



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student information

Study programme WU	BSc Biotechnology
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	22/01/2024 until 28/05/2024
Exchange destination: University	Technical University of Denmark
Faculty	-
Country	Denmark
City	Kongens Lyngby

2. Motivation for exchange

a. Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

Ever since starting high school, I was interested in the possibility of studying, working and living abroad in the future. I decided to study abroad, because I think it is important to have an international view for my study (medical biotechnology). I wanted to experience this world and be prepared as I expect that the possibilities of working abroad or in an international environment is very certain in my future. Next to that, I wanted to challenge myself.

b. What is the reason you chose for this country?

I mainly chose the country based on the university and the courses offered, but I was interested in Scandinavia. Denmark is a very safe country and the work ethics and people are quite similar to the Dutch in my experience.

c. What is the reason you chose for this university?

I chose to study at the Technical University of Denmark, because DTU provided me with the opportunity to further explore the medical biotechnology. They offered a great list of courses in the medical biotechnology, which were in my field of interest and in line with my preferred minor program.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

a. Do you have any advice about reaching your exchange destination?

You can either cross over to Sjælland by boat or go across the bridge via the mainland. Time and costs are relatively similar.

4. University and studying

a. Could you provide some general information about the followed courses?

	Course	ECTS	Short description of the contents	Appreciation of course: 1(low) – 5(high)	Remarks
1	Immune System, Anatomy & Development	5	Provides a deep insight in the anatomy of the immune system. Next to that, it covers the fundamental biology governing lymphocyte and stromal cell signalling, mouse genetics and experimental models including ethics involved.	5	Includes practicals, journal clubs, lab report and multiple choice exam.
2	Molecular Diagnostics and Precision Medicine	5	It teaches you how to understand a medical problem, evaluate the diagnostic methods applied and to predict the impact of using better methods on the treatment result.	5	There is no exam for the course, only a final paper about precision medicine for a certain disease.
3	Immunotherapy	5	The course teaches the principles of various immunotherapies and their applications and influence on current treatment approaches.	4	
4	Living Models of Body Barriers and Organs	5	This course will equip you with the engineering principles and skills to design, manufacture, characterize and apply advanced laboratory (in vitro) tissue models.	3	
5	General Medical Microbiology	5	In this course you will obtain basic knowledge of infectious diseases, how pathogenic organisms work and how to identify them and their characteristics (also using genome analysis).	5	
6	Pharmaceutical Process Development	5	Teaches the basic principles of current and future pharmaceutical production processes and their developments.	4	

b. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses that were taught in English (Yes, No - Explain): Yes, around 900 courses are taught in English on BSc and MSc level. The availability depends on the semester you decide to go on exchange. In my field of interest, there were mostly only master courses available in English, however, you are allowed to take them if you have the necessary prerequisites.

c. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses in my field of interest (Yes, No - Explain): Yes, there were around 15 courses I found interesting and I only had to follow 6 to obtain my 30 ECTS.

d. I am satisfied with the level of the courses that I followed (Yes, No - Explain): Yes, even though I followed mostly master courses, the level was good. I did follow 30 ECTS instead of the regular 25 in the period I applied for, which caused for a bit more workload. This was however manageable.

e. I am satisfied, in the end, with the selection of courses I followed (Yes, No - Explain): Yes, I liked the courses I followed. One course had a slightly different perspective on the topic than I expected, but it was still interesting to follow.

f. What is it like to study there?

E.g. Study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material?

The study life is quite different to the WUR in my opinion. In the 13-week period in spring, I followed 6 courses of 5 ECTS each. Each course is taught 4 hours a week on a specific day, so either in the morning or afternoon. Afterwards you have 3-4 weeks of exams. Not every course necessarily has (only) an exam. Some courses require reports as well as a final written exam, another class only required a final written report and for one of my classes I had to do an oral exam. All my written exams allowed aids except for internet, so the examination is quite different than the WUR.

Some of my courses required quite a lot of reading material, but others did not at all, so workload really depends on the course. The end of the 13-week period was quite busy for me as almost all report deadlines were scheduled then.

Most of the lesson material are papers provided online, lecture slides or books (mostly freely available). The academic level was quite comparable. I did notice that the level of experience with scientific writing (including referencing sources) is quite a bit higher at the WUR. Of course it depended on the origin of the students I worked with, but overall students were less experienced with this and often had not used it a lot.

g. What is the culture of the university?

E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with WU?

The culture of the university is very similar to the WUR. You are free to email teachers with questions and you can address them by their first name. They are easily approachable in class as well. In my courses, group work or discussions were often part of class. These groups consisted of both other international students as well as Danish students.

h. What does the university offer students additionally?

E.g. Catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?

Multiple sports are practised on campus, I for example joined salsa and bachata classes, but they also offer a variety of other sports. There is a big sports hall attached to the main building including a gym and rock climbing area. Building 208 has multiple dance halls. There are also additional sport possibilities in Virum, which is pretty close (10 minutes by bus), or Lyngby itself.

Most main buildings have a cafeteria (around 4 in total, including a vegetarian one) and you can find vending machines all over. There are multiple food trucks around campus, and a Netto supermarket. The main building (101) has a burger place, cafeteria, coffee place, student lounge, library and bookstore (also for course books). Laundry facilities can be found at the student residence of BDTU. Around campus and the city, multiple bike repair/maintenance self-service stations can be found.

5. Housing-traveling-living

a. What are the possibilities for housing?

E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?

You can apply for student residence at BDTU. They mostly have locations at or around campus. Another possibility is Basecamp (Lyngby), which is a bit further away from campus (15 minute bike). BDTU offers studio apartments or rooms with shared kitchens (fully furnished). All rooms have individual bathrooms. You can also get an apartment with a friend where you share your kitchen and bathroom between the two of you. The monthly rent is around 700-900 euros, depending on the location and room, but exact numbers are available on the respective websites. BDTU offers only fixed rental periods.

b. What is the culture like?

E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?

In my experience, the habits and manners of Danish people are very similar to the Dutch. During the introweek, we got told that the Danish are sometimes hard to talk to, but in my opinion this is not true at all. The Danish people are very kind and easy going.

There are some typical foods one can try such as smørrebrød and pølser (Danish hot dog). Even though the Danish also have sandwiches a lot for breakfast and/or lunch, their bread is somewhat different than ours. The Danish eat a lot of meat, which is also represented in the vegetarian options in supermarkets. You should really try Danish pastry, it's really good, especially their cinnamon rolls.

c. Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?

When you get housing with BDTU, you are (most likely) located on campus and can travel by foot or bike to your classes. The biking culture is quite big in Denmark, of course not as big as in the Netherlands, but you could get to any destination by bike. They also have Swapfiets. Public transport is really accessible as well. Every 10 minutes you can take the bus to Copenhagen, which costs around 50 DKK. The costs are reduced when you get a Rejsekort (something like the OV-kaart) or an online ticket.

6. Expenses

a. Can you give an indication of your expenses for/during your exchange?

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	€150-200
Visa - if applicable	-
Vaccinations - if applicable	-
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	-
Daytrips/sight-seeing	-
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	€850 (studio apartment)
Grocery costs per month	€125
Public transport costs per month	€50
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	€60-80 (incl. going out)

b. The price levels were in general [higher; lower; equal] in comparison to in the Netherlands: I would say equal or slightly higher when speaking about general living expenses like groceries and transport. Copenhagen is expensive, the bars, shops and restaurants. However, there are a lot of student bars on campus that have similar alcohol prices to Dutch student bars :)

c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?

They don't use Euro in Denmark but the Danish krone, so one should take into account the transfer fees. Regarding payment methods, it is smart to have a credit card as that's often your only option if you don't have a Danish phone number/bank account when paying online (like for sports memberships or housing). In shops, bars and restaurants you can just pay with a debit card or cash.

7. Free time

a. What are must-sees in the area?

E.g. Nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?

Of course Nyhavn and Copenhagen itself. It is also fun to travel to Malmö by train, which is only an hour from Copenhagen.

b. What does not appear in a travel guide, but is definitely worth seeing/doing?

Reffen is a cute food truck fair that is only opened after spring and really worth going to. Some student bars at campus worth visiting are Saxen, S-Huset (lounge and games), Kælderbaren and Etheren (for cocktails). In the summer, people go to cool off in the harbour (there is a special swimming area). After classes end in May, there is a gala called the årsfest at DTU, which is a big party including dinner where even the king shows up. So if you are planning to go on exchange in spring, mark it already in your calendar!

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

a. Any challenges? How did you deal with them?

Next to the fact that you are living in another country, for me it was the first time living on my own, which was something I had to get used to. I faceted family occasionally and some friends came over to visit, which was lots of fun.

b. Best memory?

I made a lot of great memories, but the best memories are the evenings with my buddy group. This is the group from the intro week. We stayed very good friends and did a lot of activities together every week.

9. Contact details

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Name & email address (if yes)	Shanya, shanyavanmeurs2003@gmail.com	