



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	The University of Copenhagen
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2, 2025
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Laws
Major(s)	-

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
Danish Culture Course 1	English	18 points (first year)
Danish Culture Course Architecture & Design	English	36 points (second year)

Total Otago credits gained: 54 points 72 points 108 points _____

Any comments about these papers?

Both papers were made for exchange students so everyone in them was international students (which was great for making friends, but not so great in terms of meeting Danish people). The papers were quite easy compared with what I heard about my friends who were taking papers from their degrees.

The content was interesting. I really enjoyed the one on architecture, and it was cool being able to see the buildings in real life after being taught about them.

Also, the field trips for the Danish Culture Course 1 were great as you got into a castle and one of the famous art galleries (Louisiana) for free.

How did the academic experience/ workload/ style of teaching differ from Otago?

I found the papers a lot easier in comparison to the workload I had at Otago. But I think that could be to do with taking a lot less credits in a Semester than I normally would combine with them being first/second year papers.

There were also only two assignments and no exams which was quite different to my experience taking first year POLS papers. But I did enjoy the emphasis on field trips.

Accommodation

What accommodation did you stay in? What were the pros and cons of your accommodation?

I stayed in UMEUS Valby.

It was a nice modern accommodation. The kitchen was stocked with everything, so you only really had to buy bedding and towels for the room, no cooking utensils, which was amazing. It was also easy to meet people. I would say the accommodation and classes were the two main ways I made friends. And there were many international and exchange students in the accommodation. The downside was that it was quite expensive and not necessarily the best location in Copenhagen.

If I were to do it again, I would not go through the housing foundation, as it is always more expensive. And it is not necessarily easier. I would get on to it early. So, if you are going in the second semester, start emailing people in February, and I would get in touch directly with the UMEUS team. There are a bunch of different UMEUS locations. I think the Frederiksberg one is the best, but just have a look around the area and see what is close and what the neighbourhoods are like. I think Valby was a great option, and there was definitely nothing wrong with it, but it is a less established neighbourhood, so there were fewer cafes, fewer restaurants, etc.

Also, if you go through the UMEUS team directly, it's cheaper, and the rooms are slightly better. For example, I know my friends in UMEUS Valby had their own bathroom (instead of having to share one) and a double bed (instead of a king single).

Money matters

Please detail your basic costs, e.g. accommodation, flights, visa, food, insurance

Accommodation: 7,456.00

Flights: 3,000.00 (roughly)

Visa: 1,500.00 (roughly)

Food: 100 (per week, just for groceries)

Insurance: 815.75

What means did you use to access your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, Cash passport, foreign bank account, etc.)

I just used a wise card the entire time I was there, which worked well for me. No one really uses cash in Copenhagen except at the vintage clothing markets. I would also recommend checking out Revolut because the fees for that seem to be lower than with wise.

Visas & Insurance

Did you have to apply for a visa? What was the process?

I did have to apply for a visa. This process began when I was in New Zealand and was somewhat messy and quite costly. I had to wait for confirmation of my enrolment at Copenhagen University and then book an appointment with the visa office in Auckland. VFS, which handled the visa applications, provided me with a list of documents I needed to bring, including two payments totalling around \$1,500.00 and proof of these payments. They recommend booking this appointment at least two months before your planned departure, and I would say this timeline is a good guideline; however, the sooner you can do it, the better. I had to fly up during exams, which was a bit stressful, but my approval document did not arrive until the day after I had boarded the plane to Europe. Anyway, after the appointment, they essentially send your application to Australia, then to Denmark for processing, and finally get it back to VFS, where you can either pick it up in Auckland or have it posted to you.

I did not need to show anything upon arriving in Denmark, just my passport. However, they recommend having the approval letter with you as proof of your residency. Once you're in Denmark, you need to book an appointment to receive a CPR number, a residency card, and a medical card. These serve as further proof of your right to stay here, and they also entitle you to free healthcare. The appointment was straightforward and very quick.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

No.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

What organised activities were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?

I did not do any extracurricular activities as I spent a lot of time travelling. But the orientation day was amazing and a great way to meet people. I know some people who took ballet classes, did volleyball, etc and enjoyed that. There is also a student social club right in the centre of town that has cheap food and drinks and does events most nights which is great.

What was the university/ city like?

The University was quite different from Otago. I was only really on the South Campus which is in Amager and it is quite modern. But because I was only doing the Danish Culture Courses, I found University a lot less stressful and spent a lot less time on campus.

The city was amazing. It is a lot nicer in Summer but seeing it around the Christmas season has been amazing. But in terms of drinking social events the Summer is when most of them tend to happen. However, there are so many amazing cafes, bars, museums, art galleries etc that you can still have a great time when the weather isn't so nice. I would just recommend saving a lot as the city is expensive. (Honestly expect to pay double if not more for most things).

Any recommendations for things to do, places to visit, places to eat etc.?

I highly recommend getting the Copenhagen Card when you first arrive if you're travelling with someone or are a serious museum fan. It gives you access to nearly all the city's tourist spots and covers public transport, which can be pricey. I did this with my parents when I first landed in Copenhagen, as I was there for a week with them. It was a great way to get your bearings on where everything was and how to navigate to use the public transport.

Other than that:

- Mio in Frederiksberg is great for cheap pizzas, and they are just as good as Esplanade.

- Jojo's (they have a bunch of locations) does really yummy cheap cocktails, and it is really popular with international students, especially the Vesterbro Gade one in the Summer with the outdoor seating.
- Mad and Kaffe have an amazing brunch board.
- Look into Too Good to Go, as it is a great way to get cheaper food.
- K7 week in September is when many art galleries and museums are free.
- Lidkøb is amazing for second-hand shopping.
- Keep an eye out for sample sales in October.
- Veras Market, plus checking out @myvintageguide on Instagram, is a great way to find vintage markets, which are fun in summer.
- A goboat in summer is fun.
- Baggen in the meatpacking district was my favourite club.
- Prologue Coffee does the best Cardamom bun.
- The Danish Architecture Centre is a cool building with some interesting exhibits.
- The Glyptotek is a must-visit, in my view.
- Louisiana is amazing (there is a field trip there with the Danish Culture Course, but if you don't end up doing that, I would say it's definitely worth the hype, especially on a nice day)
- Reffen is such a cool place.
- Come Rice Kitchen does great Onigiri.
- Lille Bakery is probably my favourite in the city.
- Andersen Bakery near the South Campus is definitely a close second, though
- Catching a ferry is a really fun and affordable way to enjoy the sunset, especially for sunset.
- The cold dip clubs are a great bonding activity.
- Swimming in the harbour in summer
- Leonowski Bar does a pub quiz on a Monday that is in English (make sure to book, though)
- Minas Kaffebar has cheap coffee, food and drinks.

Any tips for future students?

So many of the clubs here are 21+, so I would recommend going a bit later in your degree if you are really into clubbing and looking for a night out. I had a couple of friends who were 19 and that definitely impacted their exchange.

Swapfiets is a great company to get your bike through if you are there for a semester (and you will need a bike). I remember being so scared to bike at first, but it is quick to pick up, and we got a talk on the road rules at the orientation. But it definitely is the easiest and most affordable way to get around.

So many people got fines on the public transport when they first arrived. The rejsekort app is really easy to use and remember to check in before you get on any sort of public transport as the fines are really high.

If you are there during black Friday a lot of airlines and accommodation websites do deals. Which is great for booking a weekend trip.

Instagram pages like @copenhagen.recommends and @emmascopenhagen are great for finding out what is going on in the city that a particular week. (There are also similar tiktok accounts).

A random side note I found the food quality at the supermarkets a lot worse than in New Zealand and the selection is definitely worse.

Overall Experience

Please write one paragraph (or more) about your exchange experience. Please include some photos!

Going on exchange was such an amazing experience. Being able to live in a new country in such a supported environment was something I'm really glad I chose to do.

Copenhagen as a city just has great vibes overall. It's incredibly safe; I never once felt uncomfortable, even taking the metro alone at four in the morning. The café culture is one of the best parts of living there, with so many places to explore and spots that quickly become part of your routine. Being based in Europe also made it easy to travel and see other countries, which added so much to the whole experience.

The only real downside is how expensive everything is, but even with that, I'm genuinely so happy I chose to go. It ended up being one of the best decisions I've ever made, and I'd do it again in a heartbeat.

