

Report Form Exchange Period Abroad 2015-2016

- study period in 2nd semester:
- start date study abroad: 29th of January 2016 – 23rd of June 2016
- period of classes: from 1st of February 2016 – 14th of May 2016
- examination period: from End of may 2016 until June 2016
- did you follow a language course: Yes

Courses completed at the host university:

1. Drafting Commercial Contracts
2. Comparative liability law
3. Danish politics and welfare in comparative perspective

Before I applied for Aarhus University, I actually have never heard of Aarhus. But it appeared to be Denmark's second largest city and also a lovely student city. Although it is Denmark's second largest city, you don't really get that feeling. I personally always have the feeling that the city center is about as big as the city center of Groningen and the city is truly a cozy student city.

The way of applying for Aarhus University is quite easy, they explain everything on the website and the international center responds very quickly on e-mails. When you apply for Aarhus University, it's also possible to get a room via the Housing center. You can choose between a dorm and a shared facility house. It depends on your personal preference what is best, but a shared facility house is probably cozier. The Housing center only offers you one room, if you don't accept it for whatever reason, you need to find a room yourself. This is of course possible but it's not that easy to find a room yourself and it might save you some stress if you just accept the offer. I would recommend to ask for a place close to the university. I ended up in a dorm and got to live at a Kollegium, where I shared the kitchen and bathroom with one roommate. There was a common room with a bar for the whole building, and there are a lot of activities organized.

You should pay attention to the end date of your lease contract, it is apparently normal in Denmark that you move out of your room 7 days before your lease actually ends. It is possible to extend your lease, but be sure to ask for it on time.

During the application process, you'll be asked if you want to have a mentor. I would definitely recommend saying yes to that. A mentor can help you on your way to get started and also with other things that you might have questions about. My mentor showed me the university campus and helped me with many things, among which getting my key & the contract of my room. It depends on your relationship with your mentor, but I got together with mine every once in a while and it is a very nice way to get to know a Dane.

Denmark has, just as the Netherlands, a lot of bikes, so the way of getting around is by bike. Therefore, I would recommend buying or renting a bike when you arrive in Aarhus. If you wait too long, they will be sold out because of the high demand of all the new internationals. So it might be a good idea to immediately ask your mentor to go get one with you. Since I'm from the north of the Netherlands, my parents were able to bring me, and my bike, to Aarhus by car. It is possible, but quite a hassle to get to Aarhus by plane. Either you need to have a transfer from CPH airport to Aarhus airport and then a small bus trip, or you take a 4 hour bus trip from CPH airport to Aarhus.

Another practical thing is the fact that some shops don't accept MasterCard. If that bothers you, you can try to get a Dankort, with which you don't need to pay interest every time you buy

something and is accepted in every shop.

In the beginning of the semester is a introduction week, where you get to know things about the university and life in Aarhus and there are activities planned for internationals to get to know each other and the city. It's a nice and easy way to get to know more international students. The Studenterhus organizes a few trips (Legoland!) and activities to go to each semester, there is a bar with a lot of different beers and boardgames and there is an international night every Tuesday night at the Studenterhus. Especially in the beginning it is fun to get there.

It is also possible to sign up for the 'friendship ambassador program', you get assigned to a Dane and can get together and go to activities together.

A big plus about Aarhus is that there is a Friday bar every week at the the faculties of the University, which is very fun to go to and I would definitely recommend to go there at least a few times!

Another thing where you should go it is Kapsejladsen. It is somewhere in the beginning of May and the biggest student event in Denmark. Everybody gets up super early to get a good spot and hang around the campus all day long to watch a battle between all the faculties of the university.

The courses I followed are Comparative liability law, Drafting commercial contracts and Danish political science. Each course was worth 10 ETCS. At the Aarhus University it is possible to follow 1 course of 10 ETCS at a different faculty, as long as it is within the same department. So therefore I chose to follow Danish politics and welfare in comparative perspective at the political science faculty. The classes of Comparative liability law and Danish politics were quite small, we were with about 10 students in total, and there was a lot of interaction between the students and the teachers. All the students needed to make a few presentations for each of those courses. The class of Drafting commercial contracts was bigger, with more Danes and even though students were encouraged to discuss topics with each other, it was a bit more relaxed than the other courses. All my exams were oral. You draw a question and get 20 min to prepare an answer for it and then you need to talk for about 5-10 minutes about that topic. Afterwards, the teacher will ask you a few questions about your topic and depending on how good you know the subject, the questions will become tougher. You'll get your grade right after your exam.

The grading system in Denmark goes from -3 till 12, which still doesn't really makes sense to me but in general it won't be that harsh to pass your exam if you studied for it. I personally have the feeling that the level is a bit easier than at RUG.

People say that Denmark is not a cheap country to live in, and I can agree. But it's not that bad as in the other Nordic countries either. I spend around €800 per month. My room is pretty expensive and it costs about €400 Euro per month, and the other €400 is not only spent on groceries but also on trips to different cities and other activities. Groceries are actually not that much more expensive than in the Netherlands, and I was living rather 'cheap' on that part, but going out for drinks or doing fun stuff is expensive. Although many bars have happy hour and when you go for drinks at the Friday bar or at the Studenterhus, it's relatively cheap (€2,70 for 0,5L beer).

Danes speak English very well and it's definitely not necessary to follow a language course because of that. But it is possible to do so, and I did. I had danish classes twice a week, and even though it's not very useful, I thought it was fun to go to and it is nice to meet some more internationals.

Aarhus is a lovely city to stay, it's a student city but not a very buzzing city and I loved it that everybody is pretty laid back. There's a lot of nature and you can go to the beach whenever you want. But of course it is also possible to have good nights and do cultural things. You should check out Den Gamble by, Aros, the botanical gardens and Moesgaard museum.

Danes themselves are quite 'closed' and I found it harsh to get to know them, but once you take

that first step and talk with them, you'll find out that they're very social and 'hyggelig'.