

## EXCHANGE STUDENT EVALUATION REPORT

**Student Name:** Brittany Baumler  
**Institution where you studied:** DIS  
**Term(s) of participation:** Summer 2013  
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### 1. WHY AND WHERE:

**a. Why did you decide to study in the US or Denmark as an exchange student?**

Honestly, it was one of the only programs available over the summer that I was eligible for. I was open to studying just about anywhere, and when I heard about DIS in Denmark, it sounded like a great fit, and I especially like that I didn't have any previous knowledge about the country or its culture.

**b. Why did you select the program/University?**

It was what was available. I selected it because I wanted to give something new a chance, but it felt more like it selected me- and I couldn't be happier that it did.

**c. What were your expectations?**

I expected to feel out of place at first, which I did. But I also expected to become acquainted with an unfamiliar place, which I also did. I expected to break out of my comfort zone, which is something I ended up doing much more than I had imagined I would.

**d. What preparations did you make prior to departure?**

The preparations went very smoothly for me. DIS provided help with setting up classes and housing, as well as how to pay tuition. Booking a flight was probably the most nerve-racking part of my pre-departure to-do list.

**e. How could you improve your preparations?**

I would have chosen to learn more about the country and its customs and culture before arriving.

### 2. ARRIVAL/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

**a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.**

A homestay will really allow you to experience what life as a Dane is like in a way that residential housing just cannot. However, I was happy to be surrounded by my fellow American classmates in a more dorm-type setting.

**b. Please comment on the orientation and activities offered at both your home University and the host University, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?**

Having the Danish SRAs around to provide helpful tips and advice for the first evening in Copenhagen, as well as throughout our entire stay, was useful. Going on a tour of the city center where DIS is located and getting a chance to learn the bus system was great.

### 2. ACADEMICS:

**a. Please evaluate the instruction you received. Compare the following to your home institution's system:**

- class registration

Only having to choose two classes for the summer session made scheduling very easy in comparison to that of my home institution.

- **classroom structure**

The class structure was more hands on than what I have become used to- there was a lot of group work and we were expected to be active participants in class.

- **instruction**

The professors were so knowledgeable and really loved their jobs as instructors and I could tell that they were passionate for their field of study, especially when they spoke about their work outside of DIS.

- **teacher/student relations**

Grabbing a beer, eating lunch, chatting over coffee, or taking a walk through the park were things I experienced while abroad that I would never expect to have the chance to do with a professor at my home institution. I loved how laidback and personal the instruction and student/teacher relationships were.

- **grading/exams**

I found the grading and exams to be much easier and lenient than what I would see at my home institution, but would have to say that this made my experience abroad the best it could have been- if I would have had to instead focus most of my time outside of the classroom on classwork, I would never have had the chance to explore Copenhagen and Denmark or to have learned as much about culture and life as a Dane.

- **administration**

DIS administration was very organized and their expectations were laid out very clearly.

- **library, computer, and classroom facilities**

I was impressed with the facilities that we had access to. The location of these buildings and resource centers were conveniently located across all DIS areas, making access to these things easy and convenient.

**b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.**

The instructors had so much knowledge to share, and the best part was, they really wanted to share it with us. The content of instruction was changed to meet the interests of those in the class, and I liked how flexible instruction was. It seemed DIS really wanted us to leave with as much knowledge as they could give us, but also cared about what it was we wanted to learn.

**c. In general, what did you like best and least about the academics?**

What I liked best was the laidback atmosphere- I could go to class every day without the pressure I might feel at my own university because the student decides what is most important to them to learn instead of being forced to remember every detail, knowing there will be a test on the material. What I liked least about the academics was the lack of structure that I am used to. However, even though I found it hard to get used to, I think it was one of the aspects of the academics that made me grow the most. I had to analyze information on my own and make it into something important for myself.

**d. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?**

Children with Special Needs, Trine Bach Jensen  
Holocaust and Genocide, Torben Jorgensen

**3. HOUSING:**

**a. How would you assess the housing arrangements?**

I was happy with the DIS community housing arrangement. Being a 25 minute bus ride away from the city center helped me to get to know more of Copenhagen. I was able to experience more than just the downtown area and I also loved my bike ride into the city center each morning.

**b. How did you locate your housing?**

The shuttle bus from the airport took me to my housing.

**4. EXCHANGE SITE:**

In general, please describe your impressions of the host University campus and its location and surrounding community.

DIS is located right in the middle of all that is Copenhagen. There is no way you could go to class at DIS and not feel the calm, upbeat nature of the city and the Danes.

**5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study.

I did not encounter any health or safety concerns while abroad. I had heard of a couple instances of DIS students being pickpocketed, but never had a problem with it myself.

**6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:**

**a. How did you integrate into the host country culture and meet members of the community? (e.g., mentors, clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)**

The SRAs really helped to integrate us into Denmark's culture. They were willing to hang out with us and introduce us to activities of living in Denmark.

**b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them. (e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)**

The language barrier was very difficult- I wanted to be able to speak Danish, although I know absolutely nothing about the language. Being American in public, I felt a sense of unfriendliness from the Danes at first, but when I realized there was nothing I could do but try to live like a Dane with my English language, I was able to adapt by not caring about the difference and being friendly- most Danes were willing to switch over to English with no problem, so it wasn't as big of a deal as it seemed at first.

**7. FINANCIAL:**

**a. Please describe how the Scan|Design Foundation fellowship assisted you / made a difference in your decision to study abroad.**

Without the financial assistance I received through the ScanDesign Foundation, I simply would not have had the opportunity to study abroad- it was this fellowship that made studying in Copenhagen with DIS possible.

**b. What is the best way to access/transfer money?**

Using online banking.

**c. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.**

It really comes down to a person's lifestyle, spending habits, and needs. My advice is to expect to spend more than you think- even with the knowledge that Copenhagen is a very expensive city, I don't think there is really a way to realize just how much more money you are going to spend until it is actually leaving your pocket while abroad. This is just another reason why the ScanDesign scholarship is so appreciated!

Since I was only abroad for 6 weeks, making a monthly spending recommendation seems difficult.

**d. Please comment on the relative "cost of living" between your home University and the host University.**

The cost of living in Copenhagen is so much more than my home University.

**8. EXCHANGE/SCAN|DESIGN FELLOWSHIP ADMINISTRATION:**

- a. Please comment on the assistance and activities by the Scan|Design Fellowship coordinator before your departure, upon arrival, and during your stay. What worked and what could be improved or changed?
- b. Please evaluate services and effectiveness of the University administrative offices.

**9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:**

Please describe the type of student for whom this exchange is best suited and what advice would you give to future students.

This exchange with DIS is for the student who wants to explore a hidden gem within Europe. If you like to feel comfortable, happy, adventurous, relaxed, active, and truly cozy, then you will love Copenhagen.

**10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:**

- a. How would you rate the quality of the overall experience?

My overall experience was so much greater than I could have ever imagined. I did not expect to become so attached to the city and people over such a short time abroad.

- b. How realistic were your academic and personal expectations and how did the Scan|Design Fellowship Program make a difference?

- c. What did you consider to be the greatest benefit and challenge of studying abroad?

The greatest benefit of studying abroad for me was adapting to a new way of life and breaking out of my comfort zone- it was one of the scariest things I have ever done, but I am so glad I did, because it has made me a more outgoing, independent, and cultured person. These benefits were also my greatest challenges.

**FEEL FREE TO ADD OTHER COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE.**