

IMPORTANT FACTS 1

Important Facts 1

For applicants to the one-year exchange

Stiftelsen Rotarys Ungdomsutbyte i Sverige & Lettland

One-year exchange

www.rotarystudent.se

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in Rotary's one-year exchange programme. Rotary offers safe, high-quality exchanges, with a great deal of voluntary commitment behind every student.

This booklet contains everything you need in order to apply. Read it carefully and keep it at hand while you complete your application. If you have questions, you are always welcome to contact us.

Rotary runs youth exchange activities because we want to make a concrete contribution to greater understanding and tolerance between people from different countries, cultures and religions.

It is Rotary's goal that inbound exchange students are looked after in their host country in such a way that genuine friendships are formed, and that they return home with an understanding of the host country and its culture.

During the exchange year, students are expected to attend school, learn the local language, study the host country's society and culture, and also share something of their own country's culture and values.

Stiftelsen Rotarys Ungdomsutbyte i Sverige & Lettland (which we abbreviate **RU**) is responsible for administration, information and certain shared activities. Sweden and Latvia have **six Rotary districts** (2325, 2335, 2355, 2365, 2395 and 2405), with the Latvian clubs belonging to district 2405. The districts cooperate through what is known as a multidistrict (≈RU) to simplify the administration of your application and give you better service.

To apply for an exchange year you need the support of a Rotary club. This is then called your **sponsor club**. You can find a list of all Rotary clubs at **www.rotary.se**. The sponsor club interviews you and your family, prepares you for departure and hosts an inbound student in your town. Together with RU and the person responsible in the district (the district chair), the club forms the network that makes the exchange year safe. Much of the work is done by volunteers, which is also why the programme fees can be kept relatively low.

Please note

You are applying to a complete programme. When you accept, you accept all parts of it. Among other things, that means you and your family help the Rotary club find host families for the inbound student who comes to your town during the exchange. You also commit to following all the applicable rules and guidelines – you will be trained in these before your exchange year.

Who can apply?

The programme is open to you if you are between **15 and 18 years old** during the exchange year. Your parents do not need to be Rotary members. The exact age limits are set by year of birth and vary between countries:

Age limits	
Australia & New Zealand	born 2010 or 2011
USA & Canada	born 15 Aug 2009 – 31 Dec 2011
Other countries	born 2009, 2010 or 2011

If you started school a year earlier than usual, you must not have graduated before departure – several countries do not accept students who have already finished upper-secondary school.

Motivation

You must want to go yourself – not because your parents think you should, or because your friends are going. An exchange year is not a holiday. You will grow and learn a language and a new culture, but you will also meet new customs, laws and people you need to adapt to. Be curious and open-minded, and the year will be a wonderful experience.

Your health

You must be in good health, both physically and mentally. The application therefore includes a **medical and dental examination**, carried out by a licensed doctor and dentist. A **TB test** (tuberculosis screening) is mandatory and must be done before you submit your application. Be completely honest about your health – known problems that are not correctly documented can have serious consequences, not least for the insurance.

If you are vegetarian or have food allergies, state this in the application and in the “Vegetarian or Allergic” appendix. Note that students with special dietary needs are harder to place.

Languages

Beyond English, prior knowledge is rarely required, with a few exceptions: **Belgium and France** require French from year 7, and **German-speaking Switzerland and Austria** require German. For the **USA**, a certificate from your teacher confirming that your English is sufficient for an exchange year is required. In other countries you learn the language on site, but try to learn the basics before you leave – it makes the start much easier. There are several good apps and tools online that can help you.

School grades and a backup plan

You should have passing grades and find it easy to connect with others. If you are in year 9 when you apply, you should still apply to upper-secondary school – a lot can happen, and it is good to have a backup plan.

Hosting a student

Our programmes are based on reciprocity: a young person goes abroad and we host an inbound student. We recommend that every family whose son or daughter goes on exchange with Rotary also hosts an inbound student in their home at the same time. This is not a requirement, but our programmes are built on an exchange, meaning that while you are abroad an inbound student will be placed in your town. That student needs up to three host families. Your family will have a wonderful year, and become more involved in your exchange year, by being a host family. If you can take on that role, it increases the chances that you can take part in our exchange programme.

If your family cannot be a host family yourselves, we expect you to help us with contacts to find host families.

The requirements placed on a host family are as follows:

- The host family must ensure the student can take part in school activities and social life.
- The student should be offered regular time together, shared meals and other family activities.
- The host family may not host two exchange students at the same time.
- The student should not do more chores at home than the rest of the family.
- The student must not be used as an au pair.
- The student should be provided a suitable place for schoolwork.
- The student should have their own bed.
- If the student shares a room, it must be with someone of the same sex and roughly the same age.

Read more about being a host family at **www.rotarystudent.se**.

Countries and placement

In the registration you give **three country choices**, at least one of which is a European country within the EU/Schengen area. You may write a country even if it is not listed, but always give three options. We decide the final destination together, based on your wishes and the places available. We reserve the right to make the final placement of country and district.

Unfortunately we cannot accommodate requests for a particular town, school, family or the chance to play a specific sport (although we do try to match hobbies and interests). Most Swedish students are placed in smaller towns (500–5,000 inhabitants), and it is the Rotary districts abroad that decide the placement entirely. You usually live with **two to three host families** during the year, all of whom volunteer.

In principle you can go to any country in the world. The only requirement we set is that the country is certified by Rotary International under our shared system.

Costs and payment

Fees	
Registration fee	SEK 1,000 – paid on application, non-refundable
Programme fee, Europe	65 000 kr
Programme fee, other countries	75 000 kr

The registration fee is paid to RU's **Swish 123 628 33 94** together with the application – state your name and address. The programme fee includes insurance, a blazer, business cards, a bag/backpack and other equipment that shows you are an exchange student. You pay for the journey yourself (more information on that is in the Viktiga Fakta 2 document).

Payment schedule

Instalment	Share	Due
1 (called the enrolment fee)	15 %	when you accept participation
2	25 %	30 Apr (July departure) / 31 May (Aug)
3 · Final payment	60 %	15 May (July departure) / 15 Jun (Aug)

A binding agreement between you and RU is formed when instalment 1 (the enrolment fee) has been paid. The programme fee is then invoiced by email in three instalments as above. Depending on circumstances beyond our control, payments may be postponed.

Cancellation

All cancellations must be made in writing. For cancellation without special reasons:

Time before departure	Fee
Earlier than 4 months	enrolment fee is retained
4–3 months	15 % of the programme fee
3–2 months	20 % of the programme fee
Within 2 months	25 % of the programme fee

If you or a close relative (parent/guardian or sibling) becomes seriously ill for a prolonged period, has an accident or dies and you therefore withdraw, RU only charges an administrative fee of 5 % of the programme fee. Whatever the reason, the programme fee cannot be refunded for an exchange that has begun but is then interrupted. In special cases compensation may be paid through the insurance.

Costs beyond the programme fee

- Return ticket, plus transport to and from the airport/travel hub

- Medical and dental examination and any vaccinations
- Visa costs (vary between countries)
- Pocket money and a reserve (contingency fund, usually equivalent to about €400)
- Any school uniform, language course, camps and travel abroad
- Gifts for host families and material about Sweden

You receive pocket money each month from your host club, but the amount varies between countries and districts. RU does not award scholarships – instead the exchange is subsidised by Rotarians in Sweden and usually in the host country too.

Rules

Rotary Youth Exchange is an exchange during upper-secondary school. You and your parents undertake to follow the programme's rules throughout the year – regardless of whether you turn 18 during the exchange. Read the rules in the application document carefully. Host districts may add their own provisions for you to sign in the spring before the exchange. The host country's interpretation of the rules applies.

The six D's

No Driving – no operating any motor vehicle

No Drugs – no use of drugs (prescribed medication is permitted)

No Drinking – no consumption of alcohol

No Dating – avoid steady relationships, as they can isolate you from others

No Decorating – no new tattoos or piercings during the exchange year

No Downloading – no illegal downloading

The first three prohibitions are absolute. Rule violations are handled with a yellow-card/red-card system, where a yellow card is a warning and a red card means you must return home immediately.

The six B – make the most of your year

- **Be first** – take the initiative and look around
- **Be curious**
- **Be on purpose** – be present
- **Be grateful** – remember to say thank you
- **Be of service** – help where you can
- **Be here now** – enjoy every day

If you follow these recommendations, you will have a great experience of your exchange year.

Travel during the exchange year

The exchange year is first and foremost a school year. Travel is allowed with your host family, to activities arranged by Rotary, or to school activities with adults present. All other travel must be approved in writing by the host district, host club, host family and your own family. As a rule you may not travel alone or only with other young people. Hitchhiking and interrailing are not permitted. Always check that the journey is covered by the insurance.

The exchange year in brief

You will receive detailed information about the year in the Viktiga Fakta 2 document. Here are the essentials already:

Visa and passport

You travel on a **student visa**. This is applied for in Sweden only once you have been placed in a club and school. Applying for the visa is your responsibility; RU provides guidance. Expect that your passport may need to be lodged at an embassy from about three months before departure. The passport must be valid for at least the whole exchange period – for some countries also for a while after your return.

Insurance

RU takes out a mandatory insurance policy approved by Rotary International and included in the programme fee. It provides full cover, including liability and property insurance and unlimited compensation for medical and dental care. Detailed information is sent to accepted students.

Travel and length of the exchange

Departures take place in July or August. Travel outside Europe is booked through **Tranås Resebyrå**. They have many years of experience with complex bookings and help many non-profit organisations with theirs, and RU has an agreement with them. Travel within Europe you can book yourself. For the southern hemisphere (Australia, New Zealand, South Africa) the exchange lasts twelve months; for other countries it lasts as long as school is in session and just over eleven months at most.

Study grant

As an exchange student you are not entitled to the Swedish study grant during the exchange year. For studies within the EU you may in some cases receive it – contact CSN.

Knowledge of Sweden

You are expected to be able to answer a wide range of questions about Sweden: history, our political system, economy, social legislation, school system, labour market, industry, music, art, authors, food traditions. Prepare to give talks about Sweden.

Knowledge of your destination country

You should familiarise yourself thoroughly with your destination country before you leave. Read up on the country's history, economy, politics, school system etc. – essentially the same kind of information you learn about Sweden. Also try to learn as much as possible of the country's language, if you do not already have some knowledge of it.

How to apply

Application deadline

We need your application by **30 November** at the latest.

Do the following:

1. **Read all of Viktiga Fakta 1** before you start.
2. **Complete and sign the registration form** on the website. Registration is digital and free. A contact person from the sponsor club contacts you for an interview. Afterwards you are told whether the club wants to and can sponsor you.
3. **Complete the application document**, generated automatically after registration. It is completed in **English**, on a computer in black text.
4. **Book the medical and dental examinations and the TB test** as early as possible – waiting times can be long. The examinations must follow the application form; other certificates are not accepted.
5. **Upload photos**: one passport photo and four other photos supporting your and your parents' personal letters.
6. **Pay the registration fee** of SEK 1,000 (Swish 123 628 33 94), by 30 November.
7. **Keep everything in a "Rotary binder"** where you file all the information you receive.

The application document is the only way we – both in Sweden and abroad – get to know you, so make it thorough and ask someone to proofread it. If you are accepted you receive a written offer from us, normally in February or March. Your placement is final only once a club and school abroad have accepted you and signed a **Guarantee Form (GF)**. Sometimes we may offer a different district, or even a different country, than the one first indicated.

Safety, certification and GDPR

Rotary International works for the safest possible environment for everyone taking part. Each participating Rotary district is certified and has undertaken to work according to an established code of conduct that safeguards the well-being of children and young people and prevents abuse. Everyone working with young people within Rotary, or acting as a host family, applies to be a volunteer in the youth programme and is certified by Rotary.

The information you provide in your application is processed in accordance with our data protection policy. Only those working with the youth exchange on our behalf have access to it – Rotary clubs, district chairs, Rotex, the travel agency and suppliers – and only the information they need. We may share your name and telephone number with other applicants, for example someone going to the same country.

Contact

Office	
Address	Stiftelsen Rotarys Ungdomsutbyte i Sverige & Lettland, c/o Högberg, Hasselstigen 78, 141 71 Segeltorp
Phone	+46 8-644 74 10 · weekdays 09.00–17.00
E-post	info@rotarystudent.se · www.rotarystudent.se

You can find further contact details, including district chairs and correspondents for different countries, at **www.rotarystudent.se/contact**.