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# Copenhagen Business School Exchange Report

**Copenhagen Denmark - Fall 2016**

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# Monthly Journal

## September - An exciting start

September was my first month in Denmark and as Europe blossoms in the Summer. My first encounter with this lovely country was filled with excitement, breathtaking cityscape and a lovely time meeting other exchange students from across the world. I arrived at the end of August and was swept off into the introduction week activities offered by the school. We were offered a wide range of activities to participate in, from information sessions regarding academic matters; to city tours that include seeing Copenhagen's famous shores from a flat top barge; lake-side parties for mingling; and most memorable of all a night's worth of Danish Folk Dancing. In addition, there is also subject and student registration along with citizenship registration of which I'll further elaborate in the sections below. The month is also filled with exploration of Copenhagen which is a delightfully beautiful city with historical heritage crossover with Scandinavian modernity, one good example of which is a modern building of CBS converted from a brickwork porcelains factory.

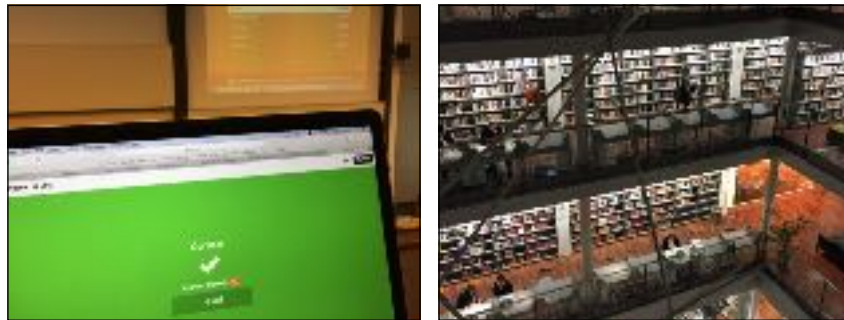


## October - Settling in

October was when school started in earnest and it was immediately noticeable that the way subjects are taught is vastly different from the methods used here in UST. Reading is by far the most relied upon method of teaching and lessons are dedicated to

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discussion sessions and even student led lectures for which one may be asked to present. This is again quite eye opening and motivates student to take responsibility and learn at their own pace. It is worth mentioning that the CBS main library is a splendid place for study as it has a calm and soothing atmosphere!



Aside from getting familiar with Copenhagen, the month also marked a number trip, for which includes a short trip to Odense - a comparatively rural part of Denmark where Hans Andersen the fairytale writer was born; Malmö - a Swedish town across the harbour from Copenhagen as well as pleasant weekend trip to Iceland.



### **November - Roaming the city**

November was when summer turned into autumn and the arrival of my first exam. In Denmark, each semester is further divided into 2 quarters Q1 and Q2 with some courses lasting only one quarter. The schedule is similar to winter semester courses in UST and exam comes early in November. As with the method of instruction, the exam methodology is also vastly different from the ones found in Hong Kong and will be further covered in the sections below.

One notable event that occurred in the beginning of November was a change in residence. Due to high rent, we (2 fellow CBS students and myself) were forced to search for more suitable housing in Copenhagen and the process allowed me to have lived in both a sub-urban and an urban setting, which I both enjoyed.

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As the weather was slowly changed towards winter trees throughout the city and the country starts to put on a different coat of paint and it is a immensely enjoyable and soothing activity to visit the number of parks (Amager Fælled, Frederiksberg Have, Damhusengen, etc.) in the city as well as country parks scattered around Copenhagen. It is also at this time that a regular schedule and social network fully settled in with regular and frequent dinner parties and outings.

It is also worth mentioning Black Friday, which is a popular day with vastly discounted prices, it is quite a unique experience not found in Hong Kong and is a good opportunity to find necessities at a bargaining price.



### **December - A festive end**

Early December marked the end of my academic exchange period as exams conclude in the beginning of the month. Thereafter I have planned a trip to Finland as well as had the chance to explore other thrilling activities such as visiting Tivoli gardens - the oldest theme park in the world as well as popular Christmas markets near the festivals.





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# General Exchange Information

## Visa Application Process

To apply for Danish student visa using a Hong Kong passport (As it is mine), one would have to go through quite a long and tenuous procedure starting with the application for a “case order ID”, a number that would be a reference to your case. The process of applying is initiated by CBS and students would be required to enter confirm their application in the system as well as make a payment of 1845 DKK. This would allow the further processing of the application. For the submission of documents and record of biometric features (fingerprints), one would have to travel to a visa application centre in Guangzhou within two weeks of initiation as well as further pay a fee of around CYN 1500 for the agency. Please note that bank statements showing that you have sufficient funds throughout your stay in Denmark must be provided, the amount is around 6000 DKK per month for the duration of your stay in Denmark. The VISA would then arrive through email and must be printed out for checking at the Danish boarder. Please note that the application process is close to 2 months (in my case) and if the VISA had not arrived before your start date, one can enter Denmark as a tourist VISA free to start their studies first.

Personally, I would also recommend **students going through the process together** and bring extra cash when making the application in Guangzhou, as the staff at the VISA application centre is not as knowledgeable as would be preferred and a group of students could more likely prevent mis-handling in documents and paying unnecessary fees if the staffer is not entirely sure of the type of VISA one is applying to.

## Accommodation

Please note that affordable accommodation is highly sought after in Copenhagen and student dormitories are extremely hard to come by. CBS would ask students to indicate their preference of housing and if one chooses to live in a dorm, there would be a separate link sent out for applying. The application process is on a first come first served basis and once the procedure starts (at a designated time), one should not hesitate in going through the process as soon as possible since space are very limited and a split second delay could mean the difference between having to find housing on ones own or having a dormitory room.

If one were unlucky in finding student dorms, the easiest way to look for housing is through Airbnb long term rentals. You can easily find people on the school Facebook group that has a need for housing as well, but please expect housing prices to be 5.5-7K DKK per person per month.

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## **Orientation Activities**

Aside from the mandatory orientation activities, students can also participate in an optional social package which includes folk dancing, movie night, lake side party and a boat trip. This is not mandatory but is highly recommended for establishing a social circle at the beginning of your exchange.

## **Course Registration**

Course registrations are quite simple as one would only have to send an email to the international office indicating their subject preferences. No computer systems are involved and the process is entirely manual so there are likely time clashes in one's schedule, as well as oversubscription (full) of courses. Please note that classes can overlap and if the overlap is more than 3 hours a semester, CBS would recommend dropping the subject and taking another.

## **Teaching & Assessment Methods**

Teaching as mentioned above is highly student directed, where one is highly independent in organising their own learning and reading schedules. Most courses are reading based, which means reading a textbook or a list of academic articles are a must before every class, and class time is reserved for mostly covering points outside of the reading material. Compared to studies in UST, students are expected to read daily and should also start early as having 50-100 pages of reading per course per week is not unheard of.

As for exams, there are mainly two types of exams: An oral defence based on a written product and a writing exam lasting 4 hours. The first is where a student must construct a written argument surrounding a topic, followed by a oral defence of the said article. The second is where one is expected to produce a written argument(s) within 4 hours on a computer. Note that both types of exams consists of 100% of the final grade and there would be no quizzes or attendance requirements.

## **Finance and Banking**

Throughout the exchange, I have roughly spent 28K HKD on housing, 10K HKD on food and beverages, and another 10K HKD on recreation purposes. The amount could vary greatly depending on one's housing and dining preferences. I have also chosen to open a bank account in Denmark as the free master debit card provided can be used anywhere and even on travels in Europe, which is extremely convenient.

## **Social Clubs and Networking Opportunities**

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In the beginning of the semester, there would be a chance to join different clubs and interact with peers of the same interest. Most clubs also have a professional focus, for example charity clubs are usually focused on collaborating with NGOs and such.

### **Health and Safety**

Denmark and Copenhagen is in general very safe even late at night, so one should not be scared of the streets late in the evening. It is also worth mentioning that after registering to one's community, a free "yellow" medical insurance card is offered for free healthcare at a designated doctor. Please note that for colds and flu, the typical treatment is simple painkillers so one might consider not going to the doctor for simple ailments.

### **Food**

My lunches are mostly from the school canteen, one should expect prices to range from 30 DKK to 50 DKK not including drinks. It is priced according to weight of the food one has taken and is in general of high quality.

As to dinners, I usually cook with a few friends using groceries bought from the local supermarkets. Please note that there is a significant price difference between different supermarkets with Netto and Nema being the most affordable.

### **Transportation**

Transportation for short to medium distances can easily be handled by a bicycle as the city has one of the most highly developed network of bicycle lanes in the world. I personally have not opted for the cycling option as my apartment is very far from campus and would require an hour's cycling to get there. Other transportation options are S-train, metro, and buses. They are all integrated into a single system with charges based on the zones you have traveled.

For travels across Europe, please note that students can obtain youth tickets from SAS which flies to most major European cities at a dramatically lower cost than listed on Sky-scanner, especially for Scandinavian countries.

### **Climate**

Denmark has cool summers and winters similar to the coldest days in Hong Kong (overcast weather, not extremely windy, temperatures of around 0 degrees). Contrary to misconception, it usually does not snow in the winter and one should not be too worried about staying warm as there is indoor heating in all buildings.

### **Communication**

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Almost all Danish people speak prolific English so there is no worries in terms of communications. Please note that Danish people are also sometimes very reserved so a enthusiastic greeting might not be in order.

## Things to Bring

- Camera(s) - Bring a GoPro if traveling to other countries in Scandinavia
- Hard drive and laptop for storing pictures
- Sufficiently warm fleece jacket for the winter
- Short sleeves for the summer
- Other clothing items can be purchased at a reasonable (Uniqlo) price at the local H&M
- Danish Kroner (and Euros if planning on traveling other countries)
- Warm shoes (Waterproof shoes such as Timberlands if planning on traveling in the winter)
- European power adaptors and power brick
- A good sense of humour and an open mind (Danish people are very open minded :D)

## Useful Links and Contacts

Danish immigration:

[https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming\\_to\\_dk/studies/post\\_secondary\\_education.htm](https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming_to_dk/studies/post_secondary_education.htm)

CBS course catalogue:

<http://www.cbs.dk/en/international-opportunities/international-students/guestexchange-student/undergraduate-courses>