

## Exchange experience report, Aarhus University, Autumn 2019

As it is the second-biggest city of Denmark, expectations are obviously set at a high level. Nevertheless, Aarhus did not disappoint in any way. Overall, the education is well organized and of a good level, the way of educating is something I really liked, the public facilities are the best, the weather was not as bad as I expected and the citizens are really nice, welcoming and *hygge*.

The first thing you will have to take care of after being selected to go to Aarhus, is getting a place to stay. I personally got this place through *AU Housing*, who offered me housing at the start of June. AU Housing is very well organized and it is just really nice to know you've got a place without having to do anything in advance to your actual stay in Denmark. The place I got turned out to be decent, but it was quite far out of the centre. Due to good public transport and my bike, it was not a big issue in the end. However, if you like a place closer to the centre, you will have to start hunting on the private market or just be more lucky with the offer Aarhus University gets you. An offer from AU Housing is even though not guaranteed and early acting is recommended to have a relax preparation.

The guidance from both my home university and Aarhus University was really good. Prior to and after departure the administrative paperwork is mostly dealt with by those parties. In the introduction week the university and faculty take good care of the exchange students and it is actually hard to screw things up. Also, the buddy system of the faculty is a nice way to get to know the campus and student life from an experienced student. At the same time it is convenient to have someone to help you with little everyday practical issues. Pretty much everything that is linked to the university is also actually located at the university campus. The campus is situated around a vast gorgeous green park. Libraries, canteens, the international office, the housing office, and so on, are all to be found on the campus.

One of the reasons I chose Denmark in the first place, was the fact that the education would be at Master's level, since I already started my Master in Groningen. The courses I took were Drafting Commercial Contracts, International Commercial Arbitration and European and International Intellectual Property Law. The first two courses were really interesting and are types of courses my home university would not offer. They were quite practice-focused with enthusiastic teachers with experience in the field. The teaching method was similar to the one in Groningen, but the teachers were less bound to the PowerPoint presentation and liked to improvise on the spot with input of the students. The Intellectual Property Law course was divided in two sections. The first few weeks were focused on the core theory with classes that are similar to the ones in Groningen at the course *Intellectuele Eigendomsrecht*. The second part of the course was way more interactive with a really passionate and interesting teacher. This part of the course focused on the idea behind and the future of intellectual property law. This was something I really liked and a way of teaching that quite opened my eyes with regard to this topic. In general, the relationship with the teachers (or anyone else from the university) is very informal, as is the communication.

The semester is basically thirteen weeks of classes until December. It is good to know there is a small holiday for one week in the fall. December and January are scheduled for exams. For each course you are provided with three possible dates to choose from and so you could pretty much form it to your own convenience. All my exams were oral, something I had never experienced before. This form of examination requires a little different method of preparation, but at the end it is definitely not a harder way of examination.

Next to the educational part of the exchange, the social part did not disappoint at all and it actually exceeded my expectations. In the first few weeks you will be flooded with social events. Most of them are organized by the university, the faculty or the *Studentarhus*. Furthermore, the 'student culture' is

tightly connected to the university itself. Rather than having a lot of independent associations where you can spend your spare time after studying, the social life is mainly centralized on and around the university/campus. This really encourages and facilitates integration and solidarity among students of all faculties and prevents a certain 'group formation'. Next to annual traditional events, there is this great concept of *fredagsbar*. Weekly, every faculty hosts a party at their canteen. It is a great way to party and socialize with the local students and have a good time in general. A great way to meet new people besides fellow exchange students is to join a sports association. Personally, I joined a team at *JAI Fodbold* with two fellow exchange students. It was a great way to get in touch with Danish people and part of their culture.

Next to everything mentioned above, the city itself has a lot to offer as well. Lots of museums, restaurants, bars, stores and squares are spread all over the city. On top of that, there actually is a nice beach for the hot summer and spring days. The long coast with its harbour is suitable for visits all year long. Further information is not needed, since the internet is full of it and the best way to explore the city is to just wonder around.

You should know life in Aarhus is a bit more expensive than Groningen. The difference is not that extreme, though. It is mainly the restaurants and bars that are quite expensive, first look at the prices to prevent any surprises! Pricing of groceries is fine, especially if you buy local (Danish) products. Another good way to save money and time is to bring, buy or hire a bike. Due to the hilly landscape, it provides you with a great daily workout at the same time. The city is well-designed for cyclists and biking is way more convenient than taking the bus. Even though the public transport is really good itself.

All in all, I would highly recommend any student to go to Aarhus for a semester (or even longer). It's easy to fall in love with the way of living and to integrate in the culture. The education is of a good level with great teachers. An experience I will never regret undergoing.