

Hvor skal du hen på udvaksling?

General information

In the autumn semester of 2016, I was able to do my exchange semester at Aarhus University, School of Business and Social Sciences (BSS). This university is located in Aarhus, the second city in Denmark. The city has approximately 315.000 inhabitants and it is one of the youngest student cities in Europe. Its population contains a lot of students. www.visitaarhus.com says: “Think of Aarhus as a major city crammed into a mega village. Being a university city, Aarhus is the youngest in Denmark measured by average age, [...]” and I think they could not be more right.

Preparation

When signing up for the autumn semester, you should sign up at the ESE around January. I almost overlooked this early deadline but luckily, I was in time. Once you are submitted, there are some meetings at the Erasmus University about the exchange and what to arrange for it. This was all pretty straightforward and you should just follow the steps. As an EU-citizen, I did have to arrange any visa. After a while, I got an email from Aarhus University in which they gave me guidelines on how to apply for accommodation. In principle, the university will arrange housing. It is *really* useful not to cross the applying deadline as housing is really, really scarce in Aarhus. Unfortunately, I got an email saying that they could not find housing for me. Being warned for scarcity of housing, I instantly started searching for housing for about a month which resulted in nothing. Then luckily, Aarhus University mailed me saying they eventually found an apartment for me. For those of you who will get the same email saying they cannot find housing, my best advice is to start looking on the private market immediately as it will require some time to find. Do not wait until you arrive in Aarhus.

Arrival

I went to Aarhus on Tuesday, the 9th of August since I had accommodation from the 1st of August on. At some point, I got an email from the university saying I have a mentor. In case I was not able to pick up my keys during office hours (which I wasn't), I had to contact my mentor so she could pick up my keys. When I arrived on the 9th, I met her and she handed me the keys. A couple of days later, I had to go to the International Office in order to arrange the contract for my apartment. The apartment was located at Dania Kollegiet which was perfect! It was located 1 minute from a big mall, 15 minutes walking distance from my faculty (BSS) and about 25 minutes from the city centre. We had a Facebook group with most of the internationals in the autumn 2016 semester where a lot of messages were posted about stuff people were doing. I just decided to go to one of these events and made friends on these nights. From the 15th of August, I did a crash course in Danish at Lærdansk. It is free when you are student and I definitely recommend doing that when you arrive early as I did. The crash course was 2 weeks. After these 2 weeks, the introduction week started. From the 29th of August to the 2nd of September, BSS hosted all kinds of activities. This week was incredibly amazing and was full with parties. You will have the best time during this week, so do not miss it!

Courses

Aarhus University requires you to do between 25ECTS and 30ECTS. At my faculty, each course is either 5ECTS or 10ECTS. I decided to do 30ECTS in total, of which one course of 10ECTS and four courses of 5ECTS.

Business Intelligence (5ECTS)

This course was the hardest course I did at the BSS although the exam was easier than I expected comparing it to the lectures and the exam. I learned a lot about the business process of transforming data into knowledge/wisdom. I really liked this course as these kind of courses are not really offered at the ESE. If you are planning on travelling the whole semester, you might want to find a buddy to share notes with as the professor (Mads Carsten Brink Hansen) does not give slides but uses the black board (not to confuse with Blackboard). There is one lecture of 2 hours per week. The exam (3-hour) is open book.

Business Development with Information Systems (5ECTS)

BDIS is about developing a business with the help of information systems. The course includes one plenary lecture of 2 hours per week and one small lecture of 2 hours per week. During the course, we had to write a report. We got a case and had to improve it by implementing information system. Once the report is done, you have to do an oral exam in order to pass.

International Marketing (5ECTS)

International Marketing had one lecture of 2 hours per week. This course was definitely not my hardest course. At the end of the semester, you have a 3-hour open book exam which, in my opinion, is relatively easy to pass.

Mergers & Acquisitions (5ECTS)

This course was all about an economic and business approach to mergers and acquisitions. For me, the course was pretty interesting as it is more relevant than I initially thought. After passing the course, which you do by an oral exam at the end of the semester, I noticed that I understood the news items about mergers or acquisitions way better.

Organisational Behaviour (10ECTS)

This course was about a range of topics in the organisational aspect: personality, perception and emotions, motivation, leadership, groups and teams, culture, change, decision making, and power, politics and conflict. I found this course extremely interesting as I have a natural interest in the psychological aspects of businesses. The exam is a 6-hour written open book exam which scared me at first but time goes pretty fast during the exam. ;)

When I went on exchange, I already did my minor (12ECTS) which means I will incorporate 12ECTS as 'Exchange' on my bachelor and the remaining ECTS will be placed on a separate form. I passed all the courses.

Finances

When I went to Aarhus, I saved about 3.500 euros. The first 75% of the Erasmus+ loan was approximately 1.000 euros. Assuming that I would stay for 5-6 months, these two fixed amounts would give me 750-900 euros per month. Furthermore, I had a lone from the Dutch government for 300 euros per month and I got 100 euros per month for not using the public

transport card. Besides that, I had the luck I could do some work from Denmark for my Dutch company, which made me about 200 euros per month. On average (!), I had between 1350-1500 euros per month to spend.

My room in the Netherlands was sublet so I had no costs to that. The apartment in Aarhus was about 3.000 DK, which is approximately 400 euros per month. When it came to buying food, buying drinks and going to parties, I didn't really have a budget. My guideline was not to cross the 1350-1500 euros per month in order to survive to the end.

There are different ways to do budgeting. You could make budgets for food, drinks, parties, public transport etc. I decided not to but just to use my monthly budget until it was spent. One thing you should take into account when using this method is travelling. I travelled a lot: a week in Norway in the Fjords, a boat cruise to Sweden, Estonia, Finland and Russia, a trip to Italy (which was pretty random) and some travelling across Denmark. I would recommend everyone to travel a lot as the countries around Denmark are also pretty amazing. When it comes to my type of budgeting, I just spent a little less one month in order to make an amazing trip the next month.

Daily life

Due to the fact that I did five courses simultaneously, I had about 7 lectures (of 2 hours) per week. These lectures were distributed among 3-4 days per week. During the semester, I continued to learn Danish at Lærdansk twice a week, each session being about 2 hours. Note that the lectures in Denmark are not obligatory so it is your own choice if you go or not. For me, it meant occasionally skipping a lecture the day after a party, especially after International Night on Tuesday. 😊

If you have any questions about an exchange in Aarhus, you can contact me on 404312dt@student.eur.nl

I hope you make the right choice for you and that you have an amazing time on exchange.

Kind regards,
Dave Teeuwsen