

EXCHANGE STUDENT EVALUATION REPORT

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1. WHY AND WHERE

I decided to study in Denmark as an exchange student because I really liked that the program offered instruction in English but also gave the opportunity to be immersed in another language. I also liked that it was a less expensive program in comparison to other European countries and was a location that was a little of a common destination then countries like England and Italy. Before I left for Copenhagen I did a lot of research on what to expect from this country and the people who live in it. I feel like I was well prepared for what to expect upon getting there culturally at least. The weather on the other hand took me by surprise. I knew it got very cold, but I failed to realize how gray and rainy it would be. The summer weather was amazing though.

2. ARRIVAL/ON-SITE ORIENTATION

I was able to move right in to my apartment upon my arrival so I did not have to find any other accommodation. The orientation was very helpful, but it was not well advertised. It was very lucky that I even found out about it. The pre-semester language program was very beneficial as that is where you meet a lot of the other international students and I would strongly recommend it. Aside from that, I wish they would have offered more activities in the beginning of the program to allow international students to meet each other. I also strongly recommend being assigned a mentor. My mentor was great and really did her best to help me with any issues I was having being in a foreign country. The orientation before I left to my program was also very helpful in telling us what to expect and the steps we had to take before leaving and upon arrival. The scan design coordinator was also very helpful in answering any questions that I had about life and culture in Denmark.

3. ACADEMICS

Compared to registration at my home university it was very confusing to sign up for classes in Copenhagen. This is because in some classes you have to register for your exam separately from the actual class registration. I also found all the different faculties somewhat confusing. I only took classes geared towards international students though so at least they were very useful in helping me figure it out. The classes themselves were pretty much the same as Madison in terms of lecture instruction and classroom size, but the way the class was graded was very different. For both of my classes 100% of my grade was based entirely on one essay. The teachers I had were very friendly and approachable. If I had a question, I had no hesitation to ask the professor. The library was very easy to navigate but I mostly used the public library in the city center, rather than the school libraries. I highly recommend the Danish Culture Course being that it really did a nice job of introducing foreign students to a wide variety of Danish Culture which was very helpful. I liked that we were able to write our essay on whatever interested us rather than a specific pre-determined topic.

4. HOUSING

The housing situation is very difficult in Copenhagen if you do not get your housing through the international office. The housing offer I received through them was in Signalhuset, so I accepted. It conveniently happened to be located south of the city and all my classes took place in the south campus. It also was very close to a metro stop and was located right across from Bilka (which is like a Walmart) and the largest mall in Scandinavia. In my housing situation I had 3 other roommates, all of which were Danish students. It was very neat to actually get to live with Danes, but they were very busy and had their own schedules so unfortunately they weren't actually around much.

5. EXCHANGE SITE

I loved the Copenhagen University. It was very beautiful and very well kept. The campus in the city center was especially great because it had that old campus feeling with the brick buildings and everything. The campus was also very easy to navigate in terms of finding classrooms and things.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Fortunately, I had no health concerns while I was abroad and there was never a time I ever felt unsafe in my surroundings. Even if I was taking the metro late at night and by myself I still felt safe. I have heard some stories from some of my friends though about theft being a problem. I never experienced this though.

7. CULTURAL ASPECTS

I integrated into the host country culture mostly through my Danish roommates and my Danish mentor. I also attended some of the events that they set up for mentors and mentees so I was also able to meet several other Danish students through that. Meeting and talking to locals really was the best way I found to actually learn about Danish culture and they're unique views on the world. There were definitely some differences between home and Denmark. I found that the Danes I came into contact with were very reserved. I really had to make an effort to become friends with them.

8. FINANCIAL

This Scan Design scholarship definitely made it possible for me to study abroad. It was a huge help in my financial situation and enabled me to have many experiences that just wouldn't have been possible on a tight budget, especially since Copenhagen is a very expensive city in general. For spending money I usually budgeted around 1,000 per month for food, rent, and transportation. I luckily didn't have any unexpected expenses. My laptop did break, but it happened the last two weeks I was there so I didn't have to deal with trying to buy a new laptop or get one sent over. The cost of living was more expensive in Copenhagen especially with the falling value of the dollar. I also had to get used to switching between US dollars and Kroners.

9. EXCHANGE/SCAN DESIGN FELLOWSHIP ADMINISTRATION

The Scan Design Coordinator was a very great resource to have while abroad. She was able to answer any questions I had and planned some very fun activities. We were able to attend the FC Copenhagen championship game, go on a trip to a Swedish Island, and visit the city of Aarhus. All of these were things I would most likely not have

had the chance to do with out Scan Design. These activities also gave us the opportunity to meet other students from Madison who were sharing this study abroad experience. There is nothing I can think of that could really be improved.

10. PROGRAM/ STUDENT TYPE

Anyone who is interested in Scandinavian Studies would really love this program. Its also really perfect for anyone who needs classroom instruction in English but still wants to learn a second language. Since the Danes have a very unique welfare state government it would also be a highly interesting experience for anyone interested in politics.

11. OVERALL EXPERIENCE

I had a great overall experience. Study abroad is something I would recommend to anyone. It gives you the chance to broaden your horizons and experience a culture that is different. In my opinion it really gets you out of your bubble and gives you the chance to experience things you usually wouldn't get the opportunity to otherwise. I really prepared for going abroad a lot before I came so my academic and personal expectations were pretty accurate. I definitely knew what I was getting myself into. The greatest challenges studying abroad were the little things that you don't even expect to be an issue, even if it's as simple as having to bag your own groceries. When you find little everyday things you usually have no problems with to become stressful it gets kind of frustrating. The sense of accomplishment you get from getting through those little things and living on your own in a foreign country was for me one of the greatest benefits.