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Degree Program at TAU: Sofaer International MBA

Host University: Copenhagen Business School

Exchange term: Fall semester

Exchange Experience

About the country and city

Denmark is a Scandinavian liberal social-welfare state with a strong economy and high standard of living. The culture is characterized by a focus on design, love for the environment and sustainability and the concept of “Hygge” – cosy gatherings at home in the company of friends and family with cake and candlelight. Denmark has a strong inside culture due to the cold and rainy weather, especially in the winter. Danes are very friendly and welcoming. However, it takes a while to actually make Danish friends and build lasting relationships.

Copenhagen offers various activities in terms of culture, sports, nature, restaurants and bars. It has several universities and a growing startup scene. Its location allows easy travel to destinations within Denmark and to other European cities.

About the Host University

Copenhagen Business School is located in the Frederiksberg neighborhood and spreads over several locations that are all in walking distance to one another. The atmosphere is open, friendly and international. The department for exchange students is very organized and approachable. I was assigned a Danish buddy girl a few weeks prior to arrival that picked me up from the airport. In addition, the international office offered Danish courses, an orientation week with an introduction to studying at CBS and various social activities. They also organized a Denmark tour and a Berlin trip later in the semester. Furthermore, there were regular parties on campus, networking events, career fairs, professional career workshops, language exchange meetings and student clubs for sports, volunteering, consulting etc.

Courses and professors

I was offered to choose 4 classes from a catalogue of around 200 Master courses in English. There were no specific classes for MBA students, so the average student in my courses was around 23 years old. The classes I took were Social Entrepreneurship, City Marketing, Service Design and Creative Industries. All of them were very interesting and I really enjoyed the lectures. I advise to read the syllabus thoroughly before registering since the classes differed a lot in terms of how theoretical or practical they are and what the academic requirements to pass the course are. Switching courses in the first week was possible in most cases, but not easy. The communication with the professors is very friendly and on eye-level. Examination to complete the classes was either written exam, term paper or oral exam. There was some flexibility to change the examination format in case a student needs to leave the country already before a written or oral exam date. Some courses required smaller exercises and presentations throughout the semester in addition. Two of my courses had a very practical teaching approach and included a lot of group work.

Accommodation

I decided to stay in the students dorms of CBS (Holger Danskes Vej – only for Master students). The advantages were the proximity to the CBS campus, the easy opportunity to meet a lot of people in the beginning and the fact that I could book it months before my arrival and did not have to arrive earlier for apartment hunt. The downside was the price. I paid for a single room with shared bathroom and kitchen an equivalent of 3500 Shekel. Only after my arrival I learned that private housing in the city is up to 3 times cheaper than student dorms. In addition the conditions in the dorms were not great. There was noise, construction work and a low level of cleanliness in the shared spaces. There was no Wifi and even a rule of not being allowed to have guests. However, this was never checked by the staff. Looking back, I would have searched for private housing if I would have known all that before. There are quite a few Facebook groups and it is definitely possible to find a room in a shared apartment around half a year before.

Visa and Insurance/Health Services

I am a European citizen, so did not have any visa issues.

Everyone who stays in Denmark longer than 3 months needs to register with the authorities there and receives the so-called CPR number. The CPR number also provides access to free health care. Once you receive the CPR number, you get automatically assigned to a family doctor in the area.

Transportation

There is no way around getting your own bike! All the international students get bikes in the first few days after their arrival since it's the most popular way of transportation in the city. It's also an easier way to move between the different CBS campuses. There are second hand stores and a Yad2 equivalent to buy used bikes online. In addition, CBS offers to rent bikes to the international students for the semester. There is also subway and buses for longer distances and heavy rain days.

Living expenses

As mentioned above, I paid 3500 Shekel per month for the student dorm room. Prices in supermarkets, restaurants and bars are very similar to Tel Aviv. I bought a bike 500 Shekel and sold it for 250 Shekel when I left. For subway and buses it is advised to get the Rejsekort, a travel card that gives 50% of all trips.

Food

CBS has a great cafeteria on each location with hot meals, salad bar, pastries, sandwiches and snacks. There are some amazing but expensive restaurants in Copenhagen. An alternative are the many food markets all over the city. Danish food includes delicious pastries, cakes and breads. The Smorrebrod (open sandwich) is a traditional Danish dish. Other than that, Danes love all kinds of candy, especially licorice. To my surprise Copenhagen does not offer a lot of vegetarian and vegan food options.

Night life

There are a lot of bars and some clubs in Copenhagen especially in the trendy areas of Nørrebro and Vesterbro. Some great international artists are performing in concerts in the city. CBS has its own campus party once a week. In general, Denmark has a culture of heavy drinking. Bars are where the reserved Danes start to open up.

Tip

Get a bike, a fancy rain coat and rain boots!