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1. Why And Where

I decided to study abroad in Denmark for a couple of reasons. First of all, my father was born and raised in Denmark so I had visited many times over the span of my life. Although I knew a lot about the Danish culture, I had yet to experience the country on my own. I wanted to experience Denmark through my own eyes, to build friendships, to speak the language on a daily basis and to travel as much as I could and this is exactly what I did. I selected Copenhagen Business School because I have been studying International Business at my home university and I wanted to be able to take business classes that would transfer back Madison. I decided not to live in housing offered by CBS and found an all Danish student dormitory called Egmont Kollegiet. I was very nervous when I moved in because I didn't know a soul and I had to put myself out there and start meeting new people. I expected classes to be challenging and much different than classes back home. My home university prepared me very well for my study abroad experience. We all had to take a one credit course that informed us on issues students have while living outside of the country, as well as our financial situations and the insurance policy we were given. Before leaving, I read a lot about the Danish politics so I had a better understanding of Denmark in general. I had also taken two and a half years of Danish in Madison, so I was very ready to start speaking the language on a daily basis. You do not need to know that much Danish when living in Denmark. Everyone there speaks fluent English, so don't get nervous about that. On the other hand, I think that every student who chooses to study abroad in another country should absolutely research their country and put the effort in to learn basic sentences in their language. It is a way of showing respect for that country and it really helps to know a bit about their current events when meeting natives and talking with them.

2. Arrival/Orientation

The Copenhagen Business School did a great job organizing events and activities for incoming exchange students. I went to the majority of the instructional events, where you become acquainted with the school itself, as well as how classes function and what to expect for the upcoming months. Unfortunately, I only attended one of the social gatherings at night because I lived much further away from everyone else and Denmark had a pretty rough winter so it was hard to make the late night activities. The one that I did go to was a dress up dinner with dancing afterwards and it was a great way to get to know other people from all over the world. The Scan Design fellowship helped a great deal once I had already acquainted myself with Copenhagen. Scan Design did a lot to introduce us to great places in town as well as offering services for any questions we had or in the first couple weeks. I first met with Anne Line and the rest of the Scan Design students a few weeks after I moved to Denmark. I felt as if I had already gotten to know a lot of people and seen a lot of cultural sites before this first meeting, but we began to plan different events that would take place throughout the semester so we all had plenty of things to look forward to. Anne Line was very helpful and informed us on lots of different things to do and organized a great deal of trips for us which were extremely helpful and enjoyable.

3. Academics

School at CBS is entirely different from UW-Madison. Don't worry if registration seems frustrating, the International Office is very understanding and usually can accommodate any schedule changes you need. One of my classes that I originally signed up for dropped from the curriculum and a couple other ones were overlapping, but they helped me right away. Classes are usually only once a week, for about 3 hours at a time. Some classes are actually only a quarter long, in which case it may meet for 6 hours in one day. Students are given two 10-15 minute breaks during class, which is nice because the school cafeteria is one of the cheaper places to eat in Copenhagen. The lectures consist of around 50-100 students, and the professors will ask for student feedback and opinions quite a bit. If you answer a question, be prepared to defend your response; it's not to be mean to the students, it's just to make kids think deeper than just a quick answer. I had very little homework during my time abroad. There was extensive reading required each week, and it's very easy to fall behind with so much adjusting going on in a new country. The lack of homework means that your entire grade is determined by your final, and they're all different formats than in the U.S. Some are four hour written exams, where you get to use all of your in-class notes as well as the textbook. Other exams are oral exams, where you draw a question at random and have 15 minutes to prepare a presentation to give to the teacher, again with your notes and the book. I only had four hour written exams and I would recommend keeping up with the reading, and then skimming everything again before the exams. Since a lot of the exams are open book, there is no need for memorization, but more often you need to be able to understand and use a framework in a real situation. Being a native English speaker does give you a huge advantage compared to the other students, but the exams are still fairly challenging. While they do allow students to type their exams rather than hand write, to be eligible to do this you must have your own printer. Only a few international students had this, so we mostly all hand wrote the exams. One difference in class structure from UW is that at CBS classes can be different lengths, ranging from 3 weeks to the whole semester. Therefore you may have only one class by the end of the semester. The grading scale consists of 12, 10, 7, 4, 2, 0, and -3, with 12 being the best and anything above 2 passing. Currently, both 12's and 10's are considered A's at Madison, and 7's are considered AB's. Professors generally don't give out 12's unless they feel you know the material better than they do. The library at CBS is significantly smaller than any library at Madison. That was a very difficult transition for me to make. At Madison, I would say I get 90% of my homework and reading done at the library, where as in Denmark I did the majority of my reading at Egmont because the library was very overcrowded. What I liked most about the academics was that it challenged me to think outside of the box. While reading the book, I learned a lot about theories and concrete ideas. During lecture, the professor used those theories in a more practical setting and related a lot of the ideas to current events. In the exams, you were supposed to integrate those theories into answering the exam questions and use your own creativity and opinions to argue your answer, which I found very interesting and different than my classes in Madison. What I like least about the classes was I found myself falling behind in readings because there was no homework or quizzes. The classes were very self motivated, which I enjoy, but at the same time can be difficult when you are busy integrating yourself into a new culture and meeting new people.

4. Housing

I lived in a dormitory called Egmont Kollegiet. I would recommend this place to anyone who is truly interested in getting to know Danes and living with only Danish students. My home university directs exchange students to international dorms in Copenhagen where you live among students from the United States and all other countries besides Denmark. I decided that I wanted to try something different and I had heard of Egmont through some friends who were exchange students at Madison from Copenhagen. There are around 500 students who live there, mainly Danish students. You receive your own room and share a bathroom with your neighbor. There are 20 students who live on each floor and there is a shared kitchen as well, where you end up spending most of your time hanging out and getting to know everyone. There are social gatherings almost every weekend so it's very easy to get to know people. Egmont is very difficult to get in to though. Last semester, they had 450 applicants and only accepted 80 of them, so apply early. You have to fill out an application answering four questions about yourself and describing why you feel Egmont would benefit from you living there. Here is their website.

<http://www.egmont-kol.dk/en>

If you decide to live at Egmont, you will have an amazing experience and leave with unforgettable memories. I can promise you that.

5. Exchange Site

CBS is located in Frederiksberg, which is a very safe area and a great location. The campus consists of basically four buildings, all of which are quite close together. The main building, Solbjerg Plads, is where most of the classes take place, where the main cafeteria and library are, and where most students congregate and hangout. The other buildings also have smaller cafes and classes take place in them as well. There are computer labs in all four buildings. The campus is accessible from every dorm either by city bus, metro, or a short walk or bike ride, depending on where you live. For me, it was about a twenty minute bike ride.

6. Health and Safety

The city of Copenhagen is extremely safe. The crime rate is miniscule, and I felt very safe when walking or biking around town at night. Regarding healthcare, you need to get a CPR card (Danish social security card) in order to be eligible for Denmark's nationalized healthcare system. Since I lived with all Danish students, a couple of my friends went with me to get my card, which was very helpful. Once you have your CPR, you will be assigned a specific doctor whom you go to if you have any health concerns. I had to see the doctor once for a minor burn and I made the appointment around 10:00 am and was in her office by noon. It was only a block away from Egmont too, so it was very easy and convenient. I might have just been lucky though. I have heard that there are waiting lists for some doctors, and it takes a long time to see one, so I would prepare to wait a little bit to get an appointment.

7. Cultural Aspects

I didn't join any club and wasn't a part of any extracurricular activity during my stay in Denmark. For me, I really didn't have to do these things to integrate myself in the Danish culture. Living at Egmont was my way to meet some of the greatest people I have ever met. Egmont is a very social environment and there are parties almost every weekend, which was a great way to get to know not only people on my floor, but also in the entire building. After I got to know my floor mates, I participated in all sorts of activities where I learned a lot more about their culture and the way Danes live on a day to day basis. I joined food club, which is basically a way to show off your cooking abilities to your floor and get to know everyone a little bit more. We also had monthly meetings, where everyone on the floor gets together in the kitchen and talks about any issues, changes or problems they feel they need to discuss. It was a great way to vocalize suggestions and ideas. We also road tripped to the Netherlands together, which was an absolute blast. If I didn't live at Egmont, I would definitely recommend some sort of side activity like a sport to get involved in so you can meet the natives. CBS offered a lot of extracurricular activities that anyone can join at anytime throughout the semester. The biggest complaint that I have heard from exchange students is that they never really meet any Danes. They live with international students and spend the majority of their time hanging out with them. Of course, this is a great idea because you get to meet people from all over the world who are in the same position as you, but beware of falling into that comfort zone of only hanging out with the people you know. Studying abroad is about meeting all sorts of people, so make a conscious effort to meet the Danes.

8. Finances

The Scan Design Foundation fellowship made all the difference in my study abroad experience. I can't even begin to describe all the ways this scholarship allowed me to fully enjoy and appreciate all Denmark had to offer. Living in Denmark is very expensive and the everyday costs add up faster than you think. This fellowship allowed me to pay for part of my tuition back in Madison, as well as the majority of my housing payments at Egmont and activities Scan Design offered. This enabled me to use my own money for food, transportation in Denmark and traveling all around Europe. I couldn't be more thankful for this foundation and how much they helped to make my study abroad experience unbelievable and unforgettable.

I opened up a bank account in Denmark at Sydbank. The majority of international students don't do this because they think it is a hassle and they have their own debit cards that work just fine. I only had credit cards from back home and none of them had pin codes on them, so they rarely worked when I used them in Denmark. Opening a bank account is not too difficult and you receive a credit card with a chip in it that will work everywhere. Here is a breakdown of my spending throughout the semester (bear in mind these are just ball park figures)

Housing: \$3000

Food: \$1500 (this doesn't include what I spent when going out on the weekends. Drinks can be very expensive, depending on where you go.)

Transportation: \$200 (I loaned a bike from a friend for the six months, so this is much less than what a lot of other people pay. Monthly 2-zone passes are around \$60 and 10 clips on a 2-zone card are about \$25).

Books: \$600

Airline Tickets: \$1500

What I really didn't take into account before I left for Denmark was the amount of money I would spend while actually traveling in the other countries. Hostels are a great choice for places to stay, as there are a lot of fairly cheap nice places. Food and drinks and transportation do add up though, so take that into account when planning your budget. The cost of living in Denmark is much more expensive than Madison so you really need to be careful if you are on a tight budget, as expenses escalate quickly and unfortunately, money tends to run out quick when you are having so much fun.

9. Scan Design Fellowship

Anne Line was extremely accommodating throughout the entire semester. She organized many activities for us to participate in and this really enabled all of us to meet one another. She was very quick to respond to emails as well, which was very helpful when planning trips and such. I attended a coffee meet and greet event within the first few weeks. This was the first time I met Anne Line and she was very welcoming and answered all of my questions that I had at that time regarding living in Denmark and what to see. I also went to a dinner at Marianne's apartment with Anne Line and all of the other Scan Design students. This was a great way to meet and get to know everyone else in the foundation. We discussed all that we had already done and what sorts of activities we would participate in together at some point in the future. I also went to a handball game with a bunch of the other students and watched FCK play against Viborg. I really enjoyed all of these activities I was involved in because in the beginning, I didn't know very many people and it helped me feel a little more comfortable as I was transitioning into my new life in Denmark. There were a couple of trips planned later in the semester, but I unfortunately could not make it to those as I had already planned other trips, but everything was very organized. We would receive e-mails about a week or two before the event was occurring and I always felt welcomed. I thought the trips that were planned were very interesting and exciting and I really wish I could have participated in more of them. It was a great program and I wouldn't change anything about it.

10. Program/Student Type

Honestly, I would recommend Denmark to every student who is looking to study abroad. Denmark is a very safe country and the majority of Danes speaks English fluently, so no need to worry about a language barrier. Although, if you have never taken Danish before, I would highly recommend taking a crash course, where you will acquaint yourself with the basics of their language and their culture. Keep in mind, Denmark has a high standard of living, and along with that comes a very expensive cost of living. This should not deter students from choosing Denmark. It really is not too hard to plan out before hand a rough budget to stick to, so as to not go overboard in spending. Denmark is a beautiful country and you really will have the greatest time of your life.

11.Overall Experience

I had the greatest six months of my life. I couldn't have asked for a better study abroad experience. It's hard even writing about it because I can't stop thinking about all the great times I had and the experiences I will always cherish. I only have great things to write about the Scan Design Foundation Fellowship. Their generous support gave me the opportunity to accomplish all that I wanted to accomplish and I am forever grateful to them. I will never forget that time in my life.

Last comment: I'm finally coming to an end. Bear with me. I just have one more thing to say. Journal. Write down as much as you can about your study abroad experience while you are living it because you wouldn't believe how fast it goes and how quickly small memories start fading. You will definitely appreciate it years down the road. Have a great time everyone!