

Exchange Report

Fall 2024

Copenhagen Business School

Denmark

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Monthly Activity Log

Write a log of one paragraph for each month highlighting some of your interesting exchange experiences, activities, impressions & places of interest. Please describe your study, learning and life experience. This section should be at least 600 words long.

August

In late August, I arrived in Copenhagen, excited yet nervous about starting my exchange journey. Since my friends had gone on exchange the previous semester, I didn't know anyone upon my arrival. Copenhagen Business School (CBS) assigns each exchange student a "buddy," a local full-time student to help ease the transition. However, my buddy was busy with work and couldn't pick me up at the airport like many others. Instead, she left my dorm key in a locker near the airport, which I retrieved upon arrival. I figured out the transport system on my own and made my way to the dormitory. At the airport, I also purchased a Lyca SIM card, but it took me some time to figure out my phone number (The number appears after inserting the card into your phone—make sure to screenshot it immediately!). Luckily, Copenhagen's transport network is straightforward, with only four metro lines, making it easy to navigate. My accommodation, Umeus Amager, was recommended by CBS after my initial private housing arrangement fell through. It's a modern student co-living space about 25 minutes from CBS's main campus by metro. Shortly after settling in, the orientation week kicked off. It included a mix of informative seminars, a city hunt, a canal tour, and a pub night. This optional, paid event was invaluable—I made most of my exchange friends here, and I noticed that those who skipped it found it harder to integrate socially. The folk dance session was particularly memorable, as it showcased the vibrancy and health of the local elderly community. After orientation, I joined the "Tour of Denmark" trip organized by CBS, which allowed me to explore other parts of the country. Although I was initially hesitant, I realized it was a great way to see Denmark without needing to plan separate trips, and it was also cost-effective. During this time, I also worked on applying for my CPR number, essential for securing a residence permit (Book your appointment as early as possible, as slots fill up quickly). In my free time, I explored Copenhagen independently, visiting museums, churches, and famous food spots. Even though I traveled solo, I never felt lonely as I was too captivated by the city's stunning art, breathtaking scenery, and charming atmosphere.

September

The semester commenced, and I enrolled in five courses: Behavioural Finance, Business, Gender, and Labour Market Inequality, Theories of Modern Society, Quantitative Methods, and Danish – Integrated Skills. Courses at CBS are categorized into three types: first half of the semester, second half of the semester, and full-semester courses. It's important to check the schedule carefully before enrolling. Most of my courses started this month, and I attended the first class for each. The teaching style at CBS is completely different from that at UST. Professors are highly interactive, lecture slides are well-organized, and the presentation style is engaging and vibrant. Students actively participate, making the classes dynamic and far from boring. However, since attendance isn't mandatory at CBS, I admit I started skipping classes after the third session to spend more time exploring the city.

One of my early adventures was a day trip to Malmö, Sweden, with friends I had made during the orientation week. Malmö is a small yet charming city, and as newcomers to Europe, everything felt eye-opening to us. We even tried Thai food there—not the most authentic, but it was comforting and helped ease our homesickness for Asian cuisine.

Later this month marked my first big trip during the exchange—a spontaneous journey to Italy with these same friends, who would also become my main travel partners for the rest of my exchange. The trip was unplanned; we booked our flights and accommodations just two days before departing. Due to time constraints, we only booked for the first city and decided to plan each subsequent stop the night before arrival. While the spontaneity was exciting, I wouldn't recommend this approach. It was more expensive, exhausting, and we missed out on some attractions (e.g., "The Last Supper") because we didn't book in advance.

Our journey took us through several cities, from Naples in the south to Rome, Florence, Pisa, Venice, and finally Milan over 11 days. Italy is known for its beautiful sights but also for its high rates of theft, so we were extremely cautious with our belongings. Thankfully, we were safe and sound—until we reached Milan.

In Milan, I planned to continue my journey to Frankfurt, Germany, to attend a K-pop concert I had been eagerly anticipating. On our last evening in Milan, I had a quick dinner with a friend at a Burger King near the Milan Cathedral before catching our FlixBus. As we were leaving, I realized my bag had been stolen. Inside were all my important belongings: my passport, HKID, cash, AirPods, souvenirs, and other valuables. Panicking, I asked the staff for help, but they said I needed a police request to access the CCTV footage. I hurried to find the nearest police officer, who directed me to a station 15 minutes away. However, it was a Sunday, and only one police station was open in the whole city, with a long queue outside.

After three hours of waiting in the cold night, the police finally listened to my case. Unfortunately, none of the officers spoke English, so I had to enlist the help of a local girl to translate. Using the "Find My" app on my phone, I was able to pinpoint the thief's location, but the police refused to intervene. Instead, the police offered two ridiculous solutions. To put it simple, they suggested that I catch the thief myself, as they would not offer any assistance. For safety reasons, I decided not to pursue this option and focused on obtaining a document to officially report the loss of my passport and belongings. It took them only 30 minutes to issue the document, which was frustrating given the hours of waiting. By this time, it was midnight, and I returned to the hotel my friends had booked, only to be refused entry because the room was for two people, not three.

At 3 AM, desperate to make it to Frankfurt for the concert, I booked a 6 AM flight and headed straight to the airport. During check-in, the airline staff initially refused to let me board without a passport. Fortunately, I had a photo of my Copenhagen residence permit, which I had received earlier that evening, and after much arguing, they allowed me on the flight. This was a nerve-wracking experience as I had no cash or cards—only €100 borrowed from my friends.

When I arrived in Frankfurt at 11 AM, I thought I still had time to make the 3 PM concert. However, at the airport, all travelers were required to show their passports. Without one, I was detained by airport security and taken to the police office. I explained my situation and presented my Danish residence permit, but they insisted on verifying it with Danish authorities. Unfortunately, the back-and-forth communication took over five hours, and I missed the concert I had been looking forward to for so long. After providing a

formal statement, I was finally released at 5 PM. Determined to make the most of my time, I rushed to the city center with my luggage to follow my planned sightseeing itinerary. What was supposed to be a full day of exploration was condensed into just one hour. Despite the chaos, I managed to see some of Frankfurt's highlights before catching my bus to Heidelberg at 8 PM, where I reunited with my friends who had stayed behind in Milan the previous night.

October

After arriving in Heidelberg, my journey through Germany truly began. From this charming city, we proceeded to Munich to experience one of the biggest carnivals in Europe: the Oktoberfest (Beer Festival). Personally, I'm not a fan of drinking, especially beer, but the festival is absolutely worth a visit for its vibrant atmosphere and world-class amusement facilities. The rides and attractions there are on another level—far beyond comparison with those in Ocean Park. If you're a fan of thrilling rides, you definitely don't want to miss out! Despite not being a beer enthusiast, I must admit the beer at Oktoberfest was exceptionally tasty. The festival also gathers people from all around the world, making it a great place to meet new friends. For example, we met a man from Romania who was so friendly that he even invited us to visit his home when we travel to Romania in the future.

Since my permit to stay in Germany was set to expire within a week, we quickly made our way to Berlin to visit the embassy and apply for a temporary passport to verify my status as a Hong Kong resident. The process of replacing lost documents was both expensive and time-consuming. (A tip for you: always bring spare ID photos with you just in case you lose your passport and need to replace documents; otherwise, you'll have to scramble to find a printing service.) While the process was stressful, the temporary passport proved to be very helpful later when traveling to other countries.

While waiting for my documents to be processed, we took the opportunity to explore Berlin's rich history by visiting several museums, particularly those dedicated to the history of the Jewish people. Walking through these exhibits and visiting concentration camps was an incredibly sobering experience. It's one thing to read about history in books, but it's entirely different to witness the artifacts and hear the personal

stories of suffering and despair—it's a profound and heart-wrenching reminder of the past.

After this meaningful and reflective journey, we finally returned to Copenhagen, nearly a month since our Italy trip. The experiences we had during this time were unforgettable and added so much depth to my exchange adventure.

One week after returning to Copenhagen, I embarked on another trip—this time to Sweden, specifically to the beautiful city of Stockholm. Stockholm is, without a doubt, the most picturesque and charming city I visited during my entire exchange. The sunsets here are absolutely unmissable, and I highly recommend setting aside some time to explore the outskirts or the hills to take in the breathtaking scenery. Watching the golden sunlight cascade over the city creates an ethereal glow, making it look like a "golden city" straight out of a fairy tale.

After soaking in Stockholm's beauty, we flew to Norway in hopes of seeing the northern lights. Our journey took us to cities like Bergen, Oslo, and Tromsø, and we spent more than 10 days chasing this dream. Unfortunately, the weather was consistently bad—cloudy skies and mild temperatures meant there wasn't even snow to enjoy. Our plans were heavily limited, and we lowered our expectations of seeing the aurora. Adding to the challenge, I caught a severe cold due to the wet and chilly weather, which made the trip even tougher.

But Norway had one last surprise in store for us. One night, as I stepped out of my accommodation, I suddenly glanced up and saw the northern lights faintly dancing above us. It wasn't as vivid or striking as the pictures you see on social media, but the fact that it appeared on such a cloudy night felt truly magical. That moment completely caught us off guard, and it was a wonderful way to end our trip. It reminded me that sometimes the best experiences are the ones you least expect.

Before I forget, if you ever visit Bergen, you absolutely must try the FJÅK hot chocolate. I promise you'll regret it if you don't—it's the best dark hot chocolate I've ever had in my life!

November

In early November, I returned to Copenhagen and decided to make the most of my remaining time by visiting the attractions and museums I hadn't had the chance to explore earlier. Copenhagen has so much to offer, and I wanted to ensure I experienced as much as possible before my exchange came to an end.

Just a week later, I embarked on another two-week trip, starting in Amsterdam, Netherlands. The country is well-known for its open sexual culture, and Amsterdam offers a variety of unique museums and shows that you can't find anywhere else. I highly recommend exploring these places with an open mind and from an artistic perspective—it's a fascinating and eye-opening experience. On the way to Rotterdam, we also stopped by The Hague and Zaanse Schans. Although the weather wasn't as pleasant as we had hoped, the gorgeous windmills at Zaanse Schans still left us in awe and made the trip worthwhile.

Afterwards, we continued our journey to the home of chocolate—Belgium. To make the most of our stay, we visited some of the country's main cities, including Ghent, Brussels, and Bruges, sampling as much local, handmade chocolate as we could along the way. Honestly, the debate online about which Belgian chocolate brand is the best doesn't matter—all the chocolate in Belgium is so amazing that you'll never want to eat anything else again. My advice? Just buy whatever looks good, and you won't be disappointed!

After Belgium, we reunited with other exchange friends in Paris, France. To our surprise, the city wasn't as messy or dirty as we had imagined, and we didn't encounter any theft during our visit, which was a relief. We were able to fully enjoy the beauty of the city, including iconic landmarks like the Eiffel Tower, the Palace of Versailles, and the Louvre Museum. However, one stereotype about Paris turned out to be true—many French people were reluctant to speak English. That said, I found this to be part of the city's charm, adding to its unique cultural vibe.

Due to a compulsory presentation at CBS, I had to return to Copenhagen alone before the end of the trip. This gave me some much-needed downtime after weeks of continuous travel. For the rest of the month, I focused on resting and enjoying the cozy "hygge" vibe of Copenhagen. This slower pace allowed me to

recover both physically and mentally from my travels and prepare for the upcoming exams in December.

December

This month was a mix of torture and happiness. On one hand, I had to “repay my debt” for skipping all my lectures and never catching up with the materials. On the other hand, it was also a memorable and eventful time. Fortunately, most of my exams were written assignments, which allowed me to work on papers or answer questions over a 72-hour timeframe, giving me great flexibility. However, the sit-in and oral exams for the Danish and Quantitative Methods courses were particularly challenging.

For Danish, it was impossible to learn such a complicated language in just a few days. As an Asian language speaker, the sentence structure, where every sentence involves inversion, was completely foreign to me. The pronunciation was even more confusing—online resources and the audio provided by the professor often sounded different, leaving me bewildered. The exam format required me to deliver a 20-minute monologue in Danish to the professor. It was tough, but the professors were kind enough to guide me when I struggled to express myself. Although I couldn’t transfer any credits for this course to UST, I’m really glad I took it and learned such an intricate and fascinating language. I have to say “At lære dansk er interessant” (Learning Danish is interesting!).

The most suffocating course, however, was Quantitative Methods. The written exam required coding and statistical analysis, which meant I had to understand the concepts and apply them to real data. I spent two sleepless nights with friends trying to figure everything out. It was a struggle, but we managed to pull through, and everything turned out fine in the end. Once those exams were over, I could finally focus on my written assignments.

As the exams wrapped up, there was just one week left until Christmas, the grandest festival in Europe. Since all my friends were traveling to the UK, and I couldn’t join them due to my lack of an HK passport, I decided to spend the week alone in Spain and Portugal. My goal was to maximize the number of cities I visited within eight days, so my schedule was extremely packed and intense—but also incredibly rewarding.

I traveled from Barcelona to Seville, then to Ronda, Lisbon, and Porto.

After my chaotic and nerve-wracking experience in Italy, I was extremely cautious during this trip. I paid close attention to my belongings and maintained a low profile the entire time. Thankfully, I didn't encounter any major risks or dangerous situations, even though I stayed in hostels alone in every city. However, I did face an attempted theft in Lisbon. Luckily, I had taken strict measures to protect my bag and managed to stop the thief.

While these two countries are often considered "dangerous," their low cost of living and unique beauty made them stand out among all the European countries I visited. Both Spain and Portugal have their own distinct charm, and I think you'll understand what I mean when you visit them. To be honest, Spain became my favorite country during this exchange, and I'm certain I'll return in the future. If you ever get the chance, spare some time to explore Spain—it's absolutely worth it.

I spent Christmas Eve on a flight back to Copenhagen, and it turned out to be an unforgettable experience. The atmosphere on the flight was so warm, with passengers heading home to celebrate with their families. The flight crew handed out Christmas snacks, and even the pilot came out to wish everyone a merry Christmas. When the pilot announced "Merry Christmas" as we landed in Copenhagen, it was such a heartwarming moment.

After landing, I had to pack my belongings and tidy up my room, as I was moving out just a few hours later. With my DKK 7,000 deposit held by the accommodation's administration office, I put in extra effort to return the room to its original condition. This marked the last day of my time in this beautiful country.

From Copenhagen, I flew to Prague to spend Christmas. I enjoyed a traditional Christmas dinner and visited the festive Christmas markets there. Afterward, we headed to Austria, where we explored several icebergs and lakes. The white and blue tones of the sky and icebergs were breathtaking—something no camera could ever truly capture. Climbing the icebergs was a challenge for me, as I'm extremely afraid of heights, but I knew I would regret it if I didn't push myself.

One of the highlights of Austria was attending an opera in Vienna. Although the performance wasn't in English, the Chinese subtitles helped us follow the plot. Many people visit the opera house just to take photos and "check-in" on social media, but I believe the real joy comes from immersing yourself in the performance—it's such a unique and enriching experience.

We spent New Year's Eve in Vienna, enjoying our last meal of 2024. Although we rushed to the plaza for the countdown by taxi, we arrived late and ended up counting down on the way there. Despite this, we still soaked in the festive atmosphere and were so grateful to share this special moment together. The after-party that followed was also a lot of fun and a great way to end the year.

January

We began the new year and the final month of my exchange in Budapest, Hungary, a city that truly embodies the phrase "living a life of debauchery." One of the most memorable moments was taking a night cruise on the Danube River, holding a glass of champagne, and admiring the golden glow of the Parliament building from the water. It was a magical experience. My friends, determined to get their "life photos," spent over five hours taking pictures in their gorgeous skirts in -2°C weather. We were completely frozen, but the incredible photos we captured made it all worth it.

After Budapest, we traveled to Finland, probably the coldest destination of my entire exchange. Luckily, the temperature "warmed up" to around -20°C during our stay, which was bearable enough for us to survive. While there, we visited the Santa Claus Village, took a picture with Santa Claus himself, and even sent postcards from the famous village. Two of my long-time bucket-list activities—the icebreaker cruise and the husky sled ride—finally came true, and both were just as incredible as I had imagined.

As my exchange journey neared its end, our final destination was Iceland, where we marveled at the country's natural beauty and wonders. Walking on the glaciers and exploring the blue ice cave was an unforgettable experience. The trek was incredibly tough due to the rainy weather, but I managed to complete it safe and sound. However, I don't think I'll have the strength to do something like that again.

when I'm older—it was both physically challenging and exhilarating.

And just like that, my exchange journey came to an end. Reflecting on these past few months, I can confidently say this has been one of the best times of my life—free from studies, free from worries, and filled with the freedom to explore and experience everything I could while still in my youth.

Thank you, Europe, and thank you to everyone who made this journey so unforgettable. This experience will stay with me forever!

Please briefly describe the visa application procedures, including

- 1) Type of passport/travel document you are holding**
- 2) Type of visa you are required**
- 3) Required documents**
- 4) Visa fees**

Since I hold the HKSAR Passport, it is required to apply for a resident permit to stay in Denmark for more than 3 months. Although it is possible to apply for the permit prior to departure from Hong Kong in Guangdong, I decided to apply only after arrival to Copenhagen in one of the SIRI offices. Apart from submitting an application form, the following documents are required: 1) Documentation of paid case processing fee to SIRI, 2) Copy of all pages of your passport, 3) Documentation showing that you are enrolled at an educational institution in your home country and 4) Documentation showing that you can support yourself during your stay in Denmark. The processing fee would be DKK 2490, while it would take around 2 months to process.

What are the course(s) that you have enrolled at the host institution?

Behavioural Finance
Business, Gender, and Labour Market Inequality
Theories of Modern Society
Quantitative Methods
Danish – Integrated Skills

Please briefly describe the course registration procedures, such as

- 1) When did you receive the course registration details
- 2) What is the course registration procedures
- 3) Where can you access information related to course registration (e.g. websites)

For my exchange term (Spring 2023-2024), I received the email regarding course registration sent to my CBS email address in early October 2023. All details are clearly stated in the email. We were given around a month to consider the choices and had to submit the Course Application Form by 31 October 2023, where we had to indicate 4 primary course choices and 4 alternatives. The course "Danish - Integrated Skills" is not counted in the 4 choices, hence you may choose to additionally take this course. Note that courses are not distributed on a first-come-first-served basis. The course list and details could be accessed through: <https://www.cbs.dk/en/study/internationals/exchange-students/undergraduate-courses-exchange-students>.

Where did you live during the program?

Student co-living space recommended by the host institution

Please briefly describe the accommodation at the host destination, including

- 1) What type of accommodation
- 2) What is the application procedures (If you are staying at accommodation offered by the host institution)

3) How did you search for the accommodation and where did you book your accommodation (If you need to arrange your own accommodation)

4) Facilities in the accommodation

During my exchange in Copenhagen, I stayed at Umeus Amager, a student co-living space located about 25 minutes by metro from the CBS main campus. The residence is situated near other universities, so the residents come from various colleges, including local Danish students, exchange students, and even postgraduates. Initially, I applied for housing through the private housing scheme launched by the CBS Housing Office and received a homestay offer. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the offer was withdrawn, and I was subsequently assigned a spot at Umeus Amager. Considering its proximity to the city center and the risks of managing a private rental agreement on my own, I decided to stay there with support from CBS.

Each resident typically has a single room, and the building features three common kitchens on each floor. I was fortunate enough to share a kitchen with responsible and friendly residents, which made my living experience more enjoyable. However, the management of Umeus Amager left much to be desired. The amenities, such as Wi-Fi, frequently malfunctioned, and the administration often caused frustration with unhelpful policies. The rent was also significantly higher compared to other housing options in the same area, which felt unreasonable given the mediocre services provided.

When it came time to move out, the process was even more stressful. Residents were required to clean their rooms thoroughly, after which staff conducted a detailed inspection and issued a move-out report. Unfortunately, the charges for minor damages were excessive—such as a DKK 2000 fee for a tiny scratch on the wall. (For those curious, I recommend checking the Google reviews of Umeus Amager for more insights.) That said, the kitchen was well-equipped, and the location was convenient, with several supermarkets, a gym, and even an excellent gelato shop nearby. Overall, I would rate my experience living in Umeus Amager a 4 out of 10.

For those planning to apply for CBS housing, the process requires you to indicate your preferences through

a form sent to your CBS email within a specific timeframe. However, the allocation is not based on a first-come-first-served system. Applicants must rank their priorities among five student residences, choose between single or shared rooms, and specify a preference for small, medium, or large rooms. Unfortunately, despite applying on time, I wasn't allocated any student housing, which led me to explore the private housing scheme.

Please briefly describe the health and safety support provided at the host institution, including

- 1) Whether there is health centers or clinics available on campus
- 2) Any safety matters that you are concerned about

Denmark has an extensive healthcare system. As long as you have received your CPR number and the yellow health card, services provided by the Danish public health insurance are free of charge.

Finances

How much did you spend (in HKD) on the following items? (Please input "0" if not applicable to you)

HKD 130,000

Air ticket between the place of departure and destination (round trip)

HKD 9,000

Accommodation (for the entire study abroad period)

HKD 37,000

Program fee (if applicable)

N/A

Personal expenses

HKD 93,000

Others, please specify

N/A

My Top 3s

Please share with students some of your top 3s. If it is best to provide the information in the language of the host destination, please do so, but provide an explanation in English.

Favorite Food

Danish pastries

Gelato near my dorm

Home-cooked meals with other exchange students

Hang-outs places on campus

Canteens

CBS Cafe Nexus

CBS Library

Must-dos in the city

Cook yourself (Sooo expensive dining out)

Casual city stroll to enjoy the fresh air

Try bakeries as much as you can (Juno the Bakery!!!)

Not-to-dos in the city

Stay inside your room looking for internships

Rely too much on the police for help (Useless most of the time and just a waste of your time)

Attend classes

Useful local apps or websites

DOT (Transport)

Too Good To Go (Very affordable food)

Flixbus (Bus Travel)

Words to describe my study abroad experience

Eye-opening

Becoming independent

Bucket list checked