Introduction
I went to Copenhagen Business School (CBS) in Denmark. My major is Business, concentrating in Finance. However, I took a mixture of courses at CBS, not just Finance.

I arrived in Copenhagen on January 16, 2015, and the last day of housing was June 14, 2015. My first day of class was January 27, 2015, and my last exam took place on June 3, 2015.

Preparation for Exchange
On researching for your partner university, I would recommend taking costs of living into account, and also the accessibility of the city. I did lots of research, but I didn’t realize how the high cost of living in Denmark would affect me so much. Also, when traveling to other European countries, taking the train would not be the most feasible option from Copenhagen, so I had to spend more money on booking flights.

In addition, I would start planning for courses on exchange early – make sure the chosen courses are able to transfer over as SFU credits. I also did lots of research on which school would provide me with the courses I needed or wanted to take.

Make sure you take voltage into account. For example, I accidentally brought a 110-V hair dryer to Copenhagen, and I didn’t have a transformer, so it became a waste of space.

There are a lot of pickpockets in Europe, but luckily, I have never had anything stolen from me during my exchange. I never used my money/travel belt – I just kept a small cross-body purse with me and I was able to keep my hand on it at all times. I would recommend bringing travel size bottles (100ml or under) for traveling purposes – always convenient to just squeeze liquids, such as shampoo, in these bottles. For short trips, you can only bring carry-on luggage (unless you pay extra for a check-in bag). Also, make sure your carry-on suitcase or backpack is within dimensions for airlines.

Bring more than one adaptor with you (in case you lose one, or if you have multiple devices to charge). For Internet in dorms, most of them have wired Internet, and I had a Macbook Air, so I had to get an Ethernet USB adaptor.

I took Air Canada to Copenhagen, with a transfer at Toronto. The round-trip price was around $900 CAD.

The majority of restaurants, grocery markets, and stores have credit card systems. However, I would recommend bringing at least some cash with you at all times.

The cost of living in Copenhagen is higher than Vancouver’s. Eating out is expensive – be prepared to pay around 2-3 times the amount for the same meal in Vancouver. If I were to pay around $8-10 CAD for a bowl of noodles in Vancouver, in Copenhagen, it would be around $25-30 CAD. However, groceries are around the same price as Vancouver – only slightly more expensive, attributed to the 24% VAT. I cooked most of the time in my dorm because it is a much cheaper option for meals.
During Exchange

My CBS Buddy met me when I arrived at the Copenhagen Airport because I signed up for the CBS Buddy Program (information will be provided to you through email). A CBS Buddy helps you integrate into life in Denmark for the first couple of weeks.

There is a mandatory Introduction week, which would give you guidance on school, dorms, etc.

I lived in Porcelænshaven, which is on campus. I would recommend this dorm, or Tietgen. Tietgen is very beautiful, but it is slightly further away from campus (takes around 20-30 minutes to get to campus). I would try to stay away from Kathrine Kollegiet – you have to share a room with someone else (unless you prefer to), it is more expensive than other dorms, and it is one of the more unattractive/unappealing dorms.

When registering for dorms, the usual time they release the online applications is 12pm Denmark Time, which is 3am Vancouver time. I highly recommend waking up for this time and be ready on the computer early. When the email pops up in your inbox, do not read anything, and immediately press the “link” in the email. For me, I wasted 20 seconds reading the email, which pushed me back to #104 in line. I would also recommend doing this on 2 computers (if you have access to 2) – you can press the link on the 2nd computer has a back up. One of my friends wasn’t able to get accommodation through CBS because her computer crashed on her (it is also much more competitive to get housing in the Fall semester).

It is possible, but difficult, to get accommodation other than CBS Housing. Other options are cheaper, but you may miss out on the “dorm life” and connecting with other students in the dorm.

Airlines I took for my short trips around Europe were Norwegian Air (although they don’t have flights to many places, I highly recommend going with this airline if you can), EasyJet, and SAS. RyanAir is also a cheap option.

CBS lectures are not mandatory, and most professors upload their PowerPoint presentations afterwards, which give you little incentive to go to class. The scheduling is also frustrating – even if you get the courses you want, the courses that are not in the same “program” (such as Marketing and Finance) have a higher chance of overlapping. Some lectures of different classes would take place at the same time, so even if you wanted to go to class, you must choose one to go to. If your classes overlap too much, they recommend you to switch a class. Fortunately, in the end, I only had a couple lectures overlap, so my schedule worked out in the end.

Most classes are 100% final. There are 4-hour sit-in written exams, oral exams, and a combination of both. The grading system is -3, 0, 2, 4, 7, 10, and 12. 2 is a pass. 12 is an A, 10 is a B, and so on.

You would find that there is a lot of free time because there is not much to do for your classes, but that doesn’t mean that it is easy to get a higher mark (10 or 12) on the exams.

The class schedule also changes weekly – one class would take place on Monday and Wednesday on week, and it may change to Tuesday and Thursday the week after, so you must check your class calendar almost everyday.

I would also recommend not buying textbooks unless you absolutely need it. It is very difficult to re-sell your textbook, and do not buy from the bookstore – buy it second hand. But it is hard to find places to buy second-hand textbooks. There are a few Facebook groups, and I used this Danish website: https://pensum.dk (use Google translate).

One option is to buy the textbook from the bookstore, and you can return it within 8 days for a full refund. Some students who just study for their final the week before can return their textbook after a week. You can also return the textbook (in new condition) and buy another textbook, and return that later on.
The culture there is more carefree, and there is a high level of trust among the citizens. However, procedures are not as fast-pace as Vancouver or other parts of the world. Work hours are short, and most do not work overtime or weekends, so it’s frustrating when you need to get something done immediately.
Weather is very similar to Vancouver’s – just slightly colder. Even when I left in June, it wasn’t to a “warm” temperature – the wind makes Copenhagen chilly.

Although I tried getting involved at CBS clubs, it was difficult to get in because I couldn’t be committed long-term. Thus, to fill in my time, I would go out with friends, and plan many short trips to other European countries. I went to Sweden, Czech Republic, Austria, Latvia, Poland, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, Iceland, and Greece. A cheaper trip, such as Germany, would be around $350 CAD total. The more expensive trips, such as Iceland and Switzerland, would be around $500-600 CAD. My trips were usually 4-7 days long.

Reflection After Exchange
In the beginning, especially the first month, I was homesick and lonely. I wasn’t used to living on my own – I liked company in my home. There was the 9-hour time difference, which prevented me from Skyping friends and family often. Through the new experiences of surviving on my own, cooking, and dealing with daily life, I’ve learned how to adapt to a new environment.

I’ve made the closest friendships during the 2nd half of my exchange. I wish I were more open to close friendships earlier on.

One advice I would give is to keep an open mind to try new things. Exchange is a one-in-a-lifetime experience. Don’t like excuses or being scared hinder you from doing what you want.
Photos

Figure 1. Dinner at My Friend’s Dorm (Tietgen)

Figure 2. Winter Outside My Dorm (Porcelænshaven)
Figure 3. A Street in Copenhagen City Centre

Figure 4. The View of a CBS Building