

# ETTELVA's guide for newly arrived architects



The background of the entire page is a detailed architectural floor plan. It shows various rooms, corridors, and structural elements in a black and white line-art style. A prominent cyan-colored horizontal bar is positioned at the top, containing the title 'PREFACE'.

# PREFACE

At ETTTELVA Arkitekter we're an assembly of architects from all over the world, some of us with the experience of being a newly arrived architect in Sweden.

We know how difficult it can be to find a job, housing or even a social context. Therefore, we have collected all the tips and advice we could imagine being of importance for any newly arrived architect facing the challenge of finding a way into the Swedish society.

We hope that this guide can be a small aid for those seeking a new job, a new home or a social context. The tips are based entirely on personal experiences.

In the first part of the guide, as a form of introduction, we share personal stories relating to how we ended up in Sweden.

In the second part of the guide, we have listed tips and recommendations. Finally, on the last page, you'll find a list of useful links.

We wish you all luck!

ETTELVA Arkitekter





## Lenka Batovska

My name is Lenka, I'm from Slovakia where I studied architecture. I came to Sweden for the first time as an Erasmus student.

My interest in Scandinavian design grew from my stay at the Slovakian architectural studio Furnier where I had an internship for two years. During this time we were hired by the Finnish developer YIT to design

and furnish a show-apartment. It was during this time I fell in love with Scandinavian brands, design and architecture.

The Erasmus study period confirmed for me that Sweden was a natural fit with my personality, even more so than I expected. Right after my graduation from the Slovak University of Technology I persuaded my sambo - also an architect - to move to Stockholm with me.

I travelled one month in advance of our planned move to re-establish contacts from my previous stay in Stockholm. Fortunately enough I met

a woman from the Czech Republic on the plane who was able to help me find accommodation the very next day via her Swedish friend.

In the process of finding a job we sent out hundreds of emails and visited dozens of architectural offices.

During Design Week we spent every evening visiting different studios talking with people from the design and architecture community. Both of us had been actively searching for jobs for two months before success came thanks to our friends and their personal recommendations.

## James Britton

My name is James Britton. I am from Nottingham, UK and studied architecture at Newcastle University for three years before I moved to Stockholm in 2013 to join the master's program at KTH.

I have been at ETELVA Arkitekter since November 2015.

I decided to continue my architectural education in Sweden to gain experience of a new country with a different perspective on architectural design. Up until now, my time in Stockholm has been fantastic. Adapting to a new culture and learning Swedish has been a real challenge, but the quality

of life is very high and the Swedish working environment has so many obvious advantages.

When I made the decision to stay and work in Sweden, the contacts I made at architecture school were enormously helpful.

During my final year I took the time to find out what working within the architectural profession in Sweden would be like and adapted my portfolio in response to what I learned.

I have worked at ETELVA Arkitekter for just over one year now and my time at the office has been really



positive and constructive.

Although I am a recent graduate I have lots of responsibility, and have had the opportunity to gain experience on live projects and have taken part in both local and international competition work.

## Yasser Sasa

My name is Yasser Sasa, I grew up in Abu-Dhabi and in Damascus. I studied architecture at the Damascus International University of Science and Technology.

I moved to Sweden in 2013 and have since worked for Millimeter Arkitekter and Fokus Arkitektur before my recent employment with ETELVA Arkitekter.

My early experiences in Sweden were quit tough. It was hard to find a job or internship, and everything was new to me. The building culture, the construction techniques and even building materials were entirely

different to what I was familiar with in Syria.

My strategy was to take on one thing at a time, so I decided to focus on the Swedish language so that I could understand others and be understood. After a while I received an internship for six months which was followed by a full-time employment at Fokus Arkitektur in Märsta, where I still live today.

Over the last year I have picked up a few good contacts and built up experience of different types of project.

Slowly but surely I have learned



new things with each passing project in relation to building rules, regulations, processes and management.



My name is Ivana Komatina. Today I have a joint-citizenship and I work under the title 'Architect SAR/MSA' and I speak (almost) fluent Swedish. Yet things did not start out so easily.

I Moved to Gothenburg in 2010, to study at the architecture master's program at Chalmers Technical University. I made the transition because I was really interested in

## Ivana Komatina

sustainability and wanted to further my training in this direction.

I enjoyed living and working in Sweden and it was during this time that I fell in love with my boyfriend.

I started working as an intern at a Gothenburg architecture office.

This period was the toughest period of my 'Swedish life', mainly because of the language barrier. My master's program was in English and so after two years in Sweden I had only picked up a few sentences in Swedish.

However, because of the help I received from some of my colleagues and my determination to speak Swedish at work I started to write and speak effectively after only a couple

of months.

Being able to speak good Swedish gave me more opportunities to find a job. I chose to work at a smaller, local office to earn the broadest possible picture of the projects I was involved in.

In time I moved to Stockholm and joined ETELVA Arkitekter, taking on a project that dealt with the sustainable handling of the conversion of an existing building with entirely new functions, just as I had dreamed of doing and prepared for in my thesis project in school.



## Miljan Andjelkovic

architecture and civil engineering.

Whilst I was in the second year of high school I represented the school in a national competition in Serbia and Montenegro that I won. For me it was a sign of what I could accomplish.

After high school I attended the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Belgrade, and received my bachelor and master degrees.

I have always followed the international architecture scene and I wanted to make myself competitive in the global market, so I decided to

find a way to work with international clients. I knew that I would like to live in Sweden, since I had visited my cousins in Norrköping for several years to go fishing. This helped me a lot in regards to find a job in Sweden.

I sent a message to my former colleague Ivana just to check up on how she was doing, and she let me know that her office was looking to hire an architect. We managed to set up an interview and within a very short space of time I was offered a job. I was so happy because it was a confirmation that I was on the right path to achieving my dreams.

I am Miljan Andjelkovic, an architect from Serbia. I was born in Surdulica, a small town in the south of Serbia.

Because my father is an architect and I liked what he was doing, I knew exactly what I wanted to do when I grew up – to be an architect. After finishing elementary school I moved to Nis, to attend a high school for

## TO LEARN SWEDISH

### LANGUAGE CAFÉ

To visit language cafés is a good way to practice your Swedish with Swedes who are not your friends. At a language café you'll meet people from around the world with the same aim as you - to learn to speak everyday Swedish. Many organisations organize language cafés, for example Newly Arrived Architects in Sweden.

### INTERNATIONELLA BEKANTSKAPER

Internationella Bekantskaper (International Acquaintances) is a charity that brings Swedish speaking people and those who want to learn Swedish together. They arrange social activities such as language cafés, sport events and visits to museums.

### SFI

SFI (Swedish for immigrants) provides basic knowledge in Swedish and knowledge about Swedish society. There are several schools that provide SFI courses. You can apply at SFI-centrum, located at Hornsgatan 124. You need to be registered in Stockholm, have a residence permit and be over 16 years old.

### SIFA

SIFA (Swedish for academic professionals) arranges Swedish for engineers and architects. You need to have a bachelor's degree and documented English knowledge. The course teaches relevant professional vocabulary, communication in the workplace and interview training.



## LET'S TALK

Let's talk is a free online application that gathers people who wants to practice their Swedish with native speakers. Register on your mobile or computer.

# APPLYING FOR JOBS

## CUSTOMIZE YOUR RESUME

Customize your resume, your portfolio and your cover letter to the Swedish standards. There are many articles on the web where you can read about what is highly valued on the Swedish market.

If you are completely new to the industry, it is especially important to put together a professional and distinctive portfolio. References should be attached to prove your skills and experiences.

## BIM SOFTWARE

Most Swedish offices use ArchiCAD or Revit. Try to learn one of these. A good tip for learning programs is to work on your own practice project, or potentially remake a pre-existing project. There are many educational videos available on Youtube. It does not matter which program you make yourself comfortable with, most Swedish offices consider them equal to each other, and you will also continue learning BIM software at the workplace.

## WHAT INTERESTES YOU?

When you start out looking for jobs, it is a good idea to give some thought to where you would like to work. What kind of architecture do you find interesting? Would you like to work at a big or small office? In small offices, there is generally more opportunity to take responsibility, whilst larger offices allow more space and time for development and offer a wider range of projects. This will make it easier for you when you start applying for jobs.

## VISIT CAREER DAYS

Bring your portfolio to career days and take every chance you get to introduce yourself to potential employers.

## SEND OUT APPLICATIONS

In addition to applying for advertised positions, send your resume, portfolio and cover letter to companies that you find interesting, even if there are no advertised jobs. Describe why you want to work with that specific company, or with that specific type of architecture. You have a better chance of getting an interview by being spontaneous and curious.

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (ARBETSFÖRMEDLINGEN)

As soon as you receive your residence permit, you can - and we recommend you do - register with the Employment Service. When you're registered you have access to unemployment benefits such as covering travel costs for job interviews elsewhere. In order to get financial aid you need to be active in looking for jobs.

A detailed architectural floor plan of a building, showing various rooms, corridors, and structural elements. The plan is rendered in black lines on a white background. A large, semi-transparent teal rectangle is overlaid on the top right portion of the plan, containing the title 'SOCIAL ACTIVITIES'.

## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

### **KAN CONNECT**

KAN CONNECT is a venue for job seeking foreign architects and employers. The project started out in 2015, initiated by architects at Kjellgren&Kaminsky. Meetings are arranged annually in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö.

### **INTERNATIONS**

InterNations is a global platform created to help expats from around the world settle into their new homes in foreign countries. The InterNations expat community in Sweden offers social networking online as well as in real life. At the social network online you will find almost everything you need to know to make the transit to Swedish life as simple as possible.

### **TOASTMASTERS**

Toastmasters is a US-based social networking site that has spread to other countries. Toastmasters arrange lectures and events to attend or to be the host of. You can sign up to hold a lecture or speech, or just improvise. This is a great way to practice your Swedish as well as getting some speaking experience.

### **ARKITEKTURENS VÄNNER**

at ArkDes (Museum of Architecture and Design) you will find the organization Arkitekturens vänner. They arrange lectures and visits to venues for a small fee.

### **STOCKHOLMS ARKITEKTFÖRENING**

Arrange lectures, seminars and workshops for their members and initiates debates on current issues on architecture, interior architecture, landscape architecture and planning.

### **LINKEDIN**

Using LinkedIn is popular in Sweden and is a good way to keep in touch with the people you have met and build up a contact base whilst you are looking for a job. It will also increase the chances of an employer finding you amongst his or her own contacts.

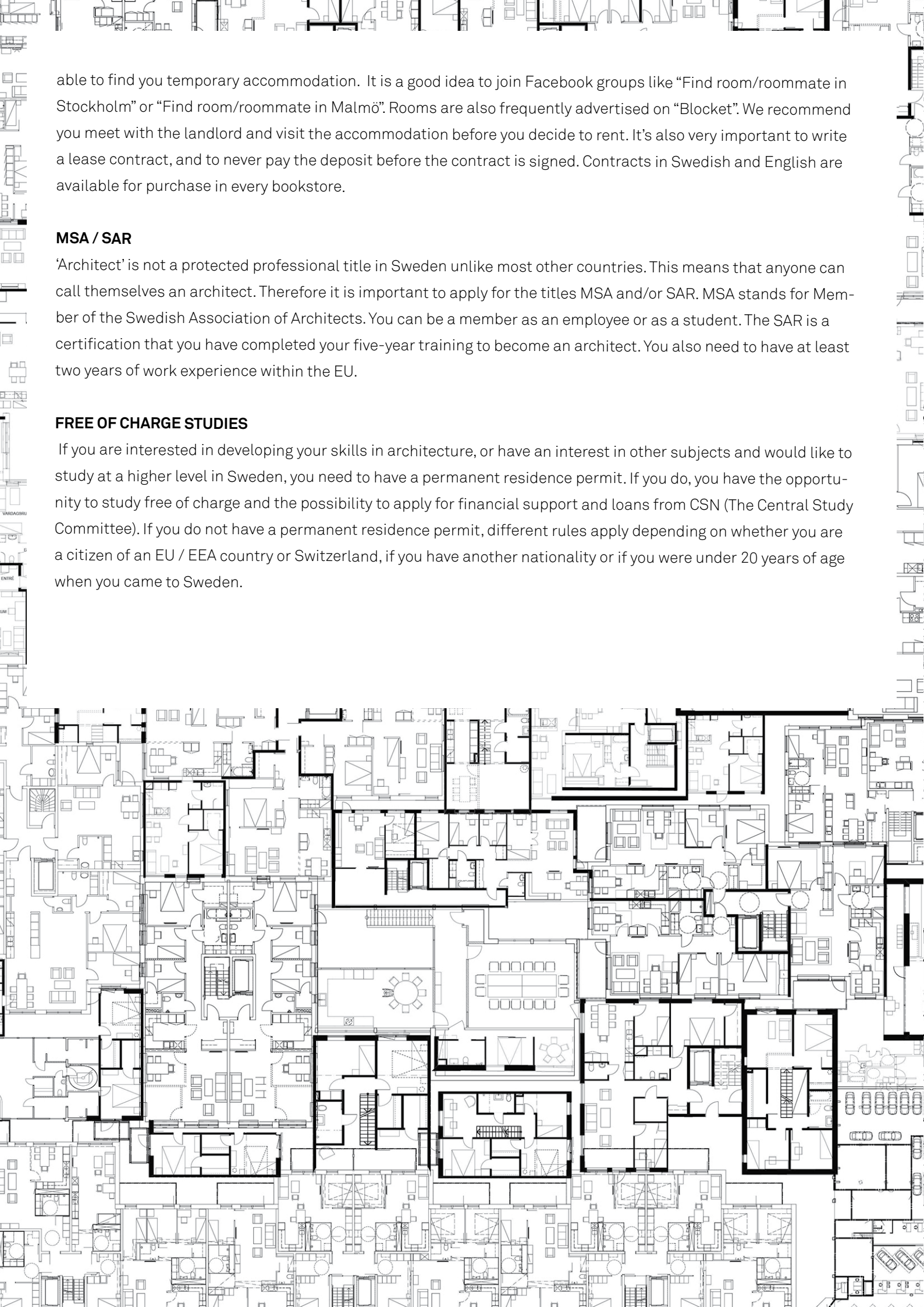
### **MEET UP**

Meet up is a platform for social networking on your mobile phone or computer. The application allows you to attend existing meet-up groups or start your own. You'll find thousands of activities to take part in, from language cafes to jogging or baking.

## OTHER GOOD STUFF TO KNOW ABOUT

### **FINDING ACCOMODATION**

Finding accommodation in Sweden can be a bit tricky and expensive. If you already have a job, your employer may be

The background of the page is a detailed architectural floor plan of a building. It shows various rooms, corridors, and structural elements. Some rooms are highlighted with thicker black lines, possibly indicating specific areas of interest or a particular floor level. The drawing is a technical line drawing in black and white.

able to find you temporary accommodation. It is a good idea to join Facebook groups like “Find room/roommate in Stockholm” or “Find room/roommate in Malmö”. Rooms are also frequently advertised on “Blocket”. We recommend you meet with the landlord and visit the accommodation before you decide to rent. It’s also very important to write a lease contract, and to never pay the deposit before the contract is signed. Contracts in Swedish and English are available for purchase in every bookstore.

### **MSA / SAR**

‘Architect’ is not a protected professional title in Sweden unlike most other countries. This means that anyone can call themselves an architect. Therefore it is important to apply for the titles MSA and/or SAR. MSA stands for Member of the Swedish Association of Architects. You can be a member as an employee or as a student. The SAR is a certification that you have completed your five-year training to become an architect. You also need to have at least two years of work experience within the EU.

### **FREE OF CHARGE STUDIES**

If you are interested in developing your skills in architecture, or have an interest in other subjects and would like to study at a higher level in Sweden, you need to have a permanent residence permit. If you do, you have the opportunity to study free of charge and the possibility to apply for financial support and loans from CSN (The Central Study Committee). If you do not have a permanent residence permit, different rules apply depending on whether you are a citizen of an EU / EEA country or Switzerland, if you have another nationality or if you were under 20 years of age when you came to Sweden.



## WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

### KAN CONNECT

<https://www.arkitekt.se/kan/>

### INTERNATIONS

<https://www.internations.org/stockholm-expats>

### TOASTMASTERS

<http://www.sitm.se/>

[http://www.stockholmtoastmasters.se/\(svensktalande\).](http://www.stockholmtoastmasters.se/(svensktalande).)

ReadSoft Toastmasters (tvåspråkigt).

### ARKITEKTURENS VÄNNER

[www.arkitekturensvanner.se](http://www.arkitekturensvanner.se)

### STOCKHOLMS ARKITEKTFÖRENING

<https://www.arkitekt.se/stockholm/>

### NEWLY ARRIVES ARCHITECTS IN SWEDEN

[www.naaisweden.com](http://www.naaisweden.com)

### MEET UP

[www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com)

### LINKEDIN

[www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

### LET'S TALK

[www.lakerol.se/letstalk](http://www.lakerol.se/letstalk)

### INTERNATIONELLA BEKANTSKAPER

[www.bekantskaper.se](http://www.bekantskaper.se)

### SFI

<http://www.stockholm.se/ForskolaSkola/Svenskundervisning-for-invandrare-sfi/Swedish-for-immigrants-/Contact-SFI-Centrum/>

### SIFA

<http://sifa.stockholm.se/program-och-kurser>

### CAREER DAYS

<http://www.arbetsmarknadsdagar.se/>

### ARBETSFÖRMEDLINGEN

[www.arbetsformedlingen.se](http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se)

### ARBETSFÖRMEDLINGEN INFORMATION FOR NEWLY ARRIVED

<https://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/For-arbetssokande/Stod-och-service/Ny-i-Sverige.html>

### APPLYING FOR/QUESTIONS ABOUT FURTHER STUDIES

[www.antagning.se](http://www.antagning.se)

[www.migrationsverket.se](http://www.migrationsverket.se)

[www.UHR.se](http://www.UHR.se)