

Exchange Report

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Copenhagen Business School

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I went to Copenhagen Business School (CBS) in the Fall of 2005. I can safely say that I have had the best semester of my entire school career. I am majoring in Business Administration with concentration in Accounting. The reason I went on exchange is because I love to travel and experience new cultures. Hopefully this report will provide you with a good overview of the practical side of going on exchange and help you get the most out of it.

Arrival and Orientation

After a ten-hour delay my friend Ivan and I arrived in Copenhagen, exhausted and disoriented. CBS has a great 'buddy system', where every student is assigned a Danish student as a buddy to help out for the first few weeks of your stay. I contacted my buddy by email before my arrival, and she arranged to meet me at the airport. Ivan and I didn't think there would be anyone at the airport after such a long delay and that we would have to find our place by ourselves. To our surprise, both of our buddies were still there, waiting for us and holding signs with our names. We left our suitcases at our residence, and headed out for our first Danish experience – to try out Danish beer.

For the first two weeks you will be participating in two programs organized by the school. These are the busiest two weeks because there are quite a few organizational tasks to take care of. They are also the most important to attend because that is when you meet all the other exchange students and learn your way around. The first week consists of an optional Danish crash course and some activities, such as a canal tour around Copenhagen and couple of social activities. I did not find the Danish Crash course that useful – it was impossible to learn anything in just five days. You should register in the full-semester course if you really want to learn Danish. However, it is important to

participate in all the activities because that is where you can meet people and make friends. The second week is a mandatory introduction week, which includes a variety of daytime activities, such as an orientation around the campus and an information session regarding the exams, and lots of fun evening activities ranging from a Danish traditional dinner to a formal welcome party. You will also receive your registration information, the schedule and location of all your classes, and access to the computer facilities and the library.

Academic details

A couple of things worth mentioning about school:

- You can drop classes up until the last month of the semester (the deadline was November 1 for the Fall semester);
- You can also add/change your classes once you get your registration summary during the Introduction Week; however, this is limited to course availability and it is important to do so as soon as possible (usually, most class have free spaces the first week or two);
- You are generally not allowed to eat in classes;
- You will not know your final exams dates until the middle or end of the semester (it depends on the course);
- You are required to take a minimum of four CBS courses (30 ECTS credits; each course is 7.5 ECTS credits), however, you can get a letter from SFU saying that a minimum full-time course load is three courses here; in which case you will be allowed to take only three classes;

- I had classes in four different buildings (courses tend to change their meeting times and locations often – you have to check your schedule every week). All these building were pretty close by and were not hard to find;
- There are no projects, papers, or midterms during the semester. Your final exam will be 100% of your final grade. Not all finals are closed-book written exams; some are either open book or oral;
- If you decide to go on exchange in the future, my advice is to plan your classes early. The earlier in your school career you go on exchange and the better prepared you are, the more options you will have to choose from abroad. Note that Spring and Fall semesters do not have the same classes offered; make sure to check with the school if they are offering a class of your interest.

Paperwork and medical

Canadians are required to obtain a residence permit prior to leaving Canada if they are staying in Denmark longer than three months. Once you are in Denmark, you are supposed to register at Folkeregisteret (the address will be provided by CBS upon arrival; usually buddies help exchange students with registration). You will receive a CPR number and a yellow health card. They will also assign you a family doctor and give you the doctor's address and phone number. Medical care is free, even for foreigners; however, it takes about six weeks to get a health card after you have arrived. It is a good idea to get medical insurance for the first six or so weeks. Dental and prescription drugs are not free.

Once you get your CPR number, you are supposed to apply for a student ID card at the International Office. It is important to apply as soon as possible, because they only make them once a month.

Financial Details

Denmark is fairly expensive; in general it is more expensive than Canada. Eating and drinking out is very expensive (a single drink is around \$10, beer around \$8 CAD); however, some discount stores carry cheap wine and beer and eating at home can be pretty cheap.

There are a few things worthy of note regarding methods of payment. The only cheques that will be accepted by banks are travelers' cheques; they will not accept any personal cheques. In order to pay with a credit card, you will need to know your PIN number; people do not sign their credit card receipts; instead, it works much like an Interac card. You need to find out before you leave what your PIN number is. I opened a bank account at a bank called Nordea. I recommend Nordea because they are pretty flexible with foreigners (other banks, such as Danske Bank, have a lot of restrictions on what kind of cards and accounts foreigners can hold). The bank gave me a Visa Electron card, which is similar to an ATM card. However, not all stores accepted it (most grocery stores did not accept it; all other retail stores did). I still found it more convenient to have a Danish bank account because they had special deals for students with absolutely no fees or charges; this way I could take out smaller sums of cash whenever I needed it. On the other hand, Scotiabank charged me \$5 every time I withdrew cash from an ATM.

Practical information

Housing

I stayed in a residence called Tordenskjoldsgade (Tordens). The residence was great because it was right in the city centre, walking distance to all shops, bars, and cafes. However, Tordens is a very old building; the bathroom and kitchen facilities are not as well-equipped as some of the other residences. There is another residence that is in the centre, called Amaliegade. One of the newer ones is Finsensvej; it is really close to CBS's biggest building, Frederiskberg; however, it is a little outside of the city centre. Every student has their own room with a bathroom and a kitchen in Finsensvej, similar to a bachelor's suite. If you are looking for a bit more privacy, Finsensvej is great, but you don't meet as many people. At Tordens we shared the kitchen and the living room with nine other people; it would get pretty messy at times, but you are around people all the time.

If you plan on living in residence, my advice is to apply as early as possible. The school does not have enough residence rooms to accommodate all exchange students (we had 630 exchange students the semester I went). A lot of people had to stay in private housing, which many people found a bit lonely, because they did not get to see other students as much.

Internet and cell phones

There is Internet in almost all residences which is included in your rent (make sure to have a network cable with you). The landline phones in the rooms accept incoming calls only. Because of that, it was almost a necessity to have a cell phone. The cheapest plan I found was the one offered by an online company called CBB-mobile (www.cbbmobile.dk). It is a prepaid plan, where you have to top up your credit online (SIM card is free and takes about five days to arrive). The only problem with it is that the

initial purchase has to be made by using a Danish credit card (called Dankort). You can just ask your buddy to use his or her card and pay them back in cash. Make sure that you have a world-phone (or tri-band); and that it is unlocked so you can use a different SIM card. I had to buy a European phone because my Fido phone did not work there, which can be very expensive (\$300-400 CAD) especially if you have to buy it without a plan (most plans require a one-year contract). If you have to buy another phone, ask your buddy for a cheap place to buy one, such as second hand shops (I went to an area called Norrebro).

I used a long-distance card called Global Passport, which is sold at every 7-11. Most students, including me, used Skype (www.skype.com) to call home.

Public transportation

Copenhagen has a good system of public transportation: including buses, metro, and S-trains that can take you anywhere in Denmark. You can buy a monthly pass for 300 DKK (\$60 CAD - you can buy it at the airport and any train station) if you plan to use public transportation often. All types of public transit operate 24 hours on Friday and Saturday nights.

Most Danes take bikes everywhere; a lot of exchange student choose to buy a bike instead of a metro pass. Prices for used bikes range from 700 – 1200 DKK (\$130-230 CAD). Places to buy cheap bikes include: police auctions, second hand shops around Norrebro and Norreport, and from other students. There are also colorful city bikes (it's hard to miss one if you see it), which you can take by depositing a coin; however, they are almost never available and really uncomfortable.

Gym

If you want to join a gym around the city centre, I recommend Fitness DK. It is more expensive than gyms in Canada (around 400-430 DKK = \$75 CAD per month), however, it has great facilities such as a pool, squash courts, a great range of classes. Another good gym near the school is called Hard Work. The gym at school is small, crowded, and costs 250 DKK (\$45-50 CAD per month).

Food

There are two discount grocery stores near the centre of Copenhagen: Netto and Aldi. There are two Nettos close to Tordens; there is also Aldi on Gothersgade. These stores carry the most basic foods, such as milk and bread, and are warehouse type places. You can also find really cheap wine (\$2-\$3 for a bottle) and beer at Netto and Aldi. The grocery store in Magasin du Nord is probably the most expensive; however, I found special foods that neither Netto nor Aldi carried there. There are Fotex and Irma close to school, which are just regular grocery stores with good selection of any kind of food. Grocery shopping was a bit of a challenge because everything was in Danish. The school provides you with an Arrival Guide, which has a list of useful words, including names of foods. I recommend studying those; it will make shopping much easier. The school has a canteen, where we ate almost every day, with a good selection of cheap meals.

Going out

Going out in Denmark can be quite expensive. Cover charges at night clubs can be as much as \$20, a double drink can be \$20, and beer can be up to \$10-15 for a pint. Some pieces of advice about going out: wine and beer are cheaper at grocery stores, you can send text messages (their phone numbers are on the internet) to get on the guest list to

most clubs which will get you free cover, and look for places that have student specials throughout the week. Here are some suggestions:

- Nexxus – the school pub at Frederiksberg. Every Thursday they have pub nights with cheap beer;
- La Cable – the school café/pub at Dalgas Have (another CBS building). Students usually go there on Fridays, they also have cheap beer there;
- LA Bar – casual bar in the centre; cheap drinks; most people go on Wednesdays;
- Moose Bar – Tuesday night specials;
- Student Huset – Wednesday night specials for students;
- Rubadub – reggae place; popular on Sundays;
- Australian Bar – casual bar; drink specials sometimes;
- Heidi's – drink specials on Fridays or Saturdays;
- Saturday nights: clubs (not cheap, but I recommend): Emma, Park, Vega, and Luux (you can find addresses to these places online).

What to bring

My general advice is to bring just the essentials, because you will be tempted to go on shopping sprees all the time and will be left with too much luggage to carry back (at least that's what happened to me). Shopping in Denmark is great; some cheap stores are H&M and Mango. I found that toiletry and make-up were more expensive in Denmark; so I suggest stocking up before you leave. You will also be asked to represent your school during their exchange fair; I recommend bringing some brochures and pamphlets from SFU.

I do not recommend bringing hair dryers, curling irons, straightening irons and the like because if you only use an adapter (instead of a converter) they will either burn or not work properly. Converters can cost as much, if not more, as your hair appliances (which are not expensive to buy in Denmark).

Places to visit in Denmark

There are a few places in Denmark outside of Copenhagen worth visiting:

- Louisiana museum – this is a museum of Modern Art; once in a while they have really good exhibitions (they had a Picasso exhibition when I was there);
- Vikings' Ship Museum in Roskilde – this is great in the summer only because you also get a chance to go rowing on one of the Vikings' boats;
- Legoland – a Lego amusement park.

Travel

You will most likely travel extensively during the semester. Traveling can be quite cheap. The key is to plan and book ahead so you can find cheap airfare deals. Additionally, it is important to do a good search through various airlines, and mix and match different airlines and destinations (because each airline has cheap deals for certain cities). Having flexible dates and times also helps. There is a one-week break in October, during which most exchange students go traveling. The school organized two weekend trips to Berlin and Oslo. It is pretty easy to make weekend trips on your own as well; usually there are no problems finding people to go traveling with, as most exchange students are always willing to go away.

Cheap airline websites:

- www.easyjet.com

- www.ryanair.com (flies from Malmo, Sweden)
- www.flysnowflake.dk
- www.maersk-air.dk
- www.transavia.dk (cheap direct flights to Amsterdam)
- sterlingticket.dk
- www.vueling.com (cheap flights within Spain).

Some places are cheaper to travel to by train or by bus; these places include Sweden and Germany (especially Hamburg and Berlin). There are also ferries available to take to Germany. If traveling within Italy, I recommend their local trains. For example, fares from Venice to Rome can be as cheap as 8 euros per person. You will find that Ryan Air is the cheapest airline available. However, I do not recommend flying with them, because you end up spending more money on getting to and from really remote airports. Most of the airports they fly from are small and can be up to 120 km away from your desired destination (a good example is what Ryan Air calls Copenhagen, which is actually Malmo, Sweden). You end up wasting a lot of time and money on getting to and from airports. Additionally, the weight limit for luggage is 15 kg, while most other airlines allow 20kg. If you happen to have an overweight suitcase, it will cost you a fortune (8-10 euros per excess kilogram). Furthermore, you always have to fly through London since there are no direct flights to anywhere from Copenhagen if you fly with Ryan Air.

For good hostel listings visit: <http://www.europefamoushostels.com/> and www.hostelworld.com

Weather

Copenhagen enjoys a mild climate. The summers do not tend to be hot, and winters are not too cold. It did not snow there once while I was there (from August to the end of December); however, I heard that it sometimes snows there in the winter.

Useful web links:

- www.useit.dk – great information for tourists; lists places to visit; various tips on traveling within and from Denmark (English);
- <http://www.rejseplan.dk/> - similar to Translink website; allows you to find the most convenient route and time schedule for any destination in Denmark (English);
- www.krak.dk – similar to Mapquest and Yellow pages – allows you to get maps of any location in Denmark; also you can find business and individual directories (Danish only);
- www.e-campus.dk – similar to webct and gosfu – you will be using this site a lot for all your classes; this is where class notes and all other course information is posted (English);
- **biografonline.dk and biobooking.dk** – for movie listings and schedules (Danish only);
- www.topauktioner.dk – police bike auctions (English);
- **fitnessdk.dk** – Fitness DK gym website (Danish only);
- http://www.cbs.dk/cbs_international/international_students/current_exchange_students/timeout/ - CBS posts a lot of information on places to go, to eat, for entertainment, and travel (English).

Free Publications

You can pick up most of these at the International Office at Dalgas Have:

- Playtime – lists all events and activities for a week; has useful information on cheap buses, airlines, and trains;
- UseIt publication – contains useful tourist information;
- Copenhagen This Week – official monthly tourist guide.