

Erasmus Experience Report

Copenhagen Business School, Denmark, Fall/Winter 2024/2025

Preparation

After being nominated by the UoC CEMS office, both CBS's international office and CBS's CEMS office got in touch with me and informed me about the next steps. You will have to activate your CBS IT account and formally apply to CBS. The process is straightforward, I always received detailed instructions and any questions I had were quickly addressed by the international office.

Regarding Erasmus funding, the UoC Erasmus office will contact you and guide you through the necessary steps. They also hosted an online information session in which you could ask questions.

Accommodation

Finding affordable housing in Copenhagen can be challenging. However, CBS offers student housing options for exchange students, which I highly recommend applying for. Detailed information about the available options, prices, and the application process can be found on the CBS website: <https://www.cbs.dk/en/study/internationals/exchange-students/housing/student-residences>.

The application process was fairly easy. Unlike in previous years, housing was not allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Instead, there was a one-week period in May in which you could fill out the application and submit your preferences.

Fortunately, I received a spot at my first choice, Nimbusparken, CBS's residence for graduate students. At Nimbus, each student has a private bedroom with an en-suite bathroom. Kitchens are shared among 10 to 12 students and are equipped with all necessary appliances and utensils. The residence also includes laundry facilities, a common room in the basement, and a storage area for luggage and bikes.

Nimbus is located in Frederiksberg, conveniently close to CBS Graduate house, where most of my electives were held, was just a three-minute walk away and other CBS buildings could be reached within 10 to 15 minutes by walking or 3 to 5 minutes by bike. Getting to the city center takes approximately 20 minutes by bike, and there is a nearby metro station that provides easy access to the city center, train station, and airport. Everything needed for everyday life can be found nearby: There are lots of supermarkets around, a few bakeries, cafés, and restaurants, a mall and the next gym is also just a 10-minute walk away.

Nimbus is a great place to socialize and meet new people. The kitchens provide the perfect space for joined cooking sessions with friends and to hang out with your kitchen mates. We often hosted joined brunches or dinners and games or movie nights. While there were parties on the weekends, either in one of the kitchens or the common room in the basement, most ended before midnight and noise was rarely an issue. The majority of the incoming CEMS students also lived at Nimbus and therefore a lot of CEMS activities took place in the residence.

Overall, living at Nimbus was great and played a significant role in making my exchange experience so enjoyable. I would highly recommend living there!

Arrival and Orientation

Copenhagen is easily accessible. For those preferring a quick journey, the easiest way to get there would most likely be to fly into Copenhagen Kastrup Airport. From there, you can easily get to the city center or CBS by metro. However, Copenhagen can also be easily reached by train as there are direct train connections from Hamburg to København H. Alternatively, some exchange students also chose to drive to Copenhagen by car.

As an EU citizen, you will have to apply for an EU residence document upon arrival in Denmark. The process is straightforward: you complete an online application and schedule an appointment at SIRI (the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration). During August and September, SIRI organizes special "Student Days," making it easier for students to secure appointments. The staff is highly experienced with assisting international students, so the process is quick and efficient. Once you have your EU residence document, you can apply for a CPR number (Denmark's personal identification number). While I completed the application for a CPR number, I found that I did not need it during my stay.

CBS offers a buddy program, which I recommend signing up for. Your assigned buddy is supposed to pick you up from the airport or train station, help you settle into your accommodation, and address any questions you might have concerning the university and student life. Throughout the semester they are also supposed to organize a buddy dinner where you can meet other students and their buddies from the program.

For those interested in learning Danish, CBS offers a one-week Danish crash course prior to the start of the lectures. However, due to it overlapping with the CEMS Block Seminar, I was unable to participate.

CBS organizes an official orientation week for exchange students during the week before lectures begin. This includes mandatory information sessions about the university and life on campus, classes, and exams. You also can buy an introduction week pass to participate in various social activities such as a sunset dinner, exchange Olympics, a canal tour, and folk dancing. While the pass is relatively expensive, it is still worth it if you are looking for opportunities to meet new people and get familiar with the city. Although not officially affiliated with CBS, the student organization 'Friendsofcph' offers a party pass that gives you free entry to and sometimes even free drinks at clubs during the introduction week. They also regularly organize parties throughout the semester.

University and Courses

CBS requires exchange students to take at least 30 ECTS during the semester. Typically, a course is worth 7.5 ECTS. Similarly to UoC, a course can either take place in the first (Q1) or second half (Q2) of the semester or run throughout the whole semester. Attendance at lectures is not mandatory.

CBS has a strong research focus and therefore the foundation for most lectures are academic papers, so be prepared for an extensive amount of reading. The final grade is typically entirely based on the final exam, which can have various forms, including take-home assignments, written sit-in exams or oral exams based on written submissions. The grading system at CBS differs from the German system and does not translate directly. There are jumps in grades from 1.0 to 1.7 to 2.3, and so on.

Prior to the course selection process, I received an email from the CEMS office informing me about the courses that are mandatory and providing us with list of approved electives and hard skill courses. Inconveniently, the course and exam schedule are only released after the course selection and in case of overlaps you might be required to change some of your courses. It is possible to finish the semester before Christmas but be aware that some exams might take place in January.

Life in Copenhagen

Copenhagen is a fantastic place to live. Personally, I found the city to strike a perfect balance – big enough to always find something to do, yet small enough to easily navigate without feeling overwhelmed.

Getting around

Biking is the easiest and most convenient way to get around. The city is super bike-friendly, with an excellent infrastructure that makes cycling safe and enjoyable. You can either rent a bike or buy one second-hand and resell it at the end of the semester. I opted to rent a Swapfiets which cost me around 30€ per month and included insurance and free repairs. If you only want to use a bike occasionally I can recommend Donkey Republic, an app that works similarly to the KVB bike. Public transport is also an option, though it is quite expensive – single fare costs around €3.50. However, the metro system is quite efficient and runs all night making it a reliable way to get home late at night or when the weather is bad.

Things to do

Copenhagen truly comes alive in the summer. There are plenty of spots to swim and sunbathe – my personal favorites include Paper Island and Kalvebod Bølge – and Amager Strand is perfect for a beach day. I would also highly recommend renting a FriendShip or GoBoat with friends to drive through the canals and see Copenhagen's sights from the water. Food markets like Reffen and Broens are excellent places to grab a bite while enjoying the lively atmosphere of the city.

The city is also great to just wander around and explore. There are plenty of design stores to do some window shopping and second-hand and vintage stores to do some thrift shopping. Frederiksberg Park, quite close to CBS, is perfect for an afternoon stroll, especially in the fall.

Once the days get darker and colder, it's time to explore some of the amazing bakeries and cafés. I highly recommend Juno the bakery, Andersen & Meillard, and Hart Bageri for a sweet treat. For hygge afternoons and evenings with friends, you can visit places like the Bastard Board Game Café or get creative with activities like pottery painting or jewelry-making.

You can also spend hygge nights in, for example at the Bastard Boardgame café. The city also has many places where you can get creative and do things such as pottery painting or making your own jewelry.

For night outs Norrebro, Vesterbro, and Meatpacking are vibrant neighborhoods with a wide variety of bars. If you are looking for affordable drinks JOJO and Leanowski are great places to check out.

If you are interested in art and culture, Copenhagen offers many museums that are worth a visit. Keep an eye out for the K7 week – a special week when many museums and other cultural institutions in Denmark offer free admission for people under 28 and tickets for performances and concerts for only 40 DKK. Thanks to the K7 week I was able to visit the Louisiana Museum and the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek for free, and see a concert at the royal theatre. All you need to do is to sign up for a free pass online.

Traveling

While I didn't travel much during my exchange, many students took advantage of the opportunity to explore Scandinavia. Popular destinations included Oslo, the Lofoten Islands, and Lapland. Denmark's small size makes quick getaways to cities like Aarhus and Odense easy. Malmö and Lund are also just a short train ride away and are great destinations for a day trip.

Costs of Living

It is important to consider that the costs of living in Denmark are higher than in Germany. In general, most items and groceries are slightly more expensive than in Germany. Especially eating out and getting drinks can be particularly expensive, however it is possible to find reasonably priced options. Rent is also more expensive than in Cologne, I paid around €850 per month. However, the Erasmus grant did help to cover most of those additional costs.