

VIA University
College



The Ultimate Guide to Studying in Denmark

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Welcome!

Choosing what and where to study are some of the most important choices you will make during your lifetime. These choices will let you set the agenda for your future career and where you want to contribute to making a difference in the world.

Already locked your eyes on Denmark? Congratulations! Not only are the Danes known as some of the happiest people in the world, the Danish educational system is world renowned for its innovative approach to learning and for its high-quality academic environment. If you choose to make a career for yourself here after graduation, you will be able to do so in an informal working environment with great work-life balance.

This guide will prepare you for life as an international student in Denmark, with tips and guidance on how to prepare for your stay, how to get the best start to your studies, how to make the most of your time here – academically as well as socially - and how to take charge of your new life as a student in Denmark in general.

Have fun reading – and don't forget: The Danish weather is really not as bad as they say!

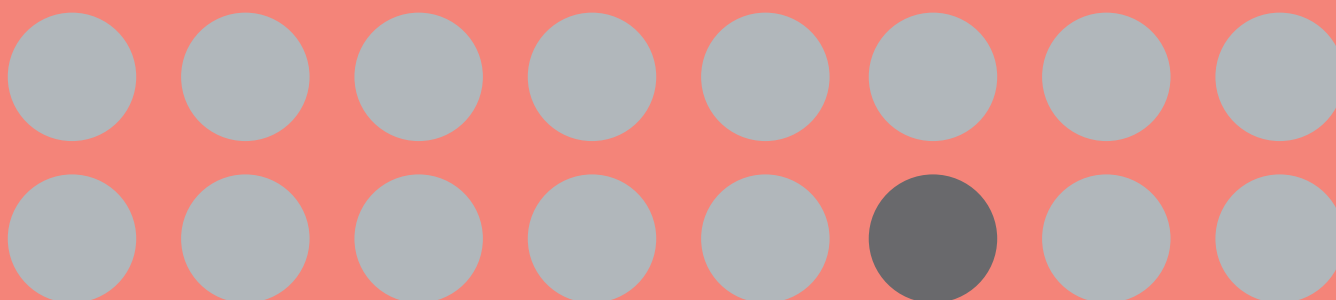
The International Team,

VIA University College

How to choose the right study programme for you

Once you have set your mind on studying in Denmark, choosing the right study programme is very important – and very hard. Here are our three tips on how to make the right choice.

- **Talk to others**
- **Consider the academic approach**
- **Research the programme**



CHOOSE THE RIGHT STUDY PROGRAMME

1

Talk to others

Use your network to get this sorted out - ask your parents and your friends. They know you and your interests and talents. They may not be able to direct you to a specific study programme, but they can tell you in which direction to look. Ask them e.g. "What am I good at?", "Where do you look for inspiration and knowledge", "Am I creative?", "Am I good at organising things?"

You can also use teachers and study advisors at your current school or at the university you are considering applying to. Ask them e.g. "Is a theoretical study programme right for me, or, am I more suited for a practical one?", "Which study programmes match my interests?"

Lastly, you can try contacting students or graduates of the programmes you are interested in. Ask them e.g. "What is student life like at the programme?" or "What are the career options?"

2

Consider the academic approach

Before making your choice, consider which form of study is right for you. When and how do you learn best? In groups or on your own? Problem based learning with real cases? Are internships important to you? International opportunities?

Once you know the answers to these questions, you are ready to look into various approaches to studying. Some programmes have a lot of classroom teaching, while others are based on group work or self-studies. Go to the website of the study programme you are considering to find out how the teaching is organised or talk to a study advisor.

3

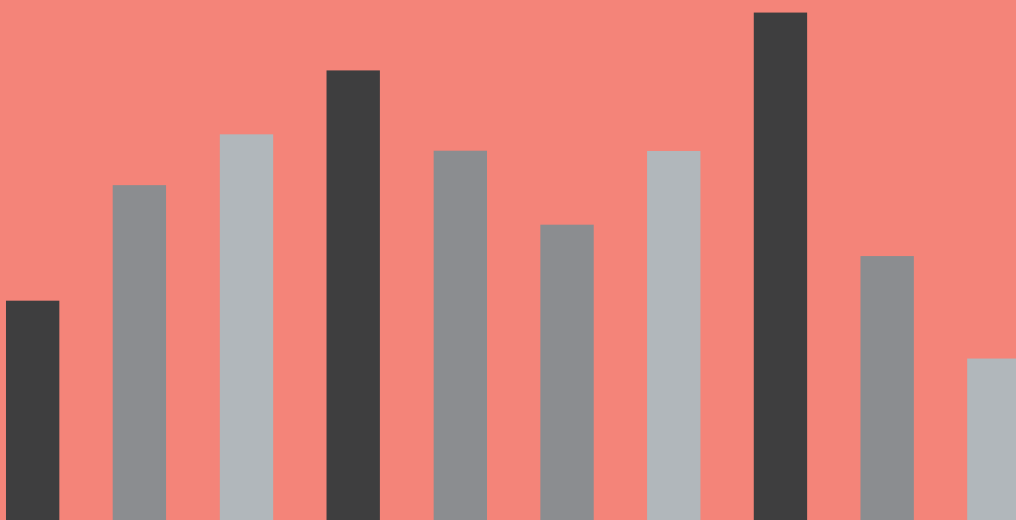
Research the programme

Once you have narrowed down your list of options, do your research online. Go to the website of the programme you have in mind to learn more about the structure and content of the programme, admissions requirements, career options etc. Most study programmes have study advisors you can talk to if you need more details.

Test your choice

When you have narrowed your choice down to a couple of options, it is time to find out exactly which one is right for you. Here are a number of ways to test your choice!

- **Join an open house event**
- **Join online events and webinars**
- **Become student for a day**
- **Try the job**



TEST YOUR CHOICE

Join an open house event

At an open house event, you can talk to students and study counsellors about the study programme you are interested in and get the answers to all the questions you are not able to find the answers to through the regular channels.

At the same time, it is a great opportunity to take a tour of campus, get a feel of the study environment and a sense of what it could be like to study there. Find out when the study programme, you are interested in has an open house event on the programme's website.

Become student for a day

Find out what it is like to be a student at the study programme you have in mind for yourself. If you are able to travel to Denmark or are already here, you can sign up to become student for a day. Usually, you can join a current student and follow him/her on a regular study day for e.g. lectures, group work or workshop classes. You get the opportunity to ask any question you may have about what it is like to be a student at the programme and get "the inside" experience.

Check out your chosen study programme's website for more information. If you have specific questions about the content, structure and teaching style of a study programme, contact the student counsellor at the programme.

Join online events and webinars

It can be difficult to attend open house events in person if you are a coming international student.

However, most educational institutions offer online open house events, webinars, Q&A sessions etc. Make sure to check out the institution's website to sign up for upcoming events.

Try the job

Maybe someone in your family, among your friends, neighbours etc. works within the profession you are interested in?

Reach out to them and ask if you can join them at work for a day or two. This way, you can get a sense of whether this is the right career path for you after graduation.

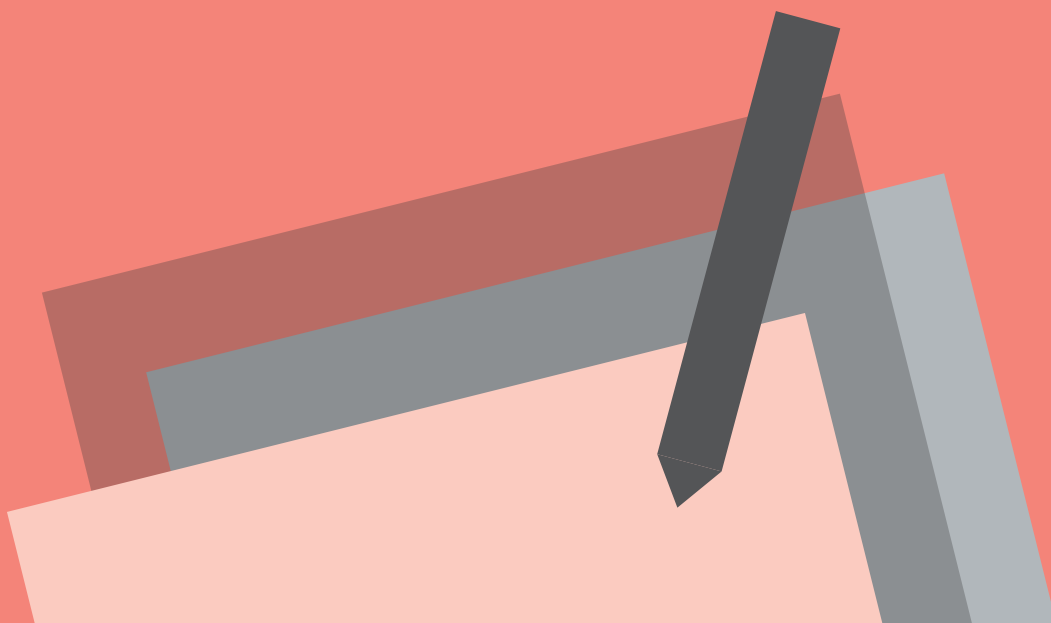


How to apply

When applying for admission at a study programme in Denmark, there are a number of things to be aware of.

We have put together a step-by-step guide for international students applying for a study programme in Denmark.

- **Prepare your application**
- **Apply online**
- **Tuition and Visa**
- **Assessment of application**



HOW TO APPLY

1 Prepare your application

Before starting the application process, research admission requirements and make sure you fulfil them and are able to document this, for example by finding your upper secondary school certificate and transcript of records, documentation of your English level and a copy of your ID/passport. Documentation requirements vary from study programme to study programme.

In some cases, it is possible to apply for admission with special permission if you do not fulfil the admissions requirements. Contact the study advisors at your chosen study programme for more information.

2 Apply online

All institutions of higher education in Denmark have a common online application portal optagelse.dk. You can sign in to the portal with your Danish CPR-number if you have one, or just use your e-mail address. At the portal, you will find complete instructions on how to fill in the application form, upload attachments and much more.

Your application will automatically be forwarded to the institution you have applied for. The portal opens 1 February and deadline for application to most programmes is 15 March.

3 Tuition and Visa

EU/EEA/Swiss citizens do not pay tuition fees and are not required to apply for a visa. If you are a non-EU citizen, you must pay a tuition fee after having received an offer letter for the programme you have applied for.

Once the payment has been registered, VIA will initiate your visa application and send you a link for you to complete the application at The Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration.

4 Assessment of application

When the application deadline has been reached all applications will be assessed. The final decision on your application will be sent on 28 July – most institutions do this through an online application service, in which you also have to confirm your study place.

If you are unsure of the application process, you can usually find help at your chosen study programme's website or by contacting a study advisor.



Student budget

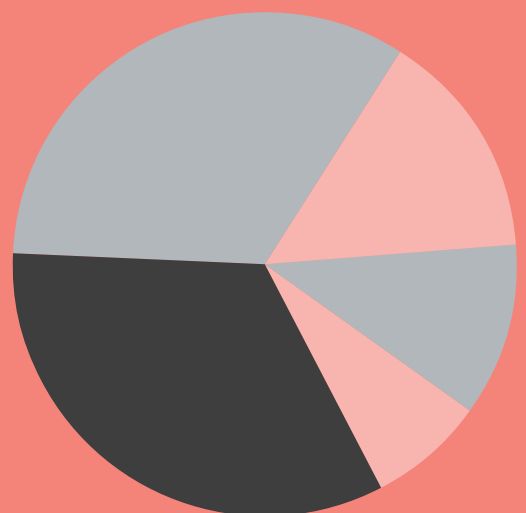
Once you have applied to a study programme in Denmark, the first thing to do is to consider your finances.

As a student, money can be tight – especially if you are studying abroad in a country where living expenses may be higher than what you are used to from home.

Here is an example of a typical budget for a student in Denmark and 5 tips on how to make the most of your finances.

- Example of a student budget

- 5 money-saving tips



STUDENT BUDGET

Once you have applied to a study programme in Denmark, the first thing to do is to consider your finances. As a student, money can be tight – especially if you are studying abroad in a country where living expenses may be higher than what you are used to from home.

Here is an example of a typical budget for a student in Denmark and 5 tips on how to make the most of your finances.

Example of student budget

This budget provides a rough idea of the average monthly expenses for a student, but depends on your individual lifestyle.

Rent incl. utilities	EUR 400-600	DKK 3000-4500
Insurance	EUR 30	DKK 200
Phone, internet, tv	EUR 40	DKK 300
Books and other school supplies	EUR 40	DKK 300
Food	EUR 200	DKK 1500
Transport	EUR 20	DKK 150
Other personal expenses	EUR 120	DKK 1000
Total	EUR 850-1000	DKK 6500-7500

Living costs may vary depending on where you settle down. A city such as Aarhus and a town such as Horsens tend to be more expensive, especially when it comes to rent. You could supplement your income with a student job.



STUDENT BUDGET

5 money-saving tips

What is your income?

What is your income? When planning your budget, it is important to know how much money you have available each month.

Do you have a student job? Any savings? Student loans? Are you eligible for SU (State Educational Grant, find out at su.dk/english/su-as-a-foreign-citizen/)

Make a budget

Make a budget and stick to it! Find out which expenses you have over the course of a year – rent, food, insurance, transport, utilities, books, phone etc. – or use the example above.

Make sure you also have a reserve for unforeseen expenses such as dentist consultations, medicine and the like.

Plan your meals!

Plan your meals! There is money to be saved if you plan your meals and limit shopping to e.g. once per week. This way you avoid shopping on impulse and wasting food.

Use discount super markets for student friendly prices. You will find discount super markets such as Netto, Fakta, Lidl, Rema1000 and Aldi in most Danish cities and towns.

Use student discounts!

Use student discounts! As a student with a valid student ID, you are able to get discounts in many stores, on transportation, at restaurants, at hairdressers and much more.

Go to studiz.dk to see where you can get discounts.

Buy used stuff!

Buy used stuff! Buying study books can be a big strain on a student budget, but you can save a lot of money buying used books, for example through Facebook groups for students at your programme or by looking at the message boards on campus.

The same goes for used bicycles and furniture which you can also find in second hand stores at a good price.



Finding student accommodation

Finding a place to stay can be hard and a stressful process – especially if you are looking for accommodation in a new country.

But do not despair. There is a lot you can do to find housing before study start. Here are our tips on how to find housing in Denmark.

- **Prepare**
- **Start early**
- **Use all channels**
- **Be flexible**



FINDING STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

1

Prepare

Start by considering what type of accommodation you prefer – dormitories, private apartments, house sharing – there are a lot of options and they all have their pros and cons. Dormitories and house sharing offer great opportunities for socialising and meeting new friends, and are more affordable.

On the other hand, your own apartment will provide privacy and freedom. Consider what you prefer and find out if it is important to you to have e.g. your own kitchen or if you are fine sharing with others.

2

Start early

The earlier you start looking, the better chance you have of finding something matching your wishes. You can start by signing up for waiting lists for dormitories or at housing associations in the city where you plan to study.

You probably have to start looking before you know whether you have been admitted to the institution you have applied for, but hold back the deposit payment until you have been offered a study place.

3

Use all channels

Be active on all housing portals and social media. Most cities have Facebook groups for people looking for housing and you can also try Facebook groups at the university you plan to attend.

Most cities in Denmark have dormitory offices or portals where you can apply for accommodation. Go to boligportalen.dk for an overview of housing portals in Denmark.

4

Be flexible

Cheap, centrally located accommodation is in high demand in the large student cities in Denmark, so be prepared to compromise and do not be afraid to look at alternative options.

You could look for something a bit farther from the city centre and commute to campus by bike or public transportation. Denmark has an efficient and cheap public transportation system and by living on the outskirts of town, you could get a larger apartment and/or pay less in rent.



Get a great study start!

The first days or weeks at a new study programme can be overwhelming – especially if you are also in a new country. Will I fit in? How do I make new friends?

And getting a great start to your studies is important for the experience as a whole. But don't worry, here are five tips on how to make sure you get off to a good start!

- **Be yourself**
- **Be open**
- **Be social**
- **Integrate**
- **Seek help**



GET A GREAT STUDY START

1

Be yourself

It is important that you remember to remain true to yourself and who you are. This will make it easier for you to create relations to others.

True connections will become stronger through out your studies and not crumble when things become difficult.

2

Be open

There are probably many types of people at your study programme. Some may be quieter than you, smarter than you, more boring than you or come from a completely different part of the world than you. But remember, nobody is perfect even though it may seem that way.

Try not to judge others and make stereotypes. Most feel exactly like you – curious, nervous and excited at the same time, so keep an open mind when making new friends.

3

Be social

Social activities have a huge influence on your time as a student. By participating actively in social events at your study programme or your campus, you will create a network and become a part of a community – important factors in fighting loneliness. Being a part of a community will give you someone to share your challenges and success stories with, and in the long run, make it easier for you to complete your study programme.

Keep an eye out on message boards, online or on campus, for activities, memberships of associations etc. Danish universities have a long tradition for associations centered around a common interest – anything from sports to food and wine, literature and knitting. Consider joining one and/or participate at social events such as introduction week, Friday bar, sports day etc. on campus.



GET A GREAT STUDY START

4

Integrate

Being in a foreign country can be hard. The culture is different, the language, the food. Consider taking Danish lessons – at some institutions they are available for free.

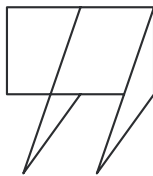
Knowing basic Danish will help you make Danish friends and make it easier for you to conduct your everyday activities such as grocery shopping, going to the gym etc. Knowing the language is also helpful if you want to get a student job.

5

Seek help

Many feel lonely even though they are around people every day. There is no one answer to what makes one feel like this. There are certain situations during your studies in which you may feel lonely – at study start, if you get behind on your homework and are not able to keep up with the rest of your class or if you lose touch with friends and family at home.

Student counsellors, psychologist/therapists, student chaplain or coaches are available at most institutions. They can help you and talk to you about your challenges. Ask your study programme which options are available to you.



The people in Denmark are usually super nice and they are always happy. They are really open minded and that helps you integrate pretty good.

Joel Arias from Barcelona, Spain, student at VIA University College



How to get a student job

A student job can be a great way of gaining experience and building up a network during your time at university, increasing your chances of landing your dream job after graduation, all while earning some extra cash.

Here are our 6 dos and don'ts if you are looking for a student job in Denmark.

DO:

- Write a CV
- Apply in person
- Research
- Join a trade union

DON'T:

- Forget to prepare
- Forget to pay taxes



HOW TO GET A STUDENT JOB

Do

Write a CV

Write a targeted, short and to-the-point CV and application/cover letter – make sure to include your motivations for applying for the job, any relevant experience, education and a few words on your personality.

Apply in person

When sending unsolicited applications, hand in your application in person, preferably to the person in charge of the department you are applying for – this shows that you are motivated and makes a good first impression.

Research

If you get the job, make sure to get a contract and that the salary is reasonable and comparable to what a Dane would be paid for the same job. There is no minimum wage in Denmark as a whole and standards vary from industry to industry, but you should aim for 110 DKK per hour as a minimum.

Consider joining a trade union

They can help you understand the rules and provide support if you have a falling out with your employer.



HOW TO GET A STUDENT JOB

Don't

Forget to prepare

If you are invited to a job interview, make sure to prepare well and do some research about both the company and the position. This will help you come across as confident in the interview.

Forget to pay taxes

If you have a legal contract, your employer will usually deduct taxes automatically. If you perform undeclared work, you risk hefty fines on up to triple the amount that you were supposed to pay in taxes.

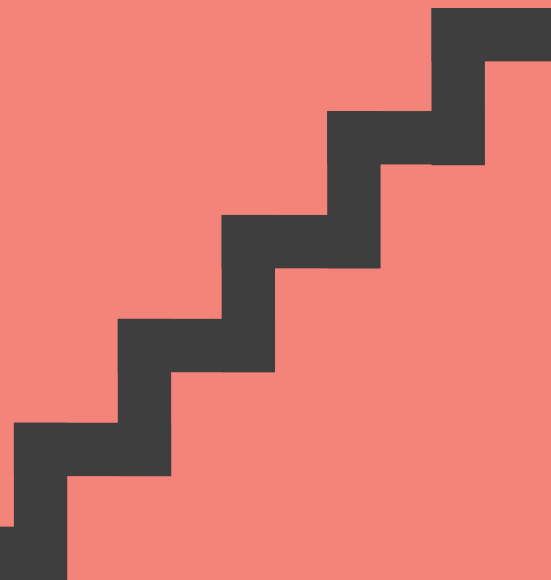


Ready to start a career in Denmark?

If you have not already considered making a career for yourself in Denmark after your studies, you should! The Danish labour market is calling for skilled work and international talent.

Here are 3 great things about working in Denmark and our tips on how to increase your chances of landing your dream job in Denmark.

- **Great work-life balance**
- **Open and informal working environment**
- **Innovative environment**



MAKE A CAREER

3 great things about working in Denmark

Great work-life balance



Denmark is widely known for having a great work-life balance with room and flexibility for a life with family and friends outside of work. Combined with relatively high salaries, this makes Denmark an attractive place to settle down and build a career. It is true that the tax levels are quite high, but, in turn, this means universal access to free education and health care.

The average Danish workweek is around 37 hours, with office hours generally being from 8-9 am to 4-5 pm, earlier on Fridays, leaving plenty of room to socialise with friends and family. In addition, Denmark has a well-functioning public day care system that can accommodate families with working parents.

Open and informal working environment



At Danish workplaces, the relationship between employee and manager is generally relaxed and open – much as is the case between Danish students and lecturers.

Critical questions are encouraged and the culture is based on open dialogue. As a result of this culture, individual employees are given a high degree of autonomy, but are also held responsible for their own areas of work.

Innovative environment



Denmark is among the frontrunners when it comes to architecture, design, construction and green development, so if you have an interest in working within one of these fields, Denmark is the place for you. Currently, there is a shortage of university graduates, especially in technical fields and engineering, so there are plenty of job opportunities.

Denmark has a great entrepreneurial spirit and offers practical support and business support and consultancy services to individuals who want to start their own businesses.



MAKE A CAREER

Getting ready to make a career

There are plenty of things you can do to prepare for your future career by building a network and getting experience already during your studies.

Get a student job



Get a student job relevant to your academic field to gain experience and to meet potential future employers.

Do an internship in Denmark



This is a unique opportunity to gain new contacts and gain insight into the industry you are interested in. Some interns get hired for a student job after their internship ends with the long-term chance of landing a full-time job after graduation.

Do study projects and assignments



Do study projects and assignments in cooperation with companies. There is no need to invent and define your own problems to solve for projects or graduation assignments, when companies need you to help them innovate and develop their businesses.

By working together with companies and organisations, you build network and gain industry relevant experience.

Use the services available to you



Most Danish universities offer career advice for all students. Such services can help you gain insight into your personal skills and help you put together a CV and prepare for job interviews.

Usually, the careers advisor will also have experience in the special challenges international graduates may encounter when looking for a job in Denmark.

Participate



Participate in career and network events at your university.



Useful links

Official guide to life in Denmark	www.lifeindenmark.dk
Portal for people that are new in Denmark	www.newtodenmark.dk
Citizen digital self-service secure login	www.nemid.nu
Citizen services for internationals	www.icitizen.dk
The Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs	www.um.dk
Study in Denmark, portal for international education in Denmark	www.studyindenmark.dk
Visit Denmark	www.visitdenmark.com
Facts about Denmark	www.denmark.dk