

## Hamish Cassidy

In preparation for my year abroad in Denmark, I have found linguistic, cultural, and financial adjustments to be the most prominent of challenges.

I have no intention of being the traditional English foreigner who requires the rest of the room to speak English. Thus, for the last 8 weeks, I have utilised both free university and online resources (e.g. Duolingo) to improve my Danish speaking (og det er gået godt!). I have made contact with multiple students at Aarhus university through various social media. More than simple question-answer conversations, I have used these connections as useful penpals, developing linguistic ability in an informal, social environment. However, to fully immerse myself in domestic and public environments abroad I need to take such skills far further. Financial assistance in accessing higher-quality language resources, particularly Kobo's Pimsleur Danish book series and Studieskolen's tutoring, would be critical in building linguistic capability far above mere 'get-by' conversations.

Moreover, my ability to culturally adjust to Denmark, given my complete inexperience with living abroad, has always been an arresting concern since application. Reading such adjustment-focused books such as Denmark - Culture Smart! has been crucial in building an initial assimilatory confidence. However, I plan to fully extrapolate the cultural experience offered through academic study in Denmark. This is why I am confident that I will utilise external assistance to a great extent: the primary use of such assistance being the accessing of local events both at university and public levels.

The most fundamental challenge faced in my preparation for studying abroad is financial preparation. Despite tapping into what little savings I have (particularly after personal financial problems during the pandemic), and four months of saving from part time work at my Student Union (YUSU), the financial plan I have for the academic year is tight. I am confident I will cover my housing rent. Furthermore, I have developed familiarity with budget-shopping week-to-week over the last two academic years. However, from a more developmental perspective, my financial situation is confining. Where linguistic and cultural education will enable me to access the Danish culture, locally and nationally, my finances won't. I hope to utilise transport opportunities such as Rejsekort (enabling more explorative travel opportunities around Aarhus and wider eastern Denmark). Financial assistance would also allow me to utilise university-linked opportunities pertinent to my course, such as the Dengambleby tours. Despite my own long-term planning and part-time work, without further assistance much of this opportunity and benefit across the year will, unfortunately, be inaccessible.

Overall, these challenges have demanded growth and preparation through various forms. Whilst I am grateful for developmental opportunities, I still have much to do in the near future, particularly given the extent to which I intend to benefit from my year abroad. The assistance that I could receive would be fundamental to enhancing my own growth: ensuring I can access higher-quality linguistic education, engage in local culture, and most critically avoid the financial restraints I could face when developing and benefitting from my study abroad experience.