



## Aarhus University

2018-2019

<b>PREPARATION</b>
exchange application process
<p>I think the exchange application process is quite straightforward. I believe that the most important part of your UU / USE application process is your motivation letter. A decent part of your motivation should be / are the courses you are able to take. Thus some considerable time should be allotted to your study plan. However, do not stress too much importance on the exact courses you want to take but at the kind of courses that Aarhus University offers in general. This is because the exact courses can change and you want to make sure you do not lose your motivation to go on exchange when you are not able to follow that exact course. I think that the financial plan is more something to do for yourself in order for you to realize how much money this decision will cost you. The Aarhus application process is more about (as far as I remember) identifying yourself (e.g. copy of passport), making a final decision on which courses you want to take and to potentially provide you with (relatively cheap) housing. At this stage, you can be quite sure that you are going on exchange to Aarhus University.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University
<p>It is important to be proactive when something is not clear about your exchange procedure. The standard / basic support that is provided by USE / UU is quite low, but the people that work there are very knowledgeable and helpful. Previously to this I already did a UU-wide exchange and it felt like this is even more the case for USE / REBO exchanges than for UU ones. Thankfully, this time around I did not need much support but I can understand it can be frustrating for certain things to be unclear. Do not be discouraged by it. By just contacting them you realize that there is a perfectly logical explanation to it. I personally just wish they would address them before / at the beginning of the exchange procedure.</p>
academic preparation
<p>The academic level of Aarhus University and Utrecht University is approximately the same. However, I do think that there are some major academic differences between Aarhus University and Utrecht University. First, Aarhus University works with 2 semesters while USE works with 4 periods. This difference on itself should not require that much adjustment. However, most courses also only have 1 final examination at the end of the semester that counts for 100% of your grade. This is quite different than the USE way of having a mid and/or end term every 4 weeks or so. Thus, for me it felt like I needed a lot more self-discipline to actually keep up with my studies in the case that the exam was "just at the end of January". Furthermore, these examinations can be written or oral. Lastly, Aarhus University has a lot more ungraded activities you have to do in order to take the exam (e.g. presentations, assignments). For some of these activities it is rather clear when you failed / passed them, while for others it is not. I myself did not prepare for this and it worked out fine for me, but I think it is nice to know the major academic differences beforehand and mentally prepare for them.</p>
language preparation
<p>Apart from doing a bit of Duolingo to get the basics down of the Danish language I did not do much to prepare. Having said that, I have not come across one person in my five-month stay in Aarhus that was not able to communicate with me on an understandable level in English. Academically speaking, everyone has a rather high proficiency in English. However, even those students, just like in the Netherlands, prefer to speak their native tongue. So you can get into a situation wherein Danish students simply 'forget' that you are there and start speaking Danish. This is something that also happens in the Netherlands and of which I am guilty of myself, so I do not blame them for that. Just like Dutch students, Danish students think it is really cool that you are able to say a few Danish sentences so I definitely think it is worth getting the basics down. It also makes your daily</p>



activities, like grocery shopping, a lot more easier / less awkward wherein by default mode the cashier will assume you are Danish. Thus, it is very helpful to know, for example, how to say that you do not want the receipt in Danish.

finances

Keep in mind that Denmark is one of those (few) countries that is actually more expensive to live in than the Netherlands. Even though Aarhus University might provide you with housing, it is at best the same price range as in Utrecht. Most likely, it is will be more expensive than in Utrecht. Groceries are also quite expensive even though there are some supermarkets (e.g. Netto and Rema1000) that make it a bit more bearable. I think that going on restaurants on a regular basis is not sustainable in any budget. As far as I am aware, there are no places to eat relatively cheaply (<20eu) apart from some pizzerias.

**STUDY ABROAD PERIOD**

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The courses are well organized. Your schedule, exam prerequisites and exam structure / content is made public quite early on. This gives you sufficient time to organize yourself and know how to take your notes in the most efficient way. Courses can have a closed book exam, open book exam or presentation + Q&A and all will require a different method of taking notes. The courses tend to have a significant Danish component in them due to data availability. This sometimes results in interesting in-class discussions. However, most of the time the classes are structured quite like a one-way street wherein the professor gives his lecture and the students just quietly take their notes. Thus, I felt like there was less interaction going on than at USE. I did enjoy the content of the courses a lot and I personally recommend 'The Economics of the Welfare State'.

academic quality of education activities

Like I mentioned before, I think that the level of Aarhus University and Utrecht University is approximately the same. However, I felt like there were larger differences in the level of difficulty between courses at Aarhus University than Utrecht University. Normally, you should have 2 weeks in which you can still switch courses if you have a viable reason (e.g. UU does not accept them). I would recommend using that time to really find out what the courses are about and whether they give you enough satisfaction, while still being manageable. If you foresee some major problems occurring I would contact UU immediately in order to find out if somethings can be changed.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I did not request counselling nor support, so I am not entirely sure about this. In general, the academic staff is quite approachable and prefers an informal setting (e.g. use of first names). At the International Office I did experience some inconvenience wherein they did not record my time of arrival. So make sure that you sign in and put your signature somewhere when you pick up your stuff at the International Office.

transfer of credits

My credits are not transferred back, but I have not been back in the Netherlands for a month yet. I did already receive my Transcript of Record almost a week ago, so I guess everything will be fine.

**STUDENT LIFE**

welcome & orientation programme

The welcome & orientation programme is really well organized and has the perfect mix of fun activities and mandatory activities (e.g. CPR-registration, choosing a general practitioner). The fact that they provide support at the mandatory activities is really helpful, because otherwise you would had to do them on your own, which would have surely taken more time. The fun activities help you to bond and socialize with your fellow exchange students while exploring the city. You are mainly being guided by two (Danish) full-time students which also



gives you the opportunity to actually interact with the locals (which is normally the hardest thing to do during an exchange). Given that some things were kept as a surprise for us, I will not spoil it for you in this report. Just know that it is not something that you want to skip.

accommodation

Aarhus University provides some housing for exchange students, but they do not have enough accommodation to place all the exchange students. I initially was not placed, but by putting myself on the waiting list I was able to get a room of someone that went back quite early in the exchange period (beginning of September). I ended up in a really nice student complex wherein I lived with 11 other students on 1 floor of which 9 were Danish and 2 were Internationals that were following a full-time study there. If you end up in one of these complexes you definitely do not want to miss out on 'Tour de Chambre'. In case you have to search for accommodation yourself, keep in mind that Aarhus is not flat at all. So make sure that you do not choose a location wherein you have to climb the hill every time you go to BSS.

leisure & culture

Aarhus has approximately the same amount of inhabitants as Utrecht. At first glance it may seem that there is not much to do, but that is not necessarily true. There are definitely museums that are worth a visit (e.g. Aros and Den gamle by), nature to walk through (e.g. the deer park) and architecture to admire (e.g. Isbjerget). You definitely do not want to miss the first two parties / International Nights of 'studenterhus', which is the ESN of Aarhus. On Fridays, you preferably want to start at a Friday bar. Der Kuhstall tends to have deals on the other days (e.g. Wednesday 'happy hour'). Bodegean is a nice bar in general and Kupe is a nice club if you do not mind spending more than 50eu on a night. Apart from that Danish tend to have their small get-togethers as that is much cheaper than a bar or club.

suggestions/tips

Two things that will surely save you money are buying a bike and a membership at 'studenterhus'. Public transportation is in the same price range as in the Netherlands and given that now you do not have a student public transport card anymore the cost of taking a bus each day will be quite high. Apart from the fact that buying and reselling a bike is cheaper than taking the bus every day, it is also a lot nicer in general. If you are not looking forward to the process of buying and reselling a bike and all the maintenance that comes with it then you can also consider 'Swapfiets'. Simply put, this is a bike rental company that also takes care of all your maintenance issues (e.g. flat tire). With a membership at 'studenterhus' you get a decent amount of discounts on the various trips they organize in the beginning of the semester and you are able to get beer for 20 Danish krone. Have not found a place, apart from Friday bars, that sell them that 'cheap'.

**CONCLUSIONS**

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes and no, if you are looking for something really different than the Netherlands then Aarhus is not the city for you. But if you are just looking for a change of scenery and an opportunity to meet a lot of new people, potentially learn a new language and making friendships and experiences that might last you a lifetime then Aarhus is a city as good as any. I do not regret going on exchange to Aarhus and I exactly got out of it what I wanted.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

While being on exchange it is very easy to stay in the 'exchange bubble', which means only interacting with other exchange students. I would advise to also make an active effort to interact with the locals. Also try to experience as much as possible and refrain from going at a certain place the whole time. 4 or 5 months may seem like a decent amount of time, but you'll surely see in December that you haven't done things that you easily could have and would have enjoyed.



<b>PREPARATION</b>	
exchange application process	
I found it quite difficult, lot of work. Lot of emails, I think it can be a lot faster if you don't have to tell every institution the same thing all the time.	
counselling & support at Utrecht University	
Was good, except that I was always unsure to which email adress I had to send emails. There is the international office, exchange office of REBO, exchange USE. For me it was not always clear which was the best one to use.	
academic preparation	
None	
language preparation	
None	
finances	
Fine, only the budget you needed to make was unnecessary in my opinion. You have really no idea what your expected costs are and at least I did not follow the budget.	

<b>STUDY ABROAD PERIOD</b>	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	
I did four courses as optional courses for my bachelor. It was good organised, only thing that was new to me was that your schedule could change every week, so it was important to look every week if there was something different compared to previous week.	
academic quality of education activities	
The level was comparable to the level here. Of course the way of teaching is different so I took me some time to get used to that, but after all I was doable. The level was comparable, but the way of testing was different. In my opinion it was better there. I had two open book exams and I think by this way of testing some important skills are trained better. You did not had to learn evertyhing by heart, but analytical thinking and reasoning were required in these exams. You do not get high grades by learning a lot, but you can get it if you really understand the material.	
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	
Good, the was one contact person for me there and she did the things as filling in the learning agreement.	
transfer of credits	
Not applicable yet.	

<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>	
welcome & orientation programme	
The first week was very good, we had an introduction week where we got a lot of information and possibilities to make new friends. It really helped me to feel home soon.	
accommodation	



When I signed up for housing provided by the university they said they could not guarantee housing. Luckily I got my first choice of type of housing (shared facility house), I was even more lucky with the location of my house.

leisure & culture

The city centre feels and is quite small, but for me there were enough different bars and restaurants so that I never got bored. Also there were enough other things to do around the city.

suggestions/tips

## CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes for sure. The size of the city is comparable to Utrecht. If you are in doubt between choosing Aarhus or Copenhagen I would definitely recommend Aarhus. Copenhagen is really big and there are so many tourists that the student life is less there (similar as in Amsterdam I think). Through the introduction week you immediately have to possibly get to know a lot of other exchange students.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you are in doubt about which type of housing to choose, I would really recommend the shared facility housing above living in a dorm. With the shared facility housing you are only living with other exchange students (in my case with 12 others), there are for sure people living in the same house who have the same interests and want to do the same activities. In dorms you are only living with a few other exchange students on your floor and a lot of Danish students. You will notice that you will not hang out with a lot of local students, almost only with other exchange students. For me, living in a shared facility house definitely improved my exchange period.