



# ERASMUS+ REPORT

Białystok University of Technology

## ABSTRACT

Every student receiving an Erasmus+ STUDIES grant has to submit a report as well. This report is about my experience for one semester study in University of Southern Denmark (SDU).

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2021-2022

## PREPARATION

### Exchange application process

When I applied for studying abroad, I thought about Denmark (Odense), Norway (Bergen) and France (Paris), because I really looked for good facilities and a high level of education. These universities were ranked pretty good. I applied for the first option, and I got it: Odense, Denmark. Fortunately, I got my first choice, and I think I can now say it was the best for me (Denmark was a good and somewhat tinier step to a living abroad experience than Norway). I had never been in Scandinavia, so that is why I also thought for Denmark and Norway (and I also like their free social democratic culture). I thought it was really weird to make the decision to go abroad so early: you just start filling in the forms and do everything you are supposed to do and then in the end you actually are going abroad, something you decided on a year beforehand. Preparing for everything was less work than I thought it would be because people told me it would be an enormous pile of paperwork. Of course, there a lot of things to work out, but it is definitely manageable. So just for the people that are not sure to go abroad because of the paperwork, do not let this stop you. I do think it is less work to go abroad with Erasmus (in Europe) than in the rest of the world. The most important thing about the application process is to watch the deadlines that the International Office summarized on one page (a timeline, I think you can find it online and at the International Relations Office at the university). It gives you more peace as you have an overview of what you have to do and cross what you already have done. Besides this, please make a copy of everything you have to hand in. The employees of the International Office are really nice and willing to help you with your process, but during my process my course applications got lost. It is just so much more practical that you have copies of it ready when something happens to it. The coordinator was easy to reach per email and at the international office. They were also opened to making appointments if you wanted to discuss something and help for making the process easier.

### Academic preparation

The academic skills I required during my master year in Bialystok University of Technology (BUT) were enough to participate in the courses at University of Southern Denmark (SDU). I must say that the Danish students in my courses were a bit more actively participating than I was used to, and I learned a lot from their critical perspective and analyzing skills. I do recommend talking with your study advisor about the courses you are taking abroad. I didn't do this and send the international coordinator emails to ask what the courses where really about to see if the courses fitted in my program, but it is quite practical, so you know what kind of consequences the period abroad will have for the rest for your study. To check if the BUT accepted my chosen courses at SDU, I filled in the form for the examination commission, and they approved my courses (so they appear at my grade list and registration dates etc.). It is practical to do this beforehand.

### Language preparation

As I am master student of Management, Smart and Innovative Business in English, I didn't need a certificate for English Language Competence. I have been asked just to do test on OLS platform to check my English level which was B1 before I went to SDU. I wasn't the best English speaker before I went to Odense, but when you have to talk English every day for a half year, you will get pretty good at it, so no worries. I also had to do a lot of reports in English supervised by English native speakers, and I am so glad I was able to develop my writing skills and English. At the end of mobility, I have been asked for an English test again in OLS platform and I got C1 level which can be clearly seem that I improved my English.

### Finances

Living in Odense is pretty expensive, and I used a lot of my savings besides the Erasmus study scholarship I got. But if you know where to go, you can really save money. For example: doing a drink downtown is really expensive but look out for student discounts or happy hours. Or just get together at someone's place or -of course- at the amazing Friday bars at the University. The supermarkets can also be quite expensive, but you can save money if you first get most of your stuff at shops like Lidl, Aldi

or Netto and look at the websites for good deals and discounts. As for trips, the Studenthouse offers some trips that are really nice and are cheaper than if you would go by your own. But you can't save on everything, sometimes just accept it and enjoy Odense!

## STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

### Study program (content and organizational issues)

I did six courses, which were all 30 ECTS: New Business Establishment, Business Economics and Management, Data Science and Machine Learning, Consumer Product Testing and Optimization, Prototyping as a Tool in the Entrepreneurial Process and Experience Based Design. Although SDU has a very practical course catalogue online, it was hard to find the right courses. It took me some time to find the courses of my semester, so I first picked some that were taught the semester or year before. SDU was a bit late with updating the course catalogue. Furthermore, there were some organizational issues with the courses on Itslearning in the beginning, what made me a bit unsecure if I could follow my courses, but in the end the teachers approached me via the student mail. I could also ask the international office anything, so everything turned out all right and I could change some courses cause of overlapping classes and different content. Almost of courses were active participation classes, what means that I had to follow a certain amount of classes and make a semester project (do presentations, write paper, workshop). I am not used to this way of education, but it kept me motivated and secure about passing the courses. Thus, it was harder to keep up with the work. In general, the education is informal, and you have to do a lot of work on your own.

### Academic quality of education activities

The level of education is high: the teachers are enthusiastic and involve the students and the facilities are great. If you keep your eyes open in check the SDU social network pages and website, you can even find extra symposiums and lectures. The library is 24 hours open, online access to different platform just using the student email. The employees of the international office and housing office are really keen on helping you and reply quickly.

### Transfer of credits

My credits will be transferred in February, and I expect it will cause no problems. I had the option to have the transcript directly sent to my home university email address or to have it posted t (to the international relations office). I recommend sending it directly to the BUT's international office. As for the active participation courses, these courses will not influence your GPA and you will only get the ECTS points, which means the courses will appear at the transcript as pass/fail. I asked beforehand how this will turn out, but apparently this is something the examination commission always will look at separately, so I guess the BUT has no general translation scale for the transferring of grades. This was a bit annoying since I couldn't know for example if a danish 10 would be a 3 or 4.

## STUDENT LIFE

### Welcome & orientation programme

The SDU introduction week was both practical and fun. The practical part was very well organized and helped me with everything that would have been difficult otherwise, such as getting your citizen card (CPR card and resident card as I am not EU) and signing up for a doctor. The fun part made me feel welcome. There were not that many activities, but the ones the SDU organized (Puzzle, Lego games, Friday bar) were fun and a good opportunity to meet people. You also get a bag with stuff to find your way around Odense. Just take the courage to approach people that seem fun, don't hesitate.

### Accommodation

You get one housing offer from the SDU and if you decline you must find housing on your own. You get the offer on basis of your preference you gave them. You can choose from a couple of things like having your own bathroom, a cheap room, a disability equipped rooms and a room not far from the university. I chose the preference a cheap room which got me a room was 370 euros per month (1680 PLN). It was in the center of Odense (Reventflowsvej). I was in a house with 3 others. We shared our kitchen and bathroom. The house itself was on a good location, in the centrum and far 10min biking from the university. The nature was close, but also the supermarkets. There was also a common room where the students held their parties, this common rooms are a great way to get involved in (danish) student life. So, the accommodation was fine, but not that save. It was fun to be in a house with Danes and internationals.

### Leisure & culture

In the evenings I spend a lot of time at the student house, which has a student discount and almost 200 drinks to try. The Friday bars (only on Friday at the University complexes) are also really cheap, as they often have deals or happy hours. It is also fun to go downtown, but more expensive, so make sure you go on discount days (such as the cocktail bar, Irish bar on Thursdays). It is also easy to go to other cities with the bus or train (such as Aarhus or Copenhagen). Furthermore, I signed up for a student soccer team. This was a great opportunity to hang around with Danes. There are a lot of bikes everywhere (even though there are a lot of hills), once you arrive to Denmark the first thing you have to do is to get a bike either buy one from marketplace or just rent it from Swapfiets as I did (21 Euros/month). They wear shorts outside when it is fifteen degrees, it is all the same. However, they are way more relaxed and nicer (I think). They don't rush as much as we do. They also think family is more important than work and they give you a lot more breaks.

### Suggestions/Tips

Friday bar, University Welcome Party, Traveling around the country (Aalborg, Aarhus, Copenhagen) also outside as Sweden and Norway. There is a lot to do in Odense. Enjoy sightseeing, student life and don't forget to get in touch with the locals, sometimes it takes a while to really get to them, but it is totally worth it.

## CONCLUSION

Odense was maybe small, cold, and windy, but they got it together: the health system is fast and free (which I used and was very good), the university facilities were great, the education is of a high level, the nature is great and there are a lot of things to do. But most of all, wherever you are, it is about the people you meet. It was such an amazing and indescribable experience to get in touch with people from different countries, make friends and establish a second life.

**ADVICE:** It may not be always that easy, but you will learn a lot and will experience the best moments of your life too. Enjoy the time you have, it's over before you know it.



Playing soccer at the SDU fields





Odense international weekly meeting





The Odense Harbor



Skovsøen Park





Walking in downtown





The image shows a large, modern atrium with multiple levels and balconies. A large audience is seated in the foreground, facing a stage area. A large screen displays the 'SDG Forum II' logo and a speaker. To the left, a large digital display shows a schedule of events and a map of the building. The architecture features a high ceiling with a grid of lights and a colorful, abstract sculpture hanging from the top.



Working on projects – SDU Labs





SDU after late-night study





Christmas decorations in downtown







AROS – BOY (Ron Muecks) - Aarhus Museum of Arts





Evening walking in downtown



SAUNA and cold swimming pool - The Odense Harbor

