

Masters Programme in Asian Studies, Lund University

- Two tracks: SAS & ESEAS
- Start 2003
- 60 students (15/45), 1,5 years, 90 ECTS
 - Find info on the web
 - Personal contacts=admission
- 2007: 2 years Bologna master



Masters Programme in Asian Studies, Lund University

- Why do South Asian students come to Sweden to study South Asian studies?



The program never tried to recruit South Asian students. Still half of the group come from South Asia.

- 1. To get a western perspective on South Asia**
- 2. They want to study in Europe and think that South Asian studies will be easier for them**
- 3. There are no similar programs in South Asia**

The Swedish Institute gives low priority to scholarship applications from South Asian students who come to Sweden to study South Asian studies.



Masters Programme in Asian Studies, Lund University

- Students come from Pakistan and Bangladesh. Few from the rest of South Asia
- English proficiency



Even though students have a documented proficiency in English (undergraduate degree in English, IELTS 6.0 or TOEFL 557/220) many of them do not master English well enough to write a paper.

Extra support is needed.



Masters Programme in Asian Studies, Lund University

- Admission dropout
- Fieldwork dropout
- Cut & paste
- Prejudice
- Lagging behind with exams



Admission dropout: Many of the admitted students do not show up, and never applied for a visa. Reasons: Could not find the funding, no available scholarships. Only one known instance when a student has used the program just to get a Schengen visa.

Fieldwork dropout: The third semester devoted to fieldwork and a course in India. South Asian students tend to drop out in the last minute. Reasons: 1. Could not find the funding to cover travel expenses. 2. Wanted to study in Europe. 3. Pakistani and Bangladeshi students say that they feel uncomfortable in India.

Students using the cut & paste model for papers and take home exams. Foreign students are overrepresented. Reasons: 1. Lack of self-confidence. 2. More lenient attitude to this model among teachers in South Asia. Solution: Paper writing workshops.

When dealing with decision-makers and officials I have sometimes come across a negative attitude to South Asian students, especially students from Pakistan and Bangladesh. They are considered among the least wanted students groups, giving the university a bad reputation. This is nonsense, of course, since the students who are admitted to the program are internationally competitive.



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- Admission
- Swedish visa bureaucracy



Admission

In the case of international masters programs it is the institution giving the program that makes the decision about admission. This causes a great deal of arbitrariness. Some people like to handpick students, not giving them a fair chance. Our program has tried to treat all application in the same way. Degree certificates and transcripts as well as English proficiency is checked by Lund University's Admission Office. We follow its recommendation to 100%.

Visa bureeaucracy

The Migration Board: Easy to work with

Swedish Embassies. Sometimes slowing down the visa process. Some cases where students have been treated badly.

The visa process tend to take a long time, 4 months not uncommon

