

Exchange Student Evaluation Report
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Why and Where:

I decided to study in Denmark because it offered English-speaking classes related to my major and I wanted a location in Europe. The program in particular seemed well-organized and had interesting classes that related to my major of computer science. I expected to learn a lot, meet people from around the world as well as some Danes, and to experience living in a European country firsthand. In preparation for my departure, I researched things to do in and around Aarhus and started looking into traveling outside of Denmark during my time off. I received plenty of help from the UW Madison study abroad office to help me submit everything necessary to get accepted into the program and choose my courses. I also prepared for handling finances abroad, contacting my bank to inform them that I would be abroad. I could have set up travel plans earlier to get a better deal on flights and such, but I think I did a good job of researching the location. One thing I overlooked was how chilly it would be here. I brought a lot of skirts and dresses thinking it would be warmer and ended up having to get a pair of tights once I arrived.

Arrival/On-site Orientation:

I arrived the day of orientation so did not need to book other accommodations before moving in. However, I've heard that the City-Sleep-In hostel was fine to stay in. If a student were to stay in Copenhagen before arriving, I can recommend the Sleep in Heaven hostel, where I stayed on a weekend trip. On the first day, there was a tour of campus and a free lunch. This helped me to get oriented on campus and to meet a few other students. The International Help Desk informed me of how to do laundry, where my accommodation was located, and had me sign all the necessary documents to move in. My Scan|Design Coordinator was not involved in my orientation to campus.

Academics:

In comparison to UW Madison, my home University, the class registration went smoothly and was easy to complete. Classroom structure was similar, although since they were summer courses, the content and day-to-day structure seemed more flexible and easygoing. Teacher-student relations were relaxed, and classes were smaller than I'm used to, making it easy for teachers to get to know all of the students. Exams were open-book and online, unlike the exams I'm used to taking at home. Administration and the facilities were all excellent and easily accessible.

The quality and content of the instruction was good. Both of my professors seemed passionate about what they were teaching and gave a thorough overview of the material. There could have been more interactive exercises to break up the long class periods. The lectures were informative but not particularly engaging.

I liked the laid-back atmosphere of the classes, with the close student-teacher relationship and the open-book exam. My least favorite thing was the lack of variety in class time activities. Most days, I would sit and listen to a PowerPoint lecture for the 3 or

4 hour duration of the class period. It would have been helpful to have more activities or discussions to break up that time.

I would recommend both of my courses, Web 2.0 Technologies and Digital Business Innovation and Social Media, to anyone who is interested in the subjects.

Housing:

My housing arrangements were fine. I had no trouble locating the building of my accommodation as we were provided a map in the welcome folder, but I had trouble finding my room, because it was a number 500 room and was on the first floor. The University arranged my housing, so I didn't have much choice in the matter. I would recommend choosing location as a top priority if possible, because many students had to live far from campus, whereas I was in a dorm 5 minutes from my classroom.

Exchange Site:

The University campus is beautiful. It is located in a huge park with some many trees, ponds and streams, and is just 15 minutes from the city center on foot. The campus wasn't all that lively as many students go away over the summer, however.

Health and Safety:

I had no concerns over health and safety during my stay.

Cultural Aspects:

To integrate into the host country culture, I attended social program events put on by the University. This was very helpful in introducing me to other international students and allowing me to see other parts of Denmark. Some of the events were a trip to a nearby theme park, a canoeing trip in Silkeborg, a Danish culture night with a traditional dinner, and a city tour. I also made an effort to get to know my Danish roommates, with whom I shared a kitchen. Although they were somewhat reserved, I got to know them by chatting during mealtimes. The other international students and I set up our own events by coordinating over Facebook. We had group dinners where others would cook food from their respective countries, which was a great experience.

One cultural difference I faced was the reserved, quiet nature of the Danes. I found that with time, as long as I put in the effort, the Danes opened up however. Other than that there weren't a whole lot of cultural differences, other than the language and general way of dressing.

Financial:

Scan|Design gave me the final push I needed to make the decision to study abroad. I was on the fence due to the high expense of going abroad, but as soon as I heard I had received the scholarship, I felt it was too good to pass up. I thought the easiest way to access money was by simply using my debit card at ATM machines here. It works as long as you inform your bank that you will be abroad. The cost of living in Denmark was quite high. I spent about \$500/month on rent, probably \$200 or so on food and going out, and another \$30 or so on transportation within Denmark. I chose to do a lot of traveling around Europe while I was here, however, so my expenses were higher. I

didn't expect the exchange fees to be so high. It is important to note that every time you withdraw money you are charged an additional fee.

Exchange/Scan|Design Fellowship Administration:

The assistance I received from my coordinator was good. She reached out to me over email, offering to give suggestions for the city. Everything went smoothly in terms of administration.

Program/Student Type:

This program is best suited for students who are independent and able to make plans on their own. The program is organized, but there is plenty of free time for students to fill with their own activities, which they must plan themselves. The city isn't huge and campus can seem quiet to anyone who is used to living in an urban area. Students who are looking for a lot of activities and excitement, rather than flexibility and free time may want to consider a bigger city or a more structured program. I would advise students attending this program to reach out to other exchange students and coordinate with them to plan more social events.

Overall Experience:

The quality of my experience overall was great! My personal expectations about studying abroad were very high, so my experience fell a bit short of these, but I learned a lot about myself and living abroad along the way. I think the greatest benefit to studying abroad was the opportunity to travel and see many other cultures, as well as meet other students from around the world. One thing I enjoyed about this particular program was that I wasn't surrounded by a big group of students from American Universities, everyone I met was from Europe, Australia, or elsewhere. I think the greatest challenge for me was battling the loneliness that came with living abroad. Having a lot of free time was hard at times, since there is only so much to do in Aarhus and it took time to form connections with the other students as we weren't all living in the same area. Overall, I am so happy that I decided to go abroad, and wouldn't have made that decision without having received the grant from Scan|Design. Again, thank you for giving me the extra push that convinced me to take this opportunity!