Exchange Report

Copenhagen Business School (CBS)

Copenhagen, Denmark | Spring 2018
INTRODUCTION

I recently completed my Spring 2018 study abroad term in Copenhagen, Denmark at CBS. I arrived in Copenhagen on January 12, 2018, which was the first day to move into my residence at Kathrine Kollegiet. My classes began on February 5, 2018 and I completed exams on June 8, 2018. I moved out of my residence on the last day, which was June 14, 2018.

As a 4th year student, I took two MIS courses (Business & Data Analytics and Information Organization in Practice) and two Operations Management courses (Introduction to Sustainable Business and Global Supply Chain Management).

PREPARATION FOR EXCHANGE

If you need to apply for a Residence Permit, which is recommended to do quite early, you’ll get a preview of how expensive it is to live in Copenhagen and Scandinavia. With the VAT in Copenhagen being 24%, it is very expensive to eat out, so be prepared to buy groceries (at Lidl, Fakta, or Fotex) and cook in your residence on a regular basis. Additionally, flying out of Copenhagen is expensive, so I recommend planning trips well in advance, while also using websites like Skyscanner.

For course registration, their process is very different from SFU. First, you submit the courses you want to enroll in, then they let you know if they are available to you or oversubscribed (full). Then, there is a second opportunity to register for classes and get on waitlists. All of this is taken care of by the host education via e-mail communication. Later, you find out your classes, which change dates each week, so classes may overlap. You also don't find out exam dates until 2 weeks into the term.

In terms of packing, Copenhagen’s climate is similar to Vancouver’s, but windier, so be prepared to bring a wide array of clothing, especially if you’re on exchange in Spring, as you’ll face snow, rain, and sun. Furthermore, if your residence does not have Wi-Fi, I recommend bringing an Ethernet Cable and Ethernet Adaptor. I would also bring an outlet adaptor with you. Additionally, ensure that your luggage fits all size requirements – not just your flight from Vancouver, but also the smaller airlines that you will travel with across Europe, as they have stricter weight and size requirements.

Lastly, I also recommend researching your bank’s international fees for your credit and debit cards. I exchanged some Canadian money into Danish Kroners and I also brought Euros and British Pounds for travelling. It’s always valuable to have cash on you, however, in Copenhagen, you won’t have any issues with using your credit or debit card. Moreover, once you arrive in Copenhagen, you can open a bank account with Nordea. Nordea is very experienced with opening accounts for exchange students and they have no fees.
**DURING EXCHANGE**

My CBS Buddy met me when I arrived at Copenhagen Airport because I had signed up for the CBS Buddy Program (information will be provided to you through email) and helped me get to my residence. The CBS Buddy program is free and connects you with a current CBS student who helps you integrate into life in Denmark. You are put into a Buddy Group, which also allows you to connect with other exchange students and their buddies.

When you arrive in Copenhagen, there is a mandatory Introduction Week, in a lecture-style format, which provides you with information regarding exams, dorms, services at CBS, the library, and student engagement opportunities. There is also a campus tour during the week, where you walk to each of the main campuses (Solbjerg Plads, Kilen, Dalgas Have, and Porcelænshaven). There are also opportunities to take a Danish Crash Course in the week prior to the Introduction Week, and to participate in social events during the Introduction Week in the evenings. However, these activities are not included and are quite expensive.

All courses are 100% exam based, therefore, there are very few assignments, none of which are graded, and lots of readings. There is also a large emphasis on team-based learning. In terms of exams, they may consist of: 4-hour written exams on a computer, 24-hour written papers (in varying lengths), or oral-exams. 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.

With regards to my residence, I lived in Kathrine Kollegiet. At CBS, housing is not controlled by the school, as in Denmark, post-secondary institutions are not allowed to offer housing. Therefore, CBS has partnerships with different buildings, which reserve housing for CBS exchange students. This is often why prices are high, and with limited availability, they are reserved quickly. This is also why some housing is very close to campus (e.g. 5 minute bike ride), whereas, other housing is quite far (30 minute bike ride). Furthermore, off-campus housing is difficult to find and can be equally as expensive. If looking for off-campus housing, I recommend joining various Facebook groups or checking via Airbnb. Often times, students share off-campus housing, therefore, you may be able to share a room in an apartment with other students to save cost.

Additionally, I recommend purchasing a used bike when you arrive in Copenhagen through the many Facebook groups. You can purchase a good bike, with lights and a lock, for between 650 DKK and 1000 DKK, which you can sell before you leave Copenhagen. Despite Copenhagen’s great metro system that runs 24 hours, it is expensive and much easier to bike anywhere in the city. If you are still planning to take the metro, especially to and from the airport, I recommend purchasing a Rejeskort Anonymous card. The card costs 80 DKK and you can upload money online, at 7-11, or at the station – you must have at least 70 DKK on the card to avoid a fine and successfully check-in. The incentive to use the card is that it provides you with fare discounts, anyone can use it, and you can sell it afterwards.
For travelling, Copenhagen is expensive to fly out of. To save money, I recommend booking early, and flying using airlines like: Norwegian, EasyJet, and RyanAir. These are cheap options, but you need to ensure that you follow their rules to avoid unnecessary and costly fees.

When you aren’t travelling, there are a lot of great options for social activities and CBS has a lot of student organizations you can get involved in. I enjoyed meeting friends at Nexus, getting coffee at Espresso House, and exploring downtown Copenhagen. Some notable sites include: Superkilen, Church of Our Saviour, the Round Tower, Nyhavn, Tivoli, Strotget, and Christianshavn. Moreover, in Spring, CBS hosts the CBS Case Competition, which is a great way to gain exposure to an international case competition. If you’re interested in gaining case competition experience as well, CBS also hosts CBS Case Competition OPEN at the same time, where CBS students can compete as well.

**REFLECTION AFTER EXCHANGE**

Exchange has been an incredible opportunity to travel across Europe, attend one of Europe’s top business schools, engage in unique student activities, and to meet students from across the world. There was definitely a culture shock at the beginning, especially with the prices in Copenhagen, the language barrier, 9-hour time difference, and needing to survive living away from home (e.g. cooking, laundry); however, I quickly learned to adapt and be independent. I would definitely recommend to spend a semester abroad, and to consider spending it at CBS in Copenhagen, Denmark!

**FURTHER ADVICE/TIPS:**

- When you arrive, the package CBS gives you has a free Lebara SIM card for your phone. You can choose from a few different Lebara plans. I chose the $20 CAD plan, which gives you 600 calling minutes (international), 3000 texts in Denmark, 60 GB of data in Denmark, and 4 GB of data across Europe.
- Coffee is very expensive. For example, a tall drink at Starbucks is around $10.00 CAD. Coffee is cheaper at the Canteen, where you can pre-pay for 10 coffees and get an 11th free.
- The water in Denmark is hard water, which means there is lots of calcium in it. You’ll need to use a calcium remover on the shower, sink, and toilet. In addition, it will impact your laundry and likely your hair when showering.
- Danish culture can be represented by the word “hygge,” meaning cozy. Since winters are cold and long, Danes spend lots of time inside and invest lots into their homes.
PHOTOS

Figure 1: The main CBS campus: Solbjerg Plads.

Figure 2: CBS Case Competition (International and OPEN) Case Launch.
Figure 3: Nyhavn – the famous 17th-century waterfront with brightly coloured buildings!

Figure 4: Tivoli – the second oldest operating amusement park in the world!