

My exchange in Aarhus, Denmark

The first week at Aarhus University was an introduction week. The two first days were a general introduction to the university with information from the library, introduction from the Student House which arranges social activities, and other information about living in Denmark. The other days were an introduction to the law faculty.

All international students had the possibility to apply for a mentor. The mentor will welcome you to Denmark when you arrive, and can, e.g., pick up the keys for your room, in case you arrive in a weekend or evening. Since the mentor is a Danish student, he/she can help you with many practical things. Mostly the mentors have more than one mentee, and can arrange social activities for the mentees.

The host university staff was very helpful. All international students coming to Denmark have to apply for a CPR-number at the local community, however, the university arranged a day where this could be done at the university itself, to make it easier for the students. The international coordinator was answering emails within a few hours.

Concerning the study programme at Aarhus University, there was a list of 14 law courses to choose from in the fall semester. They were taught in English and were all master courses. I chose International Commercial Arbitration, International Copyright, and European Human Rights Law. My favorite course was International Copyright, because the teacher, a lawyer at a local law firm, was very passionate about teaching and very good at explaining the topics. I would definitely recommend this course. I found that the courses, considering that they were at a master level, were not very difficult. Furthermore, the lectures are not compulsory, however, when you do attend classes, the lecturers expect you to participate actively in the lessons by answering and discussing questions. For one course, European Human Rights law, we were told that we had to participate actively in class presentations in order to be allowed to attend the exam, however, this requirement was not upheld. The examinations were all oral exams lasting about 20 minutes. You pick a random topic that has been discussed in a lecture, which you then have to present. When you are done presenting, the lecturers will ask you questions about the topic and possibly other topics as well. You will receive your grade right after the examination. The fact that the exams are oral is nothing to be nervous about. The teachers are very friendly and helpful during the examinations. If they see that a student is having difficulties during the exam, they will try to help them the best way they can. It is my opinion that it is easier to get a high grade in Denmark compared to the Netherlands. In the Netherlands only very few students get a 10, but in Denmark 12 (the highest grade) is given just as much as, or even more than, the lower grades.

I didn't take a language course because I already know Danish. However, in the beginning of the semester, the City of Council provides the possibility to take a free Danish course in the *LærDansk* language center. A lot of international students

were doing this and seemed to enjoy learning a new language and being able to communicate with the Danish students in Danish. However, in practice, learning Danish is not needed. Every Dane knows English, so it will be no problem to communicate in English. Learning Danish is more for a personal experience than for a practical reason.

Regarding housing, it is very difficult to find a place to live in Aarhus. I applied in good time for housing, however, the housing offer I got was from the 15th of October (the semester started in the end of August), so I had to stay in temporary housing until then. There is no housing guarantee for students in the fall semester, but in the spring semester there is. The housing I got was not through the University housing office, but through a collaboration of housing organizations in Aarhus called student housing Aarhus (www.studenthousingaarhus.dk). I recommend to search for housing through their website, since they have housing guarantee for the fall semester, contrary to the university housing office. For the students not receiving a housing offer in time, there is also a possibility for temporary housing. This is accommodation offered on a weekly basis from August till October for the students which do not yet have a place to live when the semester starts. Be aware that this kind of housing is very expensive (about 100 Euros per week) and that you have to buy this accommodation in time, since even the temporary housing can be sold out.

I was staying in a student dorm called Ravnsbjerg Kollegiet. It was 7 kilometers away from campus, which was about half an hour by cycle. There was also a bus connection which took you to the university within half an hour. I had a room of 16 m² with my own bathroom. The kitchen I shared with 15 other students. My experience of sharing the kitchen was not bad. Mostly everyone kept it clean, and when someone did not clean up it was taken care of. Every week there was a hall guard, who took care of emptying the trashcans and keeping the hallway clean, and a kitchen guard, who cleaned the kitchen. The student dorm also had a common room, gym and sauna. Overall my experience of living in a student dorm was good. The room was in good condition; it had just been painted and gotten a new carpet when I moved in. Furthermore, the dorm was only 5 minutes walking from a supermarket, so it was easy to do groceries.

Denmark is a more expensive country than the Netherlands. I paid about 300 Euros for accommodation, which is cheap for Denmark. Accommodation gets more expensive the closer you live to the city centre. In general, the prices are just a bit higher than in the Netherlands, this concerns everything from food to bus and train tickets. My estimated costs per month were about 700-800 Euros.

Several social activities are arranged by the student house. In my semester they offered a trip to legoland, a canoe trip, etc. Furthermore, they have international night for all exchange students every Tuesday. The other exchange students came from all over the world, China, Australia, Europe, America, etc.

Overall, my experience of studying in Denmark was very good. First of all I learned a lot from the courses I took and the learning experience as a whole was good

with great teachers and fellow students. Secondly, the city is charming and I can recommend a visit to *den gamle by, Aros*. In my opinion, there was always something to do in Aarhus, and if not, there is always the possibility to travel around and see the rest of Denmark, or to travel further around Europe, as many other exchange students were doing after the exams.