

Studying in Denmark

A guide for international students & families — how Danish higher education works, the SIRI residence permit, applying via optagelse.dk, tuition, the vital CPR number, and work rights.

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FREE EU TUITION, AND PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING

Denmark offers **free tuition for EU students, 500+ English-taught programs, and a distinctive, hands-on teaching style** (Aalborg pioneered problem-based learning). Non-EU students get a **residence permit for studies via SIRI** — not a “student visa” — and everyone needs a **CPR number** after arrival. This guide walks it in **ten steps**.

General guidance, not legal or immigration advice. Danish rules, fees, and the funds requirement change. The figures here are recent examples and **must be confirmed with SIRI (newtodenmark.dk), Study in Denmark, and your university.**

Understand Why Students Choose Denmark

WHAT TO KNOW

Denmark offers **free EU tuition, 500+ English-taught programs, a famously practical and collaborative teaching style, and a very high quality of life** — plus a strong innovation economy in Copenhagen and beyond.

BY THE NUMBERS

500+ English programs

study without Danish

Problem-based learning

hands-on style

Quality of life

among the world's best

HOW TO HELP

Weigh Denmark's **teaching style and quality of life** against non-EU tuition and high living costs — it's a strong pick for hands-on, collaborative learners.

GOOD TO KNOW

Denmark's **problem-based, group-oriented** teaching (pioneered at Aalborg) is distinctive — great for applied, collaborative learners.

Understand the System

WHAT TO KNOW

Denmark has **eight public universities**, six of which dominate international applications — **Copenhagen** (medicine, life sciences), **DTU** (engineering), **Aarhus**, **CBS** (business), **SDU**, and **Aalborg** (problem-based learning). Degrees follow the European structure.

BY THE NUMBERS

8 universities

6 dominate for internationals

DTU / CBS / Aalborg

engineering / business / PBL

3+2

European structure

HOW TO HELP

Choose among Denmark's **eight universities** by field — DTU for engineering, CBS for business, Copenhagen for medicine/science, Aalborg for problem-based learning.

GOOD TO KNOW

Denmark's universities have **clear specialties** — match your field to the right one.

Apply Through optagelse.dk

WHAT TO KNOW

Most applications run through the national portal **optagelse.dk** (some master's use university portals). The main international deadline is **15 January**. Bachelor entry is **grade-based (Quota 1)** or **holistic (Quota 2)**.

BY THE NUMBERS

optagelse.dk

the national portal

15 January

main deadline

Quota 1 / 2

grades / holistic

HOW TO HELP

Apply via **optagelse.dk** (or the university portal for some master's) by **15 January**, and understand whether your program uses Quota 1 (grades) or Quota 2 (holistic).

WATCH OUT

The **15 January** international deadline is firm — prepare documents and English scores well ahead.

Get the Residence Permit via SIRI

WHAT TO KNOW

Denmark doesn't issue a "student visa" in the usual sense. Non-EU/EEA students get a **residence permit for studies via SIRI** (the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration), applied for at **newtodenmark.dk** after admission, before arrival.

BY THE NUMBERS

SIRI

processes the permit

newtodenmark.dk

apply here

Before arrival

after admission

HOW TO HELP

Apply for your **residence permit via SIRI** at **newtodenmark.dk** once admitted — create a case-order ID, pay the fee, and apply early, as processing takes about 1–2 months.

GOOD TO KNOW

It's a **residence permit, not a visa** — and universities often release the documents SIRI needs only after your first tuition payment clears.

Plan for Tuition & Funding

WHAT TO KNOW

EU/EEA/Swiss students study **tuition-free**. Non-EU students pay institutional fees, typically **€6,000–16,000/year** (DKK ~45,000–120,000). Scholarships for non-EU students are **limited and merit-based**, managed by the universities.

BY THE NUMBERS

EU

free tuition

Non-EU

~€6k–16k/yr

Scholarships

limited, merit-based

HOW TO HELP

Budget the **non-EU tuition plus (high) living costs**, and apply for the **limited merit-based scholarships** your university offers — they're competitive.

GOOD TO KNOW

Non-EU scholarships in Denmark are **limited** — apply early, and budget realistically for Danish living costs.

Meet the Financial Requirement

WHAT TO KNOW

For the permit you must show funds — recently about **€950/month (~DKK 7,000)**, up to a maximum of 12 months. In some cases, **paying your first semester's tuition** can satisfy the self-support requirement.

BY THE NUMBERS

Funds

~DKK 7,000/month

Max 12 months

of proof

Tuition paid

may satisfy it

HOW TO HELP

Prepare **proof of funds** at the current monthly amount (or rely on paid tuition where accepted), and confirm exactly what your university and SIRI require.

WATCH OUT

If you've paid your first semester's tuition, you may not need separate funds proof — confirm with your university and SIRI.

Meet Language Requirements

WHAT TO KNOW

Many programs (especially master's) are taught in **English** (requiring **IELTS ~6.5** or equivalent); Danish-taught programs require Danish (Studieprøven). Most Danes speak excellent English, so daily life is manageable in English.

BY THE NUMBERS

English

IELTS ~6.5

Danish-taught

Studieprøven

English-friendly

most Danes speak it

HOW TO HELP

Take the **right test for your program's language** (IELTS ~6.5 for English programs), and learn some Danish for deeper integration and work.

GOOD TO KNOW

You can study and live in English, but **some Danish** helps with jobs and community.

Get Your CPR Number

WHAT TO KNOW

After arriving, getting a **CPR number (personal registration number)** is essential — it unlocks **healthcare (the yellow health card), banking, and MitID (digital ID)**. Register at the local Citizen Service (Borgerservice) promptly (often within days).

BY THE NUMBERS

CPR number

the key to everything

Yellow card

free health care

Register

promptly on arrival

HOW TO HELP

Register for your **CPR number** right after arrival — it's the gateway to free healthcare, a bank account, and digital ID, and little works without it.

WATCH OUT

Without a **CPR number** you can't get a bank account, health card, or phone contract — make it your first task.

Understand Work Rules

WHAT TO KNOW

Non-EU/EEA students may work **up to 20 hours per week during term** (and full-time in June–August). Staying within the limit matters — exceeding it can jeopardize your residence permit.

BY THE NUMBERS

Work

20 hrs/week in term

Full-time

June–August

Stay within

protect your permit

HOW TO HELP

Work within the **20-hour weekly limit** during term (full-time in summer), and track your hours carefully — exceeding the cap risks your permit.

WATCH OUT

Exceeding the **20-hour limit** can put your residence permit at risk — keep careful track.

Thrive & Work After Study

WHAT TO KNOW

After graduating, options to stay and work include an **establishment card / job-search period**, giving time to find qualified employment. Denmark's strong sectors (life sciences, engineering, design, IT) offer real career pathways.

BY THE NUMBERS

Establishment card

post-study job search

Strong sectors

life sciences, engineering, IT

Community

get involved

HOW TO HELP

Plan for the **post-study job-search/establishment options**, build networks during your studies, and target Denmark's strong sectors if you want to stay.

GOOD TO KNOW

Denmark offers **post-study stay options** to find work — confirm the current scheme and conditions, which can change.

Studying in Denmark: The Essentials

A snapshot — figures change, so confirm everything with SIRI (newtodenmark.dk), Study in Denmark, and your university.

The system

Eight public universities (Copenhagen, DTU, Aarhus, CBS, SDU, Aalborg and more); 500+ English-taught programs (strongest at master's); problem-based learning at Aalborg.

Applying

Via the national portal optagelse.dk (some master's via university portals); main international deadline 15 January; bachelor entry Quota 1 (grades) or Quota 2 (holistic).

The permit

Non-EU/EEA students get a residence permit for studies via SIRI (newtodenmark.dk), applied for after admission and before arrival; processing ~1–2 months.

Money & CPR

EU pay no tuition; non-EU pay ~€6k–16k/year; prove funds (~DKK 7,000/month, or paid tuition); get a CPR number on arrival for healthcare, banking, and digital ID.

Work & after

Work up to 20 hrs/week in term (full-time June–August); post-study establishment/job-search options allow time to find work.

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