



Aarhus University

2019-2020

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application progress for applying for Aarhus University is not different from other universities. What Aarhus University and Utrecht University expect from you is to 1) write a motivational letter to explain why Utrecht University and Aarhus University should choose you as their exchange student, 2) attach your transcript of records, and 3) an UU study plan in which you specify which courses you want to do. The second step can be done through email, mail ECU desk and they will send it to you. Part 3 consists of courses you want to do at Aarhus University, these are not set in stone as you have to get approval from Aarhus University. I would recommend to look through the courses but keep in mind that you will get restrictions from AU later on. Furthermore, for part 3 you need signatures from Utrecht University, this can cost some time so take this into account (take a week before the deadline to get the signatures in time) when applying.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Utrecht University arranges a meeting in which they will tell you what to expect and how to arrange your Erasmus grant. It is really helpful to go there and there is also an opportunity to ask your questions. Furthermore, they will always help you with your questions (ieo.leg@uu.nl)

academic preparation

There is no need for academic preparation. Aarhus University arranges an introduction week in which they will provide you with all the information you need. It is always helpful to read through the course catalogue, but this is not necessary.

language preparation

English is the main language on Aarhus University, so there is no need to learn Danish. If you want to learn to speak the language I recommend you to do an additional language course. There are plenty of companies who provide this and in the introduction week Aarhus University will explain the different ones. They also arrange a gathering with stands where all companies, student associations etc etc are provided. This information will all be sent to you by email.

finances

Denmark is expensive. Comparing it to the Netherlands (Utrecht), all prices are a bit higher so it counts up. Especially alcohol and coffee is expensive. Of course, you can make it as cheap as you want. At the university a coffee is €1, however, if you go to a coffee bar, like La Cabra, it is 50 Danish Crown which is equal to €6,70. But do not stress too much about the money, grocery stores are comparable to Dutch supermarkets and there are lots of cheaper restaurants. Just keep in mind that if you want to make some trips and enjoy Aarhus without worrying about money you should save some money in advance.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD



study programme (content and organisational issues)
The courses are well arranged and interesting. It is comparable to the way of teaching in Utrecht, only the way of examination is different. In Denmark exams are most of the times oral, this means that you have a conversation about the course literature with your examiner(s). This sounds terrifying and it is, however, it is manageable. It is also possible to have written exams, they vary in duration but they are most of the times longer than those at Utrecht University, this is because you have to take your own laptop which means you have access to all your note, the course literature and internet. I would recommend to do both type of exams to get the full Aarhus experience. The course catalogue of Aarhus University is very representable and accurate, it also provides the way of examination (oral/written). Read it thoroughly.
academic quality of education activities
Aarhus University has good lecturers and professors. The courses are well set up and very clear.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Aarhus University have a excellent support system. In the first week, the introduction week, two students will lead you in a group through the city and do activities. These two students are your counselors and are available for all question you have during you whole stay. This is very helpful if you want to ask small questions (where can I find this classroom/building, which is a good restaurant, etc etc). For the more compicated questions you can contact the international contact person at Aarhus University. It is one person for all your question which prevents confusion. For me this was a woman and she helped me with all my questions and problems, also they respond to your email really fast.
transfer of credits
I did my exchange outside of my curriculum so I did not need my credits.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
Your stay abroad at Aarhus University starts with an ntroduction week. Make sure you will attend this because they will not only provide you with all the information you need but also organise activities for your 'buddy group' in which you make your first friends. In this introduction week you will get information about the way of teaching, practical information and deadline for submitting forms, about the norms and values of Danish people, the culture and much more. In this week they will also arrange insurance for you and register you as a Danish civilian (so you do not have to do it yourself). Make sure you have all the paperwork they ask you to bring!
accommodation
Aarhus University has a housing department in which they will help you find accommodation. If you apply for this it does not mean you get an accommodation, make sure you apply as soon as possible. I applied too late which caused that I had to find private housing. There are multiple Facebook sites where people rent their rooms, take a look at those if you do not get in the housing of Aarhus University.
leisure & culture
Aarhus is a quet city, it has around 350.000 inhabitants (about the size of Utrecht). People are modest and helpful. Danish people have their own way of living, they are really polite, for example, they wear helmets when biking and if the trafic light is red they will line up in a row. Do not expect Danish people to come to you, they are introvert people, just give them time to get to know you and they will open up.
suggestions/tips
Bring a rain jacket.



CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would recommend Aarhus University. First of all, the University is well arranged. They provide you all the documents and information needed and are always ready to help you out. The courses are of high quality and you will definitely learn new skills. Furthermore, Denmark is an interesting and nice country to live in. It is a quiet but fun city. It is a fun way to get more academic knowledge while learning other cultures and make new friends.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
In Denmark the weather is comparable to the Netherlands only there is some more rain, wind and the days are shorter. In January it is already dark at 4 o'clock.

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The exchange application process went quite smoothly. It is of course a lot of work, which you just have to do. What was nice is that the exchange office of Aarhus University is well organised and I was able to do a lot of preparation very early.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
I got help from the study advisor with what I had to do in order to get my exchange documents ready in time. That was helpful, because the administrative burden can be high and it is nice that someone can inform you on if you are doing it right and what you still need to do.
academic preparation
It took some time to figure which courses I wanted, but I was informed quite clearly by master coordinator which courses I could take.
language preparation
Did not need a lot of preparation, because my courses abroad were in English. Did take the obligatory Erasmus language test, which just takes some time, but is ok to do. I also took Danish language courses while I was in Denmark, which I liked.
finances
I was quite happy with the Erasmus compensation for living in Denmark. I think it well makes up for the price difference and possible travel expenditures. If you want to take a lot of trips and go out to a lot of restaurants you may need a bit of additional money.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
Once again Aarhus University is very well organised in my opinion. The courses were very interesting and of a significant difficulty level. Also the amount of courses you could choose from was very broad. I am definitely very positive about the study programme for economists at Aarhus University.
academic quality of education activities
So once more the quality of education at AU is good. Also the level of fellow students was high. Furthermore the way of examination, often orals, made for a good way of learning the course and preparing for the exam.



We were namely required to prepare a small talk for 14 sub topics of the course, which made that I had to make sense out of the topics instead of trying to only remember the material.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Did not need a lot of counseling or support, but the international office is well organised and helpful.

transfer of credits

I have not completed this yet, but I think it should be easy. I knew upfront which course would be eligible for me to take home to Utrecht University. Furthermore in Denmark they also use ECTS, so I expect no difficulties.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Was quite extensive. We had a full introduction week with activities where we got to know all other exchange students. We were divided in buddy groups during the week, which made that I got to know these people quite good in a short period of time. Furthermore each group had three buddies/mentors/coaches from Denmark who we're very helpful and outgoing. Next to that we were well introduced to the academic part of the exchange. We got information about teaching methods, a tour around the library, and other academic related info. So I quickly got to know, people, the city, and the university.

accommodation

Arranged via university, which was again very well organised. I had a nice studio. Only thing was that it was a bit far from the city center. And Aarhus is very hilly so biking trips back from the city center were a serious exercise (city center is at sea level and my house at 90 meters above sea level). So you may want to seek a house for yourself (not via the university) if the university offers you a house far from the center.

leisure & culture

There is a lot to do in Aarhus in terms of leisure. Much activities organised and many places where you can enjoy leisure time in the city center.

In terms of culture the city also has quite some stuff to offer. There are a lot of good restaurants and interesting museums. And there is the possibility to learn Danish, which I did and would recommend.

suggestions/tips

In general student life in Denmark is really nice, a lot is organised in terms of activities. Only downside you may want to take into mind is that the winters get quite dark (45 min less daylight in the middle of winter than NL). This makes that the activity attendance decreases a bit, as people stay inside a bit more.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes would recommend it. The university is of a very good quality, a lot is organised, and the city is nice. Only thing to keep in mind is that the winters get dark and that you should try to get housing a bit near the city.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Not related to the destination, but in general: The experience of living in another country was really nice. Both because it's fun and challenging. So even if you don't choose Aarhus as destination, do make sure to go on exchange because it is a very valuable experience that will stick with you for the rest of your life.



2018-2019

PREPARATION
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 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.</p>



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 kroner. 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.

PREPARATION



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.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
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.

STUDENT LIFE
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 quarentee housing. Luckily I got my first choice of type of housing (shared facility house), I was even more luckily 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.