



Denmark: Education Industry Overview

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Summary

The Danish population continues to attain a higher level of education each year. At the same time, the Danish government has expanded incentives for Danes to study abroad. Danish students are now eligible for government subsidies to study in a foreign country. The United States is currently a popular destination for Danish students, and the new study abroad grant initiative creates good opportunities for Danes to acquire a full university education in the U.S.

Market Overview

The Danish education system is publicly financed and free for students at all levels, through university education. Additionally, students over 18 years old are entitled to a state education grant (SU) of approximately 900 USD per month. The stipend is slightly lower if the student is under 20 and lives with his or her parents. Students may choose to take up to 470 USD per month in loans from the state in addition to the grant. The full and easy access to education makes Denmark one of the most well educated societies in the world.

Nine years of education are compulsory for students between 6 and 17 years old. The 10th grade is optional. Some Danish students choose to spend their 10th grade year at an American high school through an exchange program either as a sophomore or a junior.

After 9th or 10th grade, students can choose to continue their education at academically (qualifying for access to higher education) or vocationally (qualifying primarily for access to the labor market) oriented youth education programs, which are typically three years long. The academically oriented youth programs are intended to prepare students for admission to university in Denmark and are more rigorous than a standard American high school course of study. Approximately 80 percent of students completed such a program in 2009. The government has set goals for completion rates of 85 percent by 2010 and 95 percent by 2015.

Higher education in Denmark consists of associate, bachelor, master, and PhD programs. Currently, 44.5 percent of students complete some form of higher education. The government has set a goal for higher education of 45 percent by 2010 and 50 percent by 2015. The bachelor and masters programs correspond to level 5 in the ISCED97 classification. The PhD programs correspond to level 6 in the ISCED97 classification.

Market Demand

Denmark has a population of approximately 5.5 million people, 1.28 million of whom are under the age 19. In 2007, a record amount of Danes applied for a higher education (20,649 in total). In 2008, the number was slightly lower, but still in the high end compared to previous years. Technical and scientific universities, in particular, experienced a high increase of 12 percent and 14 percent, respectively. Applications to IT-related programs increased by 24 percent, while applications to graduate engineering programs rose 9 percent.

About 9,000 Danish students study abroad each year, and the Danish government is currently taking active measures to increase Danish enrollment at educational institutions abroad. For example, as part of the Bologna Process, in which the European countries aim for 20 percent of those graduating in the European higher education area to have a study or trainee period abroad by 2020. In 2007/2008 the number of Danish students studying or completing an internship abroad amounted to 3.8 percent of the short-cycle professional higher education, 7.6 percent of the medium-cycle and 28.9 of the long-cycle higher education.

Funding

Danish students are allowed to bring their monthly State Education Grant (SU) and student loans with them when studying abroad. As of 2009, Danish students can also obtain subsidies to cover part of the tuition fee when studying for a full master degree abroad. This funding makes American universities a cost effective, and therefore more attractive, alternative to European universities. Students studying toward a bachelor degree can receive part of or all of the tuition fees from the state for up to two years if the program is part of their Danish study course, i.e. the student is a so-called "free-mover" as opposed to participating in a pre-arranged exchange program between a Danish and an American institution.

The rules for receiving state funding to cover tuition fees vary by degree or program type. The basic rule is that the Danish state will pay the amount equivalent to the cost of having the student attend the same course of study at a Danish University, i.e. up to 18,000 USD per year. The Danish government has created a list of universities a student would have to attend in order to be eligible for funding. This list includes the top 100 universities in the world and all universities that currently have a partnership with Danish universities. Danish students who wish to attend an American school that is not currently on the list can apply for the school to be approved as eligible for funding. The list is updated every year.

Following two agreements are particularly important for encouraging Danish schools to collaborate with American schools:

Danish – U.S. Bilateral Agreement on Vocational Education and Training

In 2000, the U.S. Department of Education and the Danish Ministry of Education signed a written "Understanding on Education" calling for cooperative efforts, including exchanges of students and teachers for vocational education and training. The agreement originally ran through 2009, but has been extended to 2012. Denmark has invested approximately 1.2 million USD to support the Danish side of the partnership. It is meant to go to subsidies to Danish students, teachers/professors, managers and board members travelling in the U.S., whether they are studying or teaching at U.S. community colleges, taking an apprenticeship or working with potential partners. Also the funding program has been extended until 2012. Students can apply all year round. The program is managed by The Danish Agency for International Education.

EU – U.S. ATLANTIS Program

The European Union and the United States have been cooperating on vocationally oriented youth programs and higher education since 1995. In 2006, at the EU-US Summit in Vienna, the agreement was renewed to cover the time period 2006-2013. The program is funded and managed jointly by the European Commission and the U.S. Department of Education. The Transatlantic Program supports transatlantic joint or double degree programs and mobility projects. It also takes policy-oriented measures and promotes dialogue on recognition of qualifications and accreditations. Finally, it provides scholarships to European students in the U.S. In Denmark, the scholarships are managed by the Denmark-America Foundation/Fulbright. Including funds from other foundations, approximately 10 million USD are granted annually to Danish master and PhD students.

Furthermore, high school exchange students are granted subsidy of 2,100 USD by The Danish Agency for International Education.

Market Data

While the number of Danish students abroad has increased over the last several years, the number of Danish students receiving a full degree abroad has declined slightly from 3,225 in 2006-2007 to 3,150 in 2007-2008. The number of students participating in an exchange program increased 10 percent from 4,500 in 2006/2007 to 5,120 in 2007/2008.

In the 2007-2008 school year, 508 Danish students studying abroad went to the U.S., constituting the largest number of Danish students abroad. See Figure 1 for a general overview. In 2009, the U.S. Embassy issued 950 student visas, and 500 exchange visitor visas.

Figure 1 –Danish Students Studying Abroad, 2007/2008

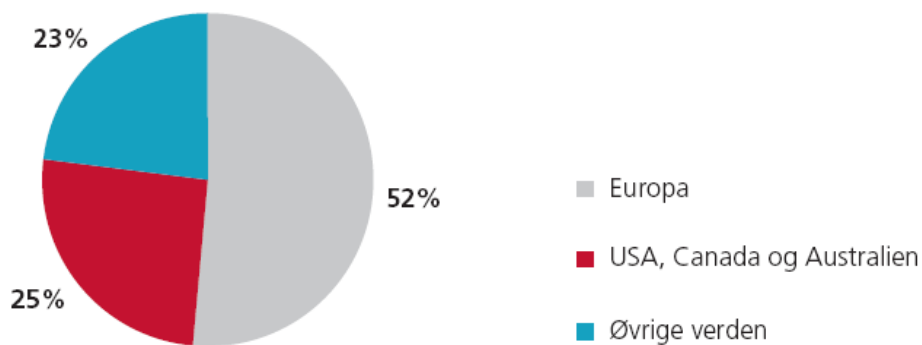
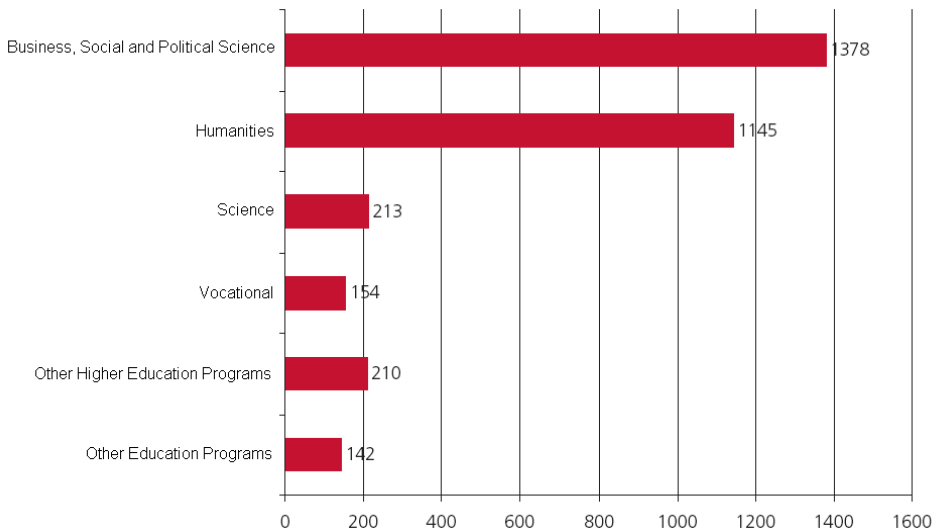


Figure 2 – Areas of Study for Danish Students Receiving Full Degrees Abroad, 2007



Best Prospects

There are ample market opportunities for U.S. educational institutions in Denmark, particularly in high school exchange programs and at the university level, including MBA and executive masters programs. There is also opportunity for expanded language and summer school programs, though these receive no state funding.

In addition, there remain good prospects hiring American teachers and professors at Danish schools, and opening subsidiaries of U.S. universities in Denmark.

Joint- and double- or triple- degrees are becoming increasingly popular.

The greatest opportunities lie in subject areas that are not available in Denmark, which is discussed below, and subjects viewed as American specialties, including business, technology, and sciences.

Key Suppliers

Institutions of higher education in the U.S. are well known and respected in Denmark and thus stand in a very good position in the Danish market. At the university level, the primary competitor for exchange students is the Erasmus program, which provides funding to study at other state institutions throughout Europe. In many ways, studying within Europe is easier for Danish students; they face less bureaucracy as well as lower psychological and cultural barriers. Importantly, EU member students do not require visas to study and live in other EU states, while obtaining a visa for study in the U.S. can be costly and time-consuming.

Prospective Buyers

Coming from a small European nation, young Danes have an international mindset and are enthusiastic about globalization. English is the standard second language in Denmark and is taught in schools from the 3rd grade. Danes generally have excellent English language capabilities by the time they attend university. Additionally, Danish culture incorporates English-language media to a high degree. Movies and television shows are shown in their original language with Danish subtitles, unlike in other parts of Europe, where media is often dubbed in the national language. Young Danes are also prolific travelers with a desire to gain experience by living and studying in another country.

Market Entry

The Fulbright Commission and the Danish-American Foundation is a certified partner to the Department of State at the U.S. Embassy under the EducationUSA scheme. They offer free student counseling and grant scholarships to Danish students and service all U.S. colleges and universities for free.

U.S. educational institutions wanting to proactively enter the Danish market can do so either through a partnership with Danish counterparts, if aimed at an exchange agreement or joint degrees, or if aimed at free-movers through an agent. The three major players in the agency/joint promotion market are Study Abroad, EDU Denmark and Kilroy Education. They each arrange education fairs, publish magazines and launch direct marketing campaigns towards students at high schools and universities throughout Denmark. They also offer student counseling and assistance in filling out applications and applying for scholarships.

Another option is to establish a subsidiary in Denmark. This would also open up the door to the Scandinavian markets, as Denmark hosted almost 3,000 Nordic students in 2007-2008.

Summer School programs are best promoted through partnerships with Danish educational institutions.

In order to be eligible for the earlier mentioned subsidy for high school exchange, the stay must be of at least 10 months and must be arranged through one of the following institutions: AFS Interkultur, Bundgård Rejser, EF High School Year, Explorius, Interstudies, Into Schüleraustausch, Language Education Danmark A/S, MyEducation, Rotary, STS High School, Youth for Understanding.

Market Issues & Obstacles

One of the biggest obstacles facing Danish students to study in the United States is the bureaucracy of obtaining a student visa. Visas are required for any course of study, including short-term language and summer programs. A student must be officially sponsored and provided documents by an institution in the U.S. All F, M, and J non-immigrant student visas require a fee of 100 USD. Each student must also be interviewed at the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen.

Additionally, each Danish state education grant must be approved by the Steering Committee for Education, which requires a significant amount of paperwork. The state grant does not cover fees for course registration, exams, library use, or study material.

The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation and/or the Ministry of Education must accredit any exchange program introduced in Denmark. Also, for course credits to transfer in full into the Danish system, students must carry a load of 30 credits per semester and 60 per academic year.

It is considered a barrier to obtaining full degree students that the Danish state allow a maximum of three years of funding to bachelor students (which is equivalent to a Danish bachelor degree). Some U.S. educational institutions have accommodated to this barrier by allowing the student the flexibility of entering the degree at the second year.

Trade Events

Education Without Borders

Date: January 2011
Website: <http://www.studyabroad.dk>

EDU Danmark International Days

Date: March, 2011
Website: <http://www.edu-days.dk>

KILROY Education Road Show

Date: September, 2010
Website: <http://www.kilroyeducation.dk>

Resources & Key Contacts

The Danish Ministry of Education – www.uvm.dk
The Danish Agency for International Education – www.iu.dk
The Steering Group for the State Education Grant – www.su.dk
The United States Embassy in Denmark, Consular Section – www.denmark.usembassy.gov/visas.html
The Denmark-America Foundation and Fulbright Commission – www.daf-fulb.dk
EDU Danmark – www.edu-danmark.dk
Study Abroad – www.studyabroad.dk
Kilroy Education – www.kilroyeducation.dk

For More Information

The U.S. Commercial Service in Copenhagen, Denmark can be contacted via e-mail at: Sabina.Kroigaard@trade.gov; Phone: +45 3341 7202; Fax: +45 3542 0175; or visit our website: <http://www.buyusa.gov/denmark>.

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