

Student Experience Report

Preparation

Being a non-EU student in Germany, there was a lot to do in terms of preparation for a semester abroad. Firstly, I had to shortlist a university and after finding that DTU in Denmark has many courses that I wanted to do or were mandatory for me, I decided to apply for it. The application was straightforward as I only needed to give documentation like cover letter, enrollment certificate etc. to my home university and they took care of the admission procedure.

Once I was accepted for the exchange, since I was going to stay in Denmark for more than 3 months, I had to apply for a residence permit there. This part was more troublesome as the Danish foreign office required a lot of documentation and had a hefty fee for the permit too. Furthermore, if I wanted to give my biometrics for the permit in Flensburg, I would end up paying double. Therefore, I decided it was more worth to travel to Copenhagen and get my biometrics taken there.

Accommodation

The situation for private accommodation is quite complicated in Copenhagen. No one is willing to give a room unless one can go and visit the renter. I had applied for a university accommodation during the residence permit process and got a contract from the university for it. However, once I received the letter, it stated that the minimum contract duration is for 6 months and since my Erasmus funding period was for 4 months, I could not afford to pay for an additional two months. Thus, began my quest to find a private room, which proved to be exceptionally difficult. I looked through Danish accommodation websites, Facebook groups etc. and it was only in the last week before me leaving Germany that I managed to secure a room.

When I had emailed the university regarding if I can reduce the duration of my contract, they had firmly rejected the notion. However, I came to find at the end of my study period that some of my friends asked the accommodation office to cancel their contracts early and that they accepted it. I would've rather stayed on campus as it would reduce my long commute to the university every day.

Travel and arrival

The residence permit situation allowed me to visit Denmark before my exchange started and allowed me to accustom myself with the nuances there. Once I got my permit, I booked a bus to Copenhagen as the journey only takes about 8 hours from Oldenburg.

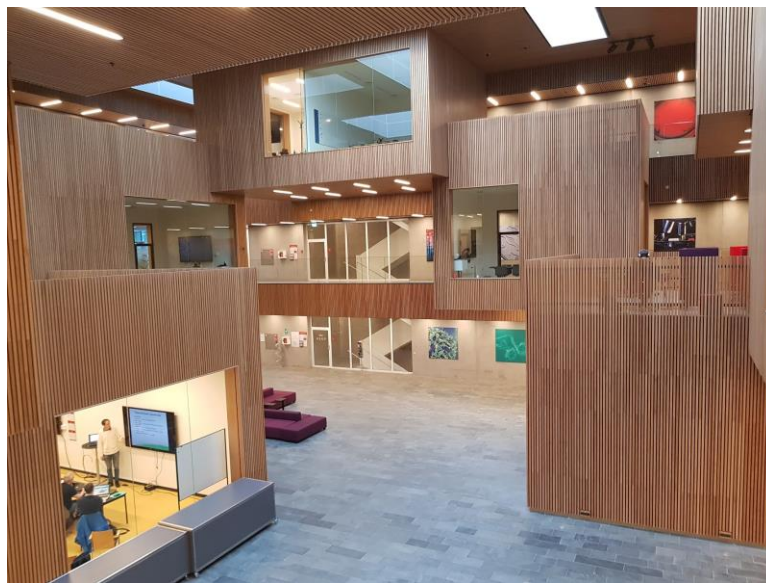
Settling in took some time but since I arrived before the orientation week, I got familiar with the university and city overall.

Studying at the host university

Studying at DTU was a joy as everything was extremely well planned – from the orientation week to the teaching schedules to the exams.

I had decided to take some courses that were mandatory in my university and one that was an elective. My assessment of the elective was wrong as it turned out to be very difficult compared to my level as it was a Master course, so I swapped that for another course. However, all the other courses which include Condensed Matter Physics, Materials Science and Strength of Materials (A material physics specialization, now that I think about it) were wonderful to attend and I passed them all at the end.

DTU amazed me with how digital everything was. During classes, everyone was encouraged to use their computers to write notes or do calculations and for all my exams, I was allowed to take a computer without internet access so that I could focus more on the course content instead of say, the math which was elementary and wouldn't give any new insights.

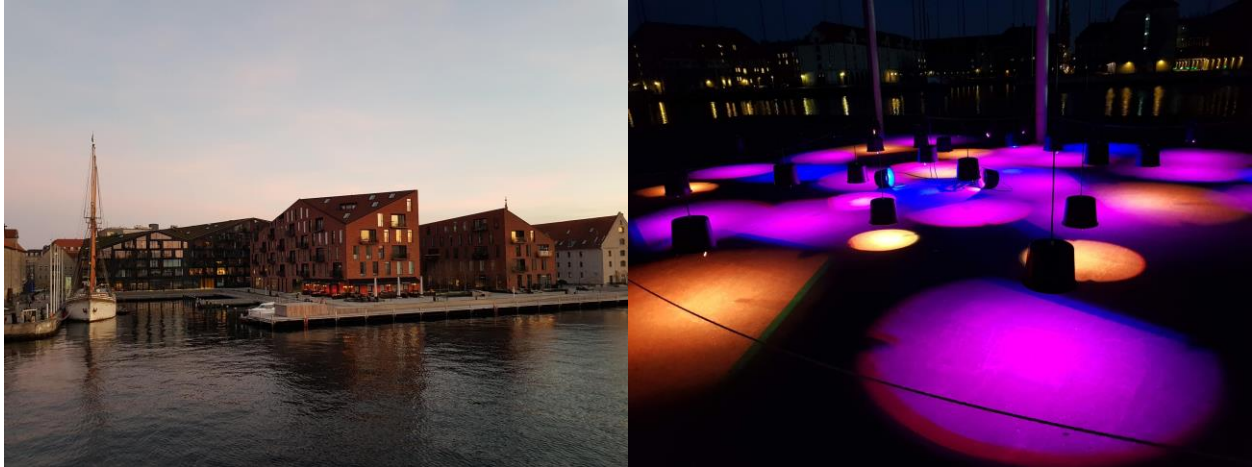


New building at the DTU campus in Lyngby

Everyday life and leisure time

I was living between Copenhagen city and DTU campus, so I had the best of both worlds. Commuting was a bit long as either direction was 7+ km but Copenhagen Area being so bike friendly, I rarely had to use public transport. There were a lot of sightseeing places and I got to take a lot of nice pictures in Copenhagen city.

I could pay with a card for all my transactions in Denmark, as they are approaching a more cashless society which is very convenient for a student such as myself.



Left: Picture taken at Inderhavnsbroen Right: Nighttime in the city during the Copenhagen light festival

Conclusion

Studying at DTU is a definite recommendation from my side. As one gets to experience a beautiful and vibrant city such as Copenhagen nearby and to study at one of the best institutes in the world. One recommendation from my side would be to take the university accommodation on campus if the student is interested in campus life. Or if the city life is more their thing, then definitely living in the city is great. It's best to realize beforehand that living in Denmark is very expensive. I had an expenditure 50% more than I do in Germany, so the Erasmus grant barely covers the surplus of expenses. Another thing student should be open about is biking, as this is very dominant in the Danish society and to fully experience Copenhagen Area, there is no better way than by biking.



Picture of me at Nyhavn, Copenhagen