

Shippensburg University

Exchange semester	Autumn semester 2025
Study level	Undergraduate (Bachelor)
Home faculty at GU	Faculty of Social Sciences
Studies at GU	kandidatprogram geografi

Courses during exchange

- Applied Weather & Climate
- Mineral & Rock Res
- Community & Land Use Planning
- GIS2: Intermediate
- Geog of US and Can

Studies

The biggest difference compared to studying at the University of Gothenburg was the pace of the studies. In the United States, the study tempo is significantly higher, with more continuous assignments and assessments throughout the semester.

Another major difference was the relationship with the lecturers. Since classes were smaller and I had the same instructors for the entire term, the learning experience felt more personal and individualized. This made it easier to engage in discussions, ask questions, and receive direct feedback.

Arrival, orientation and housing

My arrival went smoothly, and I felt well supported from the start. The international office and student mentors helped with practical matters such as housing, registration, and orientation, which made the transition much easier.

During the first weeks, I focused on getting to know the campus, my classmates, and the local area. Since the university community was welcoming and the campus was relatively small, it was easy to settle in and feel comfortable quite quickly. Overall, the structured introduction and supportive environment made my adjustment both smooth and positive.

Finances

Compared to living and studying at the University of Gothenburg, the living costs felt more predictable and manageable. Living on campus and having a prepaid meal plan

helped simplify everyday expenses and made budgeting easier.

Since housing and food were largely covered through fixed costs, I did not have to worry as much about monthly variations in rent or grocery expenses, which made daily life more convenient and financially stable during my studies.

Life in a new country/culture

Besides the studies, my exchange experience was mixed. While the campus environment was friendly and the student community was welcoming, the geographical location was unfortunately quite isolated. There were limited opportunities to travel to other parts of the country without having access to a car or friends who were willing to drive.

For example, traveling by bus and train to Washington, D.C. could take around ten hours, whereas the same trip by car took approximately two hours. Additionally, the nearby airports had a limited number of flights and relatively high prices for domestic travel. This made spontaneous travel more difficult and reduced the possibilities to explore the country outside the immediate area.

Overall exchange experience

Overall, my exchange experience was valuable but also challenging. The university's isolated location combined with the high study pace made the exchange feel somewhat more limited and less enriching than expected.

Since opportunities to travel and explore other parts of the country were restricted, and a significant amount of time had to be devoted to keeping up with coursework, many weekends were spent studying rather than experiencing new places and cultures. As a result, the exchange felt more academically intense but less socially and culturally expansive than I had initially anticipated.

On the positive side, the quality of the education and the lecturers was very high. In particular, all of my courses within the Earth Science department were highly rewarding and well structured, which made the academic part of the exchange both meaningful and professionally valuable.