry
and stay of international students
Stockholm, April 18, 2012

**How attractive is
Sweden as a
destination for talent?**

The Swedish Institute

a public agency that helps Sweden achieve it's international objectives in foreign policy, development cooperation, and education policy



The Swedish Institute

- Fosters intercultural relations through meetings, exchanges and creation of networks
- Staff of 110 with offices in Stockholm, Visby and Paris
- Annual government funding of approx. SEK 300 million (approx. €35 million)

Talent mobility

- Mission from Ministry of Education to promote Sweden as a study destination - focus on attracting "the best" students
- Mission from Ministry of Justice to promote new labour migration laws

Interaction with talent, not only attraction of talent

How is talent defined?

Students, researchers and professionals (from other countries) that are sought by universities and employers in Sweden

International students in Sweden

Strong growth in first decade of 21st century – 300 percent in 10 years

Driving factors

- Difficulty in recruiting to STEM-subjects
- Increasing availability of English-taught courses at Swedish HEIs
- Increased global demand for higher education



International Students in Sweden

- But Sweden a small player in global education market
- Introduction of full-cost fees for non EU-students led to 70 per cent decline...
- ...but increase in admissions for second year with fees



What (do we think) are Sweden's attractive features?

- Strong focus on innovation and research
- Strong focus on individual development and independent thinking
- Relatively high number of reputable universities
- Highest number of global companies per capita
- Internationalised society, English very widely spoken

And

- Safe country
- Good reputation - where we are known
- High standards of living and high quality of life
- Good marks on indices of democracy, gender equality, environmental awareness etc.

Research on International Students

- Swedish Institute and Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2007
- Swedish Institute, 2008
- Several surveys in China, India and Russia in 2008, 2009 och 2010
- 2010, International Student Barometer with 16 Swedish universities and university colleges (i-graduate)
- 2011, International Student Barometer with 14 Swedish universities and university colleges (i-graduate)

International Student Barometer

- Run by i-graduate, British company specialised in international student surveys
- Questions on arrival, quality of education, housing, support, willingness to recommend, application process and choice of country and institution
- Anonymity guaranteed
- Not a ranking!
- Why important? Students communicate all the time!

International Student Barometer 2011

- 209 422 international students from 238 universities in 16 countries (incl UK, Germany, Netherlands, US, Ireland, Italy, Australia, Singapore, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Canada)
- Approx 8500 international students at 14 HEIs in Sweden responded to the survey
- Results at institution compared to national and international benchmark
- This was the first survey in Sweden which included fee-paying students

Was there a difference in response between the two groups, ie fee-paying and non-fee-paying?

Sl.

So what do the students tell us?

*The barriers for entry into
Swedish society are too high!*

Where is Sweden better?

	Sweden	ISB	Difference
Internet access	87%	76%	11%
Transport access	91%	81%	10%
Safety	96%	88%	8%

Where is Sweden worse?

	Sverige	ISB	Skillnad
Opportunities to make money	26%	46%	-20%
Bank accounts	58%	78%	-20%
Making friends	55%	72%	-17%
Opportunities to get work experience	50%	65%	-15%

How does Sweden fare at a general level?

Sweden	2011 vs 2010		ISB
38 %	+ 2 %	I would actively encourage people to apply	33 %
43 %	- 2 %	If asked, I would encourage people to apply	47 %
14 %	- 1 %	I would neither encourage nor discourage people to apply	15 %
4 %	+/- 0	If asked, I would discourage people from applying	3 %
1 %	+/- 0	I would actively discourage people from applying	1 %

Average number of days from application to admission

Level	Sweden	ISB
Master	65 days	43 days
Bachelor	53 days	45 days
Other	47 days	40 days

Summary of results

- Despite introduction of fees satisfaction rates of Swedish HEIs are on benchmark
- *But*, increased integration with national students is needed
- Connection to employers and working life need to be improved
- Sweden is comparatively expensive
- Too little funding/scholarships
- Difficult to open bank account
- Slow process to handle applications

Some other external barriers

- Legal framework that regulates how HEIs are allowed to recruit and how they can charge fees
- Barriers for applying to study permit for students from some countries

No coherent national policy on attracting students/talent

In sum

- Sweden has potential as a study destination...
 - Strong focus on innovation and research
 - Internationalised country, English spoken widely

BUT

- Many barriers remain. Sweden does not quite see itself as a country that needs foreign talent in order to continue to prosper...