

SEP Report

1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	FASS/ Communications and New Media
Host University	Aarhus University
NUS Semester and Year of Exchange (eg. AY14/15 Semester 1)	AY15/16 Semester 2

2. Study at Host University

Please provide information on the academics at your host university:

- Studying or learning culture at your host university. How were classes conducted?
- What did you like most or dislike most about the academics at your host University?
- Advice on module registration and module mapping

Studying and learning culture

The danes has a relaxed classroom atmosphere, especially for classes which are smaller and conducted in a tutorial room instead of lecture halls. For these classes, teachings are usually more discussion-based, meaning students can present opinions and discuss ideas during the lecture. I find that in NUS, whenever a student speaks up in class, he/she tends to present new or argumentative ideas. However in Aarhus, you can simply speak up because you agree with someone's idea or would like to comment on something related. For example, in a "Persuasion" module where a student is presenting her designed brochure, another student commented that she liked the content and raised the point that it is alright if the brochure lacks visual aesthetics because this is not a module that teaches design. Therefore, the classroom environment in Aarhus is very much relaxed and opened and thus you can find the lecturers being very friendly, encouraging and receptive towards students. It is also common to call the lecturers by their personal names, which makes classroom interaction more informal than in NUS.

What I liked/disliked most about academics

I like the assessment style whereby the final exams constitutes 100% of your grades. This puts less pressure on the student to speak up in class for the sake of class participation, hence class discussions are usually more easy-going and lively. In the unlikely event that you have failed your exam, you are given 2 more chances for a re-exam. Also, the exam format in Aarhus can come in many forms including a 48hour take home report. Therefore, you are able to learn concepts not just through memorizing but through thinking and applying it in the report, which I personally find much more beneficial and less stressful.

What I did not like was the structure of the classes. In Aarhus, there may not be a clear cut lecture-tutorial structure and the "tutorial" section can come in the forms of small exercises throughout the class. I find this very disorganized as I do not know which lecture the exercises are based upon and I personally do not find some of these exercises useful towards my learning.

Module registration and module mapping

To register, it is a rather straightforward process whereby you submit a form and the coordinator approves it. However, it is noteworthy that you will not know whether there are any clashes in the timetable until the semester has started as the timetables are usually only determined much later on. Therefore, you may have to change your modules if there are more than 2 clashes. Thus, always make sure you have some backup modules which you know is mappable and approved by your major!

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Please list the courses that you took during SEP. (Please take note that the list of modules available to exchange students at the host university are subject to change. This table merely serves as reference.)

Host University			NUS Equivalent		
Module code	Course title	ECTS Credit	Module code	Course title	Modular credit
41015 1U039	Web-based Communication for the Marketplace	10	NM3XXX	-	(20/3) MC
41015 1U037	Persuasion	10	NM3XXX	-	(20/3) MC
41014 1U050	Communication in a Management Perspective	10	NM3XXX	-	(20/3) MC

2. Accommodation

What kind of accommodation did you stay in during your exchange (eg. on campus / off campus)?

Would you recommend this accommodation to future outgoing students?

Do you have any other suggestions?

I stayed in Grundtvigs Hus Kollegiet during my exchange and it is a student dormitory that is off campus. It is a newly renovated dorm with a new wing that was built so the facilities available were really impressive. I would definitely recommend students to stay here. However, it is important to note that housing for Aarhus University (AU) is decided by the International Center hence you are not able to request for a particular dormitory to stay in. You can, however, list and rank 3 important considerations in your housing application which may help them to allocate you to an appropriate dorm.

In AU there are 2 types of accommodations available to exchange students:

- 1) Shared facilities whereby you and other exchange students share a whole house
- 2) Student residences are dormitories. There are some with private or shared bathroom, depending on your dorm.

Social life

There are pros and cons to each type. For shared facilities, you definitely get to mingle with international students and can party or hang out together. In student residences, you may not be able to meet that much international students at home and have to try hard in order to break into the more reserved Danish social circles but usually dormitories will hold parties and games night that may help. Besides getting a close glimpse into the Danish way of life, you also get to benefit from the range of facilities that student residences offer such as movie rooms, bars and gyms etc.

3. Activities during SEP

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Were there any activities organized by school/student group/external organizations at your host university which you would like to recommend to other students?

In AU, there is a famous and popular student boating event annually during the spring semester called "Kapsejlad" which I would highly recommend students to join. You do not have to take part but you can just show up with friends and sit by the grass to watch the race while soaking in the electrifying atmosphere. It is an event that attracts people from all over Aarhus, even the non-students, to join and party. This was one of the highlights of my time here in AU.

Make sure to also check out the weekly i-Night, whereby the Student House organizes a party just for international students. This is where you can get to meet people from all over the world and play beer pong or table soccer.

For other external organisations, you can find organisations such as the "International Community Aarhus" on facebook which posts socializing events.

Every faculty also has their own Friday bars held in their very own department building so be sure to attend some with friends! You can also bar-hop and visit the different Friday bars around the school. Just a tip: medicine faculty is known for having really good Friday bars!

4. Cost of Living

Please provide an estimation of how much money you spent during your SEP?

Please list travel expenses separately.

Flights: 1600 sgd
Accommodation: 3600 sgd
Living expenses: 3000 sgd
Total: 8200 sgd

AU provides a breakdown here: <http://bachelor.au.dk/en/living-in-denmark/living-costs/>

5. Challenges

Did you face any challenging issues during your SEP stint? How did you overcome it/them?

I faced lots of difficulty assimilating into the Danish way of life, with 2 most prominent areas being transport and food. As both are extremely expensive, it took me a long while and lots of self-encouragement before I got used to cycling around and cooking my own food.

I feel that as Singaporeans, we are blessed with a highly developed food culture whereby we can get cheap and filling meals anywhere and everywhere. This is not the case in Aarhus (all shops are closed on Sundays too). You will have to learn to depend on yourself to make your lunch packs to school (canteen food can be expensive) and dinner everyday.

As for transport, you can buy a secondhand bike from dba.com and sell it at the end of your exchange if you want the true "Danish experience". I had lots of difficulties getting accustomed to cycling uphill

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initially but after 2 months, your body will slowly get used to it and being able to cycle around Aarhus is actually one of the most fulfilling experiences I have had here.

6. Overall SEP Experience

Please write one paragraph about your exchange experience and attach some photos that represent your exchange experience.

Aarhus was a surprise through and through. I did not expect to get into this school because it was my 4th choice so it came as a surprise. To be honest, I did not like being in Aarhus in the first month because I arrived in the cold and bitter Danish winter and had a steep learning curve in getting used to living here. Getting food was a huge problem because people do not eat out often and most of the time you will have to cook on your own. The pace of life was slow; people walk about not hurried and happenings are sparse and mild. Everyday, I sigh under my breath as I embark on the strenuous task of cycling uphill back home (Aarhus is a very hilly city). The change came when I could cycle home without stopping for the first time. I felt a wave of motivation and encouragement. "is this how cycling to the Danes feel?", I wondered. Soon after, this same feeling washed over every other component of living in Denmark including getting used to cooking. Before I know it, I am enjoying cooking and biking so much that I can say these 2 things are some of the things I enjoy the most about Denmark. Denmark was truly a pleasant surprise. It is a country where, with some time and patience, you will definitely fall in love with.

7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.

Biking is a fantastic and cheap way to explore Aarhus and I would definitely recommend it. I have discovered some of the most beautiful yet random places via bike and having the cool Danish breeze on your face while you ride through the city is truly a great experience!