

Exchange at Aarhus University

Aarhus University of Denmark on the Jutland peninsula is just a brisk 4-hour bus ride from the country's capital, Copenhagen. It compares nicely to Groningen in size, and the fact that it's mostly a student city – there are lots of events and celebrations happening somewhere in the city. The vibrant student culture also adds to the general liveliness of the city.

The overall exchange process was very fast and easy upon getting the confirmation of enrolment. The representatives at Aarhus University are extremely helpful and fast at clarifying any issues you might be having. During the introduction week, the faculty will set aside times for incoming exchange students to apply for their CPR (mandatory health card), residence permit and other formalities which is a huge convenience to have them in one place and get it done on the same day. The only problem that might come up depending on your preferences could be finding accommodation. While it seems like there's a sufficient number of rooms available to incoming exchange students, most of the buildings are located a 20-30 min bus ride away from campus and you often will not even get an offer from the housing at all. It may be necessary to start searching for accommodation on your own, which is what I did and settled on a standalone apartment about 15 minutes away from the main university campus. Rental prices are similar to or slightly more expensive than Groningen, so be prepared for anything upwards of 400 euros for a room in a shared apartment, and 600 euros for a standalone apartment not close to the city center.

The transportation infrastructure of the city is well planned, although just like in the Netherlands, the majority of the people in Denmark bike everywhere. You can usually find a bike for around 100 euros on second hand Facebook groups or websites; they tend to hike up the prices at the shops around the city. A semester bus pass goes for around 150 euros in a two-zone travel area, and it's available for unlimited travel on any of the city busses and light rail. Train travel is quite expensive, but there are frequently scheduled buses via budget bus companies such as FlixBus, on which one-way travel to Copenhagen is between 12-18 euros with a student discount.

Aarhus University campus is absolutely beautiful (chosen as one of the most beautiful university campuses in the world, actually!) and the main campus is where you will have most of your classes. It sprawls over a few blocks in the city, complete with ponds and the incomparable University Park, where you can go to enjoy a cup of coffee or a sit by the ducks. There are several libraries on campus, including the State Library and Law Library for anything you need. You will find most of your course books here, and for the ones missing, you can put in a request with the library, which will be delivered in a timely manner. With the student card, you will have access to all the university buildings no matter what time it is, which proves very convenient during exam time. Just like the libraries, there are numerous cafeterias with different menus on campus, most of which are within an affordable price range – best one being the State Library restaurant where they have a different a la carte menu for every day of the week.

Regarding studies at Aarhus University: the exchange will be with the Kandidat program of the law faculty, which is the Masters of Law in Denmark. You will be choosing from an extensive and exciting list of courses at the Masters level offered at the law faculty, taught in English, most of which will require you to do an oral exam or a take home essay. These courses are 10 credits each, so you will have the entire semester to take 3 courses. Compared to Groningen, there is a very informal type of relationship with the professors and they are very approachable and available for anything you may need. The lectures are 3 hours each, and you will usually have one every week for each course where there is often the requirement of active class participation. Because they are Masters level classes, they are much smaller in size and therefore a lot more room for active discussion. About the examination processes, oral exams last for about 10-15 minutes on a topic you will choose after walking into the exam room where the course instructor and an external examiner will evaluate your efforts. The oral exams may seem nerve wracking at first, but you get your grade as soon as you are done the oral exam, which is a huge relief. The take home exams may be anywhere from 3 days to 2 weeks where you will need to write an essay on a topic given at exam start time via an online platform called WiseFlow.

I took the following three courses at the University: International Copyright, Law of the EU Internal Market, and Drafting Commercial Contracts; for two of which I had an oral exam and one of which required a take home essay. I have to say that I had an amazing time with Law of the EU Internal Market as that has always been of personal interest to me and coming in from Groningen, a sufficient degree of knowledge to be able to follow the course. The real surprise, though, was International copyright – not only was the content some of the most interesting I have come across in my three years at law school, but the teacher was an absolute marvel and was always very enthusiastic about the course content which made it a pleasure to attend. Keep in mind that because these are Masters level courses, there is quite a bit of reading and preparation going into the lectures and the International Copyright has one of the most expensive literature on the market – thankfully you can find versions of the book in the main libraries in both Aarhus and Copenhagen. Drafting Commercial Contracts was a let down for me personally, despite coming highly recommended from others who have previously attended Aarhus University. I would recommend Law of the EU Internal market to anyone who has interest in a more practical and analytical in depth look at the EU single market practices (there was a guest lecture from Judge Allan Rosas, a judge at the European Court of Justice – which was fantastic); International Copyright for those who are looking for more of an acquired taste and a different course to those we take during the LLB. There is no mandatory attendance for any of the lectures to qualify for the exam, though some courses may require you to do class assignments or presentations as practice, while again not mandatory, is highly recommended.

The overall experience in Denmark is one, which is full of interactions with the friendliest people of the North. Don't let the directness of the Danes fool you, once you start to interact with them, they are the warmest and funniest folk around who love their "hygge" and socialize often in groups be it over some beers, or dinner excursions. There will be lots of opportunities to interact within the faculties of the University as well, as the "Friday Bar" culture is a big one in Denmark. They are proud of their love for beer and will never be apologetic about it, student and professors alike, intermingling at Friday Bars at the faculty or student houses. Use

these opportunities to get to know your professors and fellow Danish colleagues, and of course, Carlsberg.

English could almost be considered a second language, as most Danes will start their language training as early as kindergarten, thus there is no difficulty in terms of communication even in the smallest of towns. While this may prove to be a relief for some, as there really is no need to learn Danish to carry on with your day to day life, you are welcome to attend language courses offered at most language centers – and a lot of them for free. Information on Danish classes and much more will be passed on to you during a very well organized and interesting welcome week by the BSS Faculty.

Aarhus is a beautiful city with lots of friendly people, and never short of something exciting to do, albeit expensive to live in – you can count on everything being at least 1.5 or 2 times as expensive as Groningen, so make your choice accordingly. My top priority was always to go to a school in good standing with interesting courses and a good law faculty, which is why Aarhus was always my first choice and if I had to do it again, I would choose it again.