



**COPENHAGEN
BUSINESS SCHOOL
EXCHANGE REPORT**

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January 2017 – Arrival

I'd longed for visiting Copenhagen – the world's most liveable city, with intelligent infrastructure to free education, free healthcare and a society focused on the life balance between work and play (as introduced by my CBS buddy who came to HKUST for exchange). That's why I applied for Copenhagen Business School (CBS) for the spring exchange 2017. ß

To help exchange students adapt to the new environment and school life, CBS would kindly assign an exchange buddy to pick you up at the airport, hand over the student dorm keys and welcoming package, introduce you to CBS and Copenhagen, etc. Therefore, remember to contact your buddy before you fly to Copenhagen, especially when you are allocated to a student dormitory.

I arrived at Copenhagen two weeks before the term started, allowing sufficient time to settle down. The weather in Denmark was very cold and humid with temperatures ranging from 0 to minus 8 or 9 degree Celsius and light showers all day long. Moreover, the sun sets at around 4.30pm and rises 8.30am every day in winter. To spend such a long night, Danes usually grab a drink in bars (gathering with friends or having fun), or go to gymnasium to keep fit.

****A week in advance of the commencement of spring term, CBS organized an *Introduction Week* for which we must attend the daytime activities and had the option of joining the social events in the evening. For example, **staff would introduce the course add-drop procedures, examination and student portal (similar to CANVAS and my.ust.hk)**. Make sure you remember the deadline for course add-drop and relevant procedures as it is different from those for local students. Also, the course **timetable here is flexible and it is normal to have clashes occasionally**. Remember to check your calendar regularly and minimize clashes.**

On the other hand, students would guide you around tourist attractions, introduce Danish cultures like folk dancing and partying places, etc. You could get to know other exchange students and enjoy a fancy dinner with them on the last day of the week.



Folk dancing performed by a group of lovely elderlies



Welcome Dinner on the last day

February 2017 – Commencement of spring term

** Students in CBS enjoy a very high degree of freedom – for many courses, attendance would not be mandatory; no mid-terms, no assignments. This means **final examination would be the only assessment that determines your grade**. Therefore, self-discipline and good study plans are of vital importance in order to give ourselves enough time to study and assimilate lecture materials before the exam.

Lectures here encouraged inputs from students and the atmosphere was quite free and relaxing. For example, in a course called Entrepreneurship and Innovation in a Global Perspective, professor adopted a “case study-based” style of teaching and split the lecture time equally to teach theories and discuss cases. I had a group project with other exchange students and it was interesting to know their cultures and way of thinking.

For commute, you can choose to walk, bike or take public transport to school. Copenhagen is a bike city, with around half of the population bikes to work and study every day. If you would like to bike, you can buy a second-hand bicycle from other exchange students. If you would like to take metro, it is highly recommended to get a travel card Rejsekortet as the ticket price would be halved compared to a single ticket.

2 things memorable in February – snowing in Copenhagen and visiting Finland

Snowing wasn't very often in Copenhagen but it looked so fantastic when the whole city became white. In one of the snowy days, I took a walk in the royal garden (now open to the public) *Frederiksberg Have* near my student residence. The park was very huge without few people walking around, which became a perfect place to feel the peace and beauty of nature. Somewhere on a slope, you can see kids enjoy sledging with their siblings and parents. Copenhageners really treasure their family time and you can always see them go to supermarkets, picnic and museums with their beloved ones. Here are some of the pictures taken in the garden:





At the end of February, I visited Finland for the northern lights. This was my first trip in Europe, and the most special one. The weather there was freezing, and there was a blizzard at the first night we arrived at Helsinki. We spent four days in 3 cities – *Helsinki*, the capital; *Rovaniemi* for the Santa Claus Village; and *Inari* for the aurora. I tried the reindeer meat, crossed the Arctic Circle in Santa Claus Village; saw the spectacular northern lights while staying outdoors, enduring a chattering chill of minus 32 degree Celsius. This was not easy, yet this wholly fresh experience has made my exchange more thrilling and memorable.



Reindeer meat



Sunset in Inari (on a lake)



Aurora in Inari

March 2017 – Studying and Living as a Copenhagener

** Life was quite busy in March as three out of my four courses were in first quarter. In CBS, **one semester was divided into 2 quarters, which some courses would finish within one quarter, while some would be taken throughout the whole term.** To finish 3 full-semester courses within 2 months, my schedule as a result was quite full. In addition, I took an advanced course which I had never studied any relevant knowledge before. Careful time planning and additional studies to catch up with others was required.

However, life in Copenhagen was still enjoyable. First of all, I learnt how to cook. As one of the Nordic countries, the price level in Denmark is pretty high – it usually takes over 100 Danish kroner (dkk or kr.), which is equivalent to around 120 Hong Kong dollars, to dine out. A set meal in McDonald in Copenhagen takes 60 to 70 kroner. (Interestingly, a kebab here could be as cheap as 25 kroner.) It was a fulfilling process to learn how to take care of myself, to be independent and finally to cook some new dishes based on random ideas. At weekends, I would even spend an afternoon in a cozy apartment, making desserts, listening to music and gathering with friends. Sometimes we would also visit some nice cafes, sipping coffee and surfing the Net. Other than bars, cafes would be the next popular place for Copenhageners to spend their free time. You could grab your laptop, walk into the coffee shop and have a nice brunch. There wouldn't be long queues, loud talks but soothing music and friendly waiters/waitresses.



Brunch at Café

Other than food, museums would be another recommendation to go. There was a museum district in the downtown, Kongens Nytorv, where you could see a lot of art galleries, museums and castles. Some of them were free to enter on certain weekdays. I visited a few, in which many nice paintings and statues were displayed. There were some artists sketching or drawing in front of the artwork too. It would be nice to take a rest in the inner garden with fountains and plants surrounding you, providing a sense of comfort.



Early April 2017 – Examinations

3 exams took place from 27th March to 7th April. As mentioned earlier, the 100% exam-weighted grading added a bit more pressure on my exam preparation.

** The exam format here in CBS is very different from that in UST. First of all, many exams are **open-book**, which means you could take all the lecture materials and your own notes to exam venues. Second, **most exams are taken electronically**, instead of handwritten. Therefore, you could save all your learning materials in an USB drive and copy them to the exam computer for your reference. The **exam in CBS usually lasts for four hours**, which allows sufficient time to think and organize your answers. It is advised to bring some snacks along so you would not feel too hungry or drained in the course of examinations.

** Exam results would usually be released one month afterwards. **If you fail for the first time, you would still be given two retakes** which the format and time will be announced in the beginning of the semester as well. However, if your exams take place in June, it is advised to get them pass at first try. Otherwise you will have to ask UST stuff for their supervision to retake the exam in Hong Kong.

There are also **oral exams in CBS** which you have to submit a written report to professors first, and prepare for the Q&A session based on your paper. Sometimes powerpoint slides would

be needed to supplement your presentation. I did not take one in CBS, but I heard that it was quite challenging to think of a good answer on the spot.

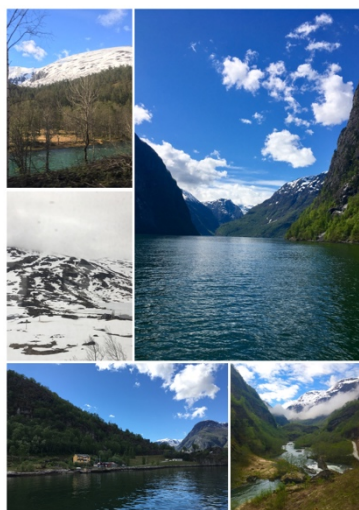
Mid-April 2017 – Traveling around Europe!!

Exams were over! As there was only one course left for my second quarter, I have five days in row free to travel every week. However, you have to plan your trips a month earlier in order to get cheap air tickets or accommodation. Airbnb is a good choice as it provides many nice and cheap apartments in Europe – some even has a balcony or garden! In the following 2 months, I have travelled around 15 cities, ranging from Northern European countries like Norway, and western ones like Germany and France, to eastern ones like Russia. It is hard to talk about them one by one in detail, but I would highly recommend Moscow and Saint Petersburg as part of your European trips. The cities were very clean and nice-looking, and people there were friendly. These two largest cities in Russia also have the deepest, most underground metro systems, with the most awesome and artistic interior design too.



I N S T A M A G

Vienna



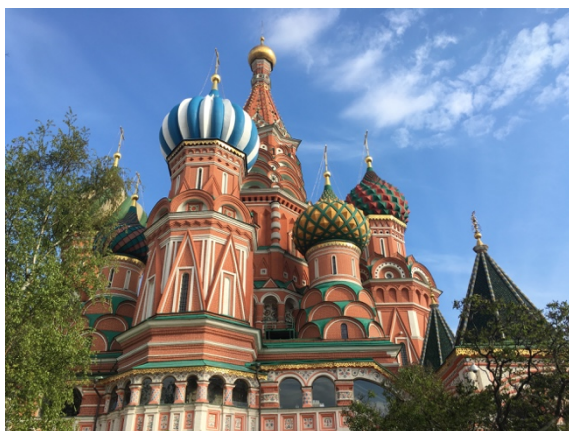
I N S T A M A G

Norway in a Nutshell



Netherlands

Moscow below (Saint Basil's Cathedral, left and Metro station, right)



Europe is a continent with great heterogeneity where you can feel the difference in lifestyles, arts and cuisines. Treasure your time here and plan more good visits to enrich your exchange!

GENERAL EXCHANGE INFORMATION

1. Visa Procedures

CBS will send you detailed guidelines and application form for visa application.

If you are a Hong Kong passport holder, you have to apply for residence permit from the Danish embassy for staying in Denmark for more than 90 days. You have to submit an online application to Danish embassy first, and then go in person to visa application center to have your biometrics recorded. The nearest center will be in Guangzhou. Upon successful application, your residence permit will be sent via email.



2. CPR and residence card (VERY IMPORTANT)

Upon arrival, you have to go to the local municipality (either Frederiksberg town hall or International Office) to obtain your personal ID number ("CPR number"). The authorities will mail you a **yellow card** 2 weeks later, with your CPR, address and your personal doctor's info. on the card. You must have this yellow card to get many of the things done, e.g., get a SIM card, open a bank account.

Another **pink card**, residence card, will be mailed you automatically. You have to present this card at the borders when leaving or entering the Schengen Zone (for example when I entered Russia).

3. Accommodation

Student residence provided by CBS is VERY LIMITED and it is on a first-come first-served basis. CBS will send you the information and application procedures via school email so keep checking your mailbox and must not miss the time open to application. You have to submit your application online through a designated system and complete it within 10 minutes. Make sure you have a good wifi connection at that time because seconds can mean whether you can get your first choice or not, even whether you can get the student residence or not.

Housing in Denmark can quite expensive, from the lowest price of around 3000 dkk/month to 7000 dkk/month, depending on the size, place and single/shared room. There will be kitchens in student residence, with basic cooking utensils provided. Bed linens will be provided in the welcoming pack as well.

4. Course registration

There will be 2 rounds of course registration, with the first take place in late October/early November and second one in December. You can take up to 30 ECTS (7.5 ECTS a course) in one semester. If you wish to overload, you have to write a request letter and upload it on the course registration system.

After the semester starts, you can still choose to change your courses in an add-drop period. However, you have to email the International office for your request and they will put you in the waitlist.

5. Finance and banking

Danish kroner is the currency used in Denmark, which 1 DKK = 1.2 HKD as of 2017/7/30.

Denmark is a cashless society which means you can pay by credit/debit card in every shop. You can open a Danish bank account with your CPR, CBS official acceptance letter and the bank account information of the person who send you remittance. Danske Bank and Nordea Bank will be the two largest banks in Denmark. They also have mobile banking for your to check your transactions real-time and transfer money to others. Forex bank is where you can get foreign currencies when travelling around.

6. Social clubs and Networking Opportunities

You are welcome to join any clubs and societies in CBS, e.g., chess club, management consulting club, finance lab. If you are interested in case competitions, you can also join the annual CBS Case Competition OPEN and be the audience for CBS International Case Competition. It is a big event for CBS.

7. Health and Safety

You can enjoy free healthcare services in Copenhagen once you have your CPR. Regarding safety, Copenhagen is a pretty safe city in Denmark/Europe with almost no terrorist attack heard during my stay. However, mind your personal belongings as there are several thefts happened on exchange students.

8. Transportation

Public transport is convenient in Copenhagen and you can use the same single ticket to take metro, bus or train within 2 hours. However, it is recommended to get a travel card, Rejsekortet, as early as possible so you can enjoy great discounts. You can always check the routes on Google map and the timetable. Copenhagen is a small city which you can travel to airport (metro M2 line Lufthavnen) from CBS main campus within 20 minutes.

You can also choose to bike as Copenhagen is a bike city with over half of the population ride a bicycle to work or school every day. You can get a second-hand bike with few hundred dollars.

9. Communication

The Danes speak English very well so there will not language barrier living in Copenhagen. However, it is still better to know some basic Danish as the price tags in supermarket are all in Danish.

Mobile data is super cheap in Denmark which you can get 30GB of 4G data a month with only 99 kroner! If you plan to travel around Europe, you can buy an international card in 3 (tre.dk) which can be used in Europe and even back in Hong Kong. Calls dialing between Denmark and designated countries (includes most of the places in Europe) are free. Data usage will also be free in those countries.

10. Other notes

Tap water is drinkable in Denmark, however, as it contains quite a lot of minerals, it is normal to see white powder in water after boiling and stored for a long time.

THINGS TO BRING

- Danish kroner
- Warm clothes, including heavy jackets/coats, gloves, knitted hats
- Water-proof shoes (avoid getting wet in snow)
- Medicine
- Personal care stuff

- **European Adapters (2-round pins)**
- Electronic devices, e.g. laptop, camera, USB drive
- Cabin-size luggage (for travelling on budget airlines)

USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACTS

Email address of Guangzhou Visa Application Centre: cangklvisa@um.dk

CBS International Office: rec.io@cbs.dk

YOUR EXCHANGE BUDDY!