

ERASMUS-EXPERIENCE REPORT

Name: Anonymous

Field of study: Bachelor UBRM / Environmental and Bioresource Management

Host University: Syddansk Universitet / University of Southern Denmark (SDU) – in Odense

Year of study: SS 2024

Duration of stay: from end of January to end of June

Publication of the report

I consent to the publication of this experience report including the above data (field of study, host university, year of study, duration of stay) on the website of BOKU-International Relations for the purpose of sharing information related to the study visit, so that future interested outgoings can inform themselves about your experience at the host institution.

✓ **yes** ☒ **no**

The consent is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time without giving reasons with immediate future effect. Any withdrawal can be declared at any time by e-mail to erasmus@boku.ac.at.

THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS WOULD BE INTERESTING FOR FUTURE OUTGOINGS:

1. City, country and people + social integration

I was studying for one summer semester in the third biggest city of Denmark – in the city Odense. Odense is located on a big island Funen and is by train only about an hour away from the capital Copenhagen. Even though the city resp. the city center might seem smaller (compared to other European cities), it still had a nice cozy and hygge vibe and it was easier for me to integrate and fit in faster, because I knew the main places and streets and did not need to search for directions on google maps. One can often see the typical brick houses all around the city often with smaller gardens more towards the suburbs or the nice small colorful historical houses. Danish people are as in most Scandinavian cultures more introverted and do not engage so much with new people. But once you engage with them and ask them something they are all very helpful and kind. Fortunately, the integration is also easy because nearly everyone can speak English very well. I tried to learn some Danish phrases and words, but the language was a bit difficult to learn, because the pronunciation is often different from the written language. If I wouldn't be so focused on university and studying, I would definitely also try the free (with deposit) Danish course, which was offered by my guest university. I also felt very safe in Denmark and really enjoyed spending time with the international students there and traveling around the country with them. ESN also organized nice events in Odense and trips around Denmark. I went on the trip to Aarhus, Aalborg and to Grenen, where we saw also beautiful nature and the force of the sea. Generally, Odense is also known because of Hans Christian Andersen and his fairy tales, so there can be find lots of museums and his "footsteps" throughout the city. I really enjoyed also the many parks, the river which flows through the city, where I could go for a run hidden from the cars and asphalt.

The only thing to keep in mind, it is next to the sea, so it is somehow always windy and relatively cold. In February/March it was sometimes snowing and freezing, but later on in May it was around 20°C and in late June it was even warmer around 24°C. I really enjoyed the long days, where there was light until almost 10:30 p.m. and the great weather for doing sport outside, so that it isn't too hot. It also rains quit a lot and is cloudy, especially in the first few months of the year.

When it comes to food, they don't really have some really special cuisine, but they have their open faced' sandwiches – smørrebrød, hot dogs – pølser and in general lots of meat. But I really love their pastries like the Vienna Bread – wienerbrød or Cinnamon Snail – kanelnegl. They also like beer and in Odense they have their Albani Odense Pilsner. I don't like beer so I can't really judge, but if you like to drink alcohol it might be cheaper than long drinks.

2. Accommodation

I applied via the university's accommodation office for a single bedroom housing (with shared common rooms). Each student gets only one offer from the university which can be accepted or denied and then I would have to search myself another accommodation. Fortunately, I got a really great flat offer from the university which I accepted. I had a big furnished room for myself (bed, desk, chair, wardrobe). The only thing I had to buy was bed linen, duvet and pillow (There is a big IKEA and shopping

center near the university). In the flat were three other bedrooms, where my roommates lived. We all shared a bathroom and a big kitchen (also well equipped: stove, oven, fridge, dishes, cutlery etc.) and a linked dining room. The great thing, there were many empty spaces and cupboards, where we could store our food. We had a nice view from the kitchen of the garden. We were living on the top floor, which was nice because this way I could enjoy sunlight through my window. We also had one washing machine for the whole house downstairs (cost approx. 10kr/2h). There is also a room, where we could look our bikes. My roommates were all female and I really enjoyed living with them. Two of them were from France and one was also from Austria. We sometimes cooked together, played some board games, arranged study sessions or went on trips and festivals (like Tinderbox, Odense Run/Løbet/Quiz night/Karaoke). We also had a nice white board, where we wrote down the chores (cleaning of bathroom, kitchen, floor, garbage) and information like who is currently on vacation etc. This way we had always a clean flat and there was no conflict. The accommodation is only a minute away from the tram station and it takes around 15 minutes to university.

The only thing, I applied a bit later for this accommodation, so I was only allowed to move in 3 weeks after I arrived in Denmark. That's why I lived for the first few weeks in a very nice Airbnb.

3. Costs and expenses

Unfortunately, Denmark is one of the top five most expensive countries in Europe and therefore you should always have some money reserve. The official currency in Denmark is the Danish Krone (DKK/kr.): 1EUR = approx. 7,4DKK. Therefore, it is very nice that the Erasmus financial aid is a bit higher than in other countries. Almost everywhere in Denmark is very common to pay with card or even phones. That's why I never even needed cash. I used and can recommend Revolut for exchange, because otherwise it can get pretty expensive with the constant currency exchange rate, depending on your home bank. I also cooked a lot at home and made pre-cooked meals so that I can eat them sometimes also at university. There are also lots of supermarkets and discount stores. But generally, alcohol and sweets are mostly very expensive.

4. Arrival and departure (mean of transport)

I arrived from Vienna by plane to Copenhagen Airport and then took the train (DSB) to Odense St. from where I took the tram (Letbane) to my accommodation. Sometimes when going to Copenhagen I also took the cheap FlixBus because the train needed to be booked a few weeks in advance in order to be cheap. They also sell discount train tickets (orange ticket). I always loved the journey from Odense to Copenhagen, because you leave one island and across on long bridge (surrounded by sea from each side) to another island. I used as public transportation mostly the tram and bought an Ung/Young Odense ticket (under 26y)-10kr, valid for 75min. with the Fynbus app reps. now RejseBillet app. But this was only at the beginning of my stay, where it was snowing and cold. Later on, I mostly went everywhere by bike, and it took me also around 20 minutes to university. I used the SwapFiets app to rent a bike for 4 months, because they had nice bikes with a basket, lights, gear change, breaks, a lock, weren't rusty and had free service included. Denmark is well known for its wonderful and fully developed and built out bicycle roads and that's why you can see bikes everywhere there. The bike roads are almost as big as the car roads, and you can see there people biking even if it is snowing or raining.

5. Other (visa, insurance, etc.)

I didn't need a visa, but I needed to register at the Danish authorities (the process is explained by university) and then I also got a Danish insurance card (yellow card). Because Denmark is so expensive, it invests also money in health care and therefore healthcare and insurance is generally for free with this card. I also got the MitID app, which is important for registration and official matters.

6. Description of host university

The Syddansk Universitet / University of Southern Denmark (SDU) in Odense (the biggest of the 6 SDU campuses) is the third-largest university in Denmark many faculties like Humanities, Science, Engineering, Social Sciences and Health Sciences. I was studying at the Business and Social Sciences faculty. The whole campus is enormous and has two soon three tram stations (as soon as the new university hospital is built) and lots of parking slots for bikes and cars. It is built mostly in the style of brutalism and has a bit rusty frontage but also many climbing plants, forest and nature around it, as it is a bit outside of the city centre. The university has one long main hall (where people even have own scooters inside to manage the distance from one end to the other) and then many side halls and lecture rooms and the library. I usually looked up the room on the SDU map. There is also a main canteen, a vegetarian canteen, cafeterias, a own "Friday bar" inside the university (where students can party), a free inside swimming pool, an free athletic stadium track (which I used also for running) or a SDU Fitness Gym (where I signed up for a relatively cheap prize and also participated in many nice fitness courses like Dance Fit, Core Fitness, Yoga etc.). There were also computers and printers which we could use for free. The university had many places to sit and study or chat with friends.

7. Application and enrollment formalities and orientation phase

The application process was a bit exhausting with all the steps in mobility online and sometimes a bit longer waiting periods and also because SDU didn't have the courses for the upcoming semester online yet, so I wasn't sure if they will be the same or change. But after sending some mails, SDU organization was very helpful and answered all my questions. The process itself wasn't exhausting. The problem was just to have all the relevant documents ready and signed to do the next step. The orientation phase at SDU was also well organized. We had a welcome lecture and a short campus tour and we also had beforehand a Teams group where we had all relevant information ink. videos from SDU (about orientation days, register with Danish authorities, student card, Danish courses, Bulletin board, student job, connect with fellow students, contact SDU etc.). There was also a Facebook Groups (from ESN, with festivities), WhatsApp group chats etc.

8. Course offer and attended courses (short description and possibly grading)

There are quite a few courses. Unfortunately, many courses with maybe a bit more nature orientated view are only for master students. However, I enjoyed the 5 courses (with more business and social aspects) I took: Anthropology of Development, Business Anthropology, Marketing and Strategic Communication, Global Consumer Cultures, Economics of Development.

9. "Study workload" (ECTS) per semester + grading

Each of the courses I took had 5 ECTS, except for one that had 10 ECTS.

I usually had to read some longer academic papers in advance and then go to the (facultative) lectures (around 3-4 hours a day) and we discussed, summarized the topic. The final exam was mostly a take-home exam, which meant that we got at a certain time (mostly noon) the exam questions and then had 48 or sometimes 72 hours to answer them and write an around 6-10 pages long essay (ink. the lecture's information and papers) on our PC. Then there were sometimes smaller on campus test or oral group presentations about certain chapters.

The grading system works a bit differently than in Austria. They have a 7-point scale, where 12 (A) is the best score, followed by 10, 7, 4, 02, 00 and lastly -3 (F). The grade 02 is the minimum score for passing an exam.

10. Academic counseling/support

I could always write a mail or go to student services, reps. to the international office if I had some question or also ask my fellow students.

11. Tips and summary

I really enjoyed my stay at Odense and got to know the city, culture and brush up my English. I also love the different (harsh sea) nature and getting to know many new people and making friends. You will definitely learn to love biking there and I already miss the nice big bike streets.

I recommend taking a good water/windproof jacket and pants if you are riding a bike. It rains quit a lot and is windy. I also recommend especially at the beginning to go to events (ESN always organizes something- also get the ESN card for approx. 100DKK) and try to connect with people, because the time flies by quicker than one can anticipate. Compared to Austria the people are way more down-to-earth and even professors at university are not called by their titles, but by their first names also by students.

Lastly, some Apps I recommend:

- Itslearning
- SDU maps
- Swapfiets
- Flixbus
- Fynbus
- RejseBillet
- DOT Billetter (for CPH)
- Revolut
- MitID
- Tricount (or other split apps for the household with your roommates)

