

## Study Abroad Experience Report

**YES, I AM HAPPY** for my experience report to be viewed by other student's interested in studying abroad, as detailed in the guidelines.

**Aleksander Patryk Kolodziejczyk**  
**MSc International Business**  
**Loughborough University, England**  
**Masters year**

Exchange was completed during MSc International Business programme, second semester.

**Overall experience summary:** My experience was quite negative, with living costs being astronomically high and social life being ultimately non-existent. Coupled with mediocre academic experience, I would not return to do another exchange in Denmark.

B916240

**Denmark, Aarhus University**

**2020 – MSc, Semester 2**

**Experience Report**

**B916240**

This report shares my negative experience of exchange during my second semester of MSc International Business studies at Aarhus University, Denmark. Despite the over spilling, although justified, pessimism, I would like to acknowledge how great both Loughborough and Aarhus international teams were. I express my gratitude for their help with preparations to go out to Denmark, and support whilst out there.

## **Aarhus and the academic experience**

Aarhus University is arguably the second most reputable university in Denmark and regularly scores highly on world rankings. The university is spread across two mini campuses, with one campus dedicated purely to Business and Social Sciences students. The city itself is relatively small and one can get everywhere by walking. Preferred mode of transport is bike with popular rental company Swapfiets offering a bike or up to 6 months for as little as equivalent to around 40 GBP. There is not much to do in Aarhus other than visit historical sites and art galleries. The city centre is full of cute coffee shops, although getting a coffee in any of them is a bit of an extortion and may be affordable to local students who get paid monthly to study, but perhaps not to exchange students.

Generally speaking, the academic experience was mediocre. Prior to travelling to Denmark I was asked to select modules which fall within specific categories at Aarhus so that I do not have any timetable overlaps. I had an option of choosing between BSc or MSc modules, which seemed odd, because the option of picking BSc modules made the experience feel like something purely for fun rather than academic. I was also specifically requested not to pick modules which would cover material previously taught at Loughborough. Well, that was impossible because in order for me to pick modules which do not overlap, I had to pick at least one module which overlapped slightly with previously taught Entrepreneurship module. Further, the pre-requisites table shown to oncoming students that no modules which I selected required any pre-requisites. When approached a lecturer of module titled 'Corporate Finance – Project' however, I was told that I should immediately switch modules and was made to feel belittled since I had no pre-requisites to study that module, despite those pre-requisites not being listed on the 'pre-requisites list'. It was rather off-putting right from the get go to be so discouraged by the lecturer to study a module which could potentially be more challenging than others in an environment which is meant to be encouraging students to be outside their comfort zone.

The same principle applied to the module titled 'Distribution and Transportation'. Whilst no pre-requisites were listed, the module convener and lecturer dropped 'subtle' hints, that it would be highly regarded of if a student used 'previously taught' (at the

university, to students in my class) coding skills to score higher marks in the exam paper. Perhaps it also doesn't help that half of the teaching for this particular module was done online, yet, the module is purely practical, which made self-learning extremely challenging. I scored a 2 – equivalent of roughly 45 in Loughborough grading. Additionally, in one of my other modules, we, in a group, were asked to prepare an academic review paper which was to be UNMARKED, and then deliver a presentation on it. As it happens, two days after submission of paper the presentation got cancelled and marks were awarded based on the paper which we were previously reassured, won't be marked. My academic experience was therefore somewhat disappointing, and after paying astronomical tuition fees and deciding to go on a year abroad, my biggest take away from it all was that my average was worsened.

As something worth noting, when working in a group (a requirement for almost every single module), one is not assigned to a group and is required to go out and pick their group mates. Danes are not outgoing towards strangers and 99% of your classmates share almost every other module with each other – they will work with in the same group they work in other modules, not you. This only makes the whole experience extremely stressful and quite frankly uncomfortable, when one is left sitting in the middle of a class with nobody to work with.

To bring some positivity into this report, I was allowed to take law module on intellectual property, which was fantastic. It was delivered in a very transparent way and the efforts of the lecturer to create additional material was outstanding which made studying easy, and, enjoyable. The examination in a format of in person verbal delivery also made the experience applicable to real life scenario and allowed for clarifications around anything that would have otherwise been misunderstood if written down on paper – a format used at Loughborough.

### **Accommodation**

My accommodation was fine. The team from Aarhus International Centre were great and everything was organised in a way it should be, if not better. There is not a bad thing that can be said about them. My keys were collected one day after my lectures started since the room was not available until then and I had to stay in a hostel for a

week before eventually moving in to my room. My room was spacious with good lightning and was well furnished. I shared my house with 6 other international students who were extremely dirty and inconsiderate. Contrary to my beliefs they did indeed fit a stereotype of an Erasmus student of being on an exchange predominantly to enjoy themselves, which, was not my intention when out in Aarhus. Regardless, my accommodation was 20 minutes from campus and 10 minutes from a large shop. I once locked myself out of my room and the international centre team came to open my room within 15 minutes, always being responsive to my questions and requests.

### **General comments**

My advice to oncoming students is to think twice as to why you want to do an exchange, seriously consider whether you can afford to live in Aarhus comfortably with your budget and do some reading around modules you are selecting to study. And if you think you have read enough about them, then read more – you will need all the information you can get on how you will be assessed, whether you will work in a group and whether you really do not require any pre-requisites.

Further, if you are planning on making friends with Danes then you can somewhat forget about it. You are there for 5 months and it will take you roughly 2 months to settle in – and that is coming from someone who is an extrovert, is confident, well-travelled and has moved a country before. Any relationship with Dane you will develop will be extremely difficult to take beyond surface level, simply because of the time you are out there for. You will most likely be surrounded by other international students simply because your initial introductory activities are with other exchange students and again, Danes already have their friends. You might occasionally get invited to do something with a group of Danes and I would encourage you to do that, but, from my experience and that of other students, this is rare.

My biggest take away from my exchange in Denmark is that my two best modules were taught by a German lady and an English man. My second biggest take away is that as someone from a country culturally and ideologically closer to an eastern bloc would never consider moving, working and living in egalitarian Scandinavia, which, I would love to argue for, is just massive sugar coating, and social inequality shines

right from beneath it. My time in Demark has also given me so much free time from being ultimately immobilised by me not necessarily wanting to engage in daily drinking beyond point of consciousness with other exchange students, and Danish unwillingness to integrate foreigners, that I manage to secure a fantastic graduate job – for which, I had to fly back to England.