

# Internship Report

## Personal data and general information on the internship

Subject of studies: Romanic Languages

Bachelor/Master/State exam: Master

Time of internship: 10.08.25 – 17.10.25

Place of internship: Sonderborg, Denmark

Internship institution: Deutsches Museum Nordschleswig

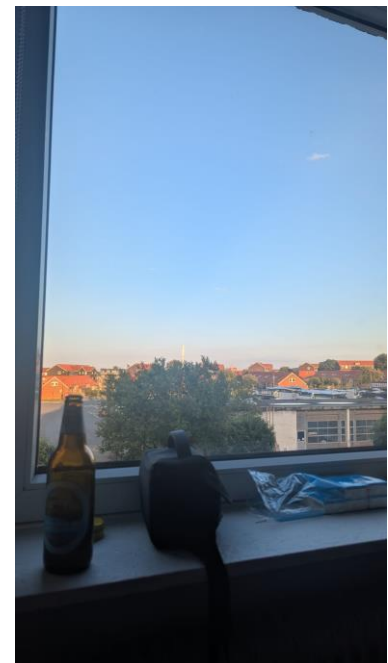
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## 1. Planning and preparation

This report presents my internship experience at the **Deutsches Museum Nordschleswig** in Southern Denmark. The internship took place within the framework of my academic studies and was motivated by my personal plan to move to Denmark after my studies. My main objective was to gain first-hand experience of working in Denmark, particularly within the cultural sector.

As I was already working at the French Institute and interested in cultural institutions, I aimed to find an internship in a similar field. After several applications and rejections, I contacted the Deutsches Museum Nordschleswig by email. Following a positive interview with the museum director, I was offered the position.

The internship was unpaid, but accommodation was provided by the institution. Regarding the language, I talked with my colleagues in German and with the visitors German and a bit of Danish.



*View from my room in  
September*

## 2. Internship

Two defining features of this internship were **autonomy** and **routine**.

The workload largely depends on what you choose to do. In general, you have full control over your internship, from your arrival time to when you leave your workplace. This means that if you do not feel motivated to work, nobody will micromanage you.

However, I believe this freedom can be risky for someone who is not autonomous or whose sole motivation is obtaining ECTS credits. In such cases, it is easy to become bored and feel that the internship does not bring much value.



*Park near the museum*

Since it is a very small structure with only four permanent employees, and only two working full-time, you are often on your own. You must decide what you want to do, when to do it, and how much you want to challenge yourself. This can be very demanding, especially when everything is new.

For me, it was agreed that I would :

- 1- create educational materials in forms of a game for students in order to immerse them in the subject and transmit knowledge
- 2- help with the archival work.

A typical day for me would start at 7 or 7:30 a.m. I would take the bus at 8:10 and arrive at 9 a.m., stay until 4 or 5 p.m., and then return home. I was living in Aabenraa, which is quite far from the city where I was working, so my commute was around two hours per day. I will discuss this further in the fourth part of the report.

During the first two weeks, I mainly worked on archiving documents found in the museum's archives.

### **Structure of the German minority institution**

I will now present its structure and history. This will help future students gain a clearer understanding of what they can do there and better the relevance of my tasks.

The German minority in Danish territory was officially recognized following the 1920 referendum. However, the region of Schleswig-Holstein had long been inhabited by both Danes and Germans. After the referendum, Germans living in Northern Schleswig became the German minority of Denmark. Until the Second World War, coexistence was relatively peaceful. During the war, German associations including youth and women's associations were in contact with German Nazi organizations.

After the war, Denmark focused on reconstruction. Most German men were held in **Faarhus camp** while awaiting trial. Only a few were sentenced to death. The majority were released and

reintegrated into civil society, continuing their activities. Although this period is well documented in Germany, it is very interesting to discover it from a local perspective. Along the museum and archives, you have the newspaper Der Nordschleswiger (<https://www.nordschleswiger.dk/>) who hires more than 5 interns per year from my understanding. The schools are also an essential part of the organization Bundes Deutscher Nordschleswiger who administers and manages different structures that you can see in details in **Annex 1**.

During my internship, people came on several occasions to donate documents belonging to their grandparents or great-grandparents. I had the opportunity to listen to their stories and speak with them. I particularly appreciated this aspect of the internship and the openness with which they shared their family histories. However, overall, I did not interact with visitors frequently.

The museum maintains its own archives since 2020 and continues to collect documents and personal belongings from former members of the German minority in Denmark. Their focus is therefore to bring a different perspective from what happened in Denmark and to provide context and explanations for historical events. They are currently trying to work a lot with younger students in order to promote dialogue and cultural understanding.

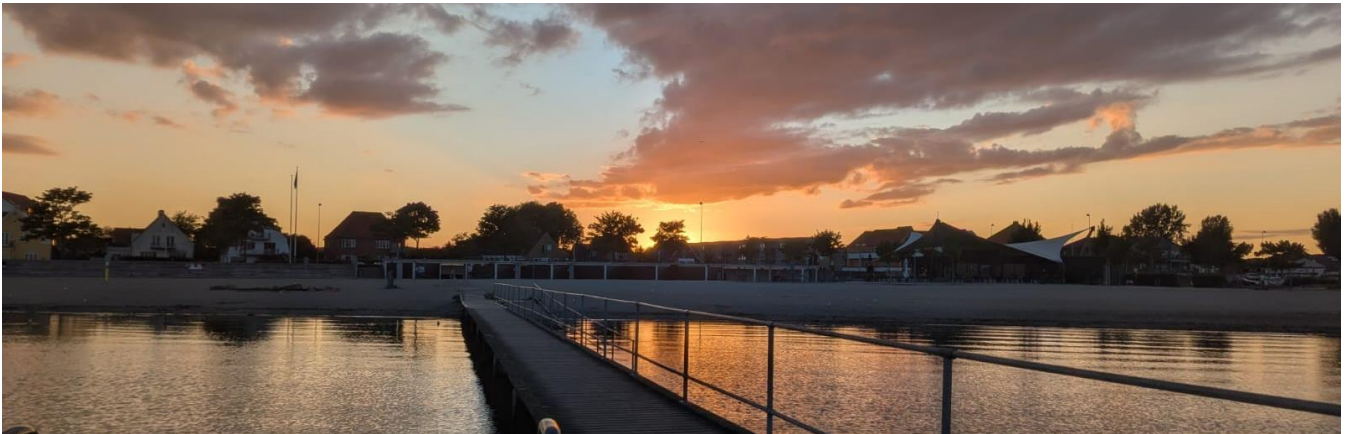


*Picture of the alley on the way home in Aabenraa in October*

After the first two weeks, I met with my supervisor to show him my progress. I was then assigned significantly more scanning work. Unfortunately, he was not very present, and due to the management style, I was largely left on my own. I did not feel that I received much encouragement for my project. There was no precise plan for the educational game I was supposed to design, so I had to find all the documentation myself. At the same time, I still had more than 200 documents to scan and archive digitally. From what I understood, this is the the museum's main priority and the process that is the most documented.

I would have appreciated having a mentor, someone I could talk to every day, assigned to me from the beginning. From what I understood from the other employees, the horizontal management is normal practice and, again, autonomy is considered key. However, I felt somewhat overwhelmed when it came to designing the educational game. It felt like too much responsibility without a clear system in place to ensure success. That said, this situation seems common in many workplaces today. Coming from a French cultural background, I think there may have been a mismatch in management expectations.

In the end, I did not complete the game design. I researched how to create both online and physical games, but around the middle of the internship, I gradually lost motivation and was ultimately unable to complete the project. I was also asked to read and transcribe letters, which was extremely challenging given that I am not fully comfortable in German. It was also not something I had originally planned to do. However, I would not have minded completing this task with one of the weekly volunteers. This does not corresponded to the way of working in the museum. To this day, I



*Pictures of the small bay in Aabenraa in late August*



do not fully understand why teamwork or collaborative projects were not encouraged. Reflecting on this more than six months later, I recognize that Danish work culture may be more individualistic, and training someone for such a short time probably is not considered as productive. I think that someone from Germany, particularly with a university background, might have felt more comfortable in this environment than I did.

I believe I got along very well with my colleagues and had many interesting discussions, but the work environment sometimes felt lonely. In contrast, my German flatmate L., who was completing her internship at the Gymnasium in Aabenraa, seemed to have an extremely positive experience. Looking back at the pictures, I have very fond memories of the people there. I had almost forgotten that during the last four weeks, there were many birthdays and events, and we had cake almost every day for about two weeks. The working environment was informal and reflected the Danish concept of "hygge," characterized by a relaxed and convivial atmosphere.

### 3. Social contacts and Free time

My flatmate L. was my savior. As a person who likes to go on adventures and try to discover things, it was a blessing to have her live with me. We had so much fun and I feel really lucky to have her friendship still today! She is coming now in February and I am planning on visiting her.

Moreover, I am lucky enough that I was prepared for the Danish shyness and I was able, I think, to manage it pretty well because it was from the beginning for a limited amount of time. Since I am planning to move with my partner there, I think I will definitely need to join some clubs. Some cafés were organizing some events in Sønderborg but it was difficult to go there since I was living so far away.

My partner ended up visiting me and we rented an Airbnb for a week not too far from my work and this was really nice, commuting just for a week only 15 mins by bike, and being able to do activities in the evening changes a lot the dynamic. Most of the shops close at 18:00 so it is plenty of time if you finish at 17:00 to have a drink. That week, we went for dinner to one of my colleague and we went to a drag queen show. Sønderborg is a student city so I think it would be easy to go to students' bars and connect with people.

In Aabenraa, I went to a party with L. and the other Lehramt students and talked with the students and the professors at the high school. I have to say, the vibe seemed much more relaxed over there, they were observing and giving some classes and their work placements seemed more structured and closely supervised. L., in particular, reported a very positive experience.

At some point, there was also a flatmate who was working at the local German newspaper, who was really shy. Another student had an internship at the German daycare. From the 4 of us, she seemed to be the more stressed with the workload.

We all only used German at our jobs. If you are interested in politics, [the Bundes Deutsches Nordschleswiger](#) also had an intern, however I am unsure if you have to speak Danish to get an internship there.

Overall, Aabenraa offers limited social and cultural activities, especially without access to a car. The town is not directly connected to a train station, which restricted spontaneous travel. Weekends spent there were generally quiet and consisted mainly of walks or everyday errands. Other interns with access to a car were able to explore the region more easily, and in one case, the journalist intern's employer even financed a weekend trip to Copenhagen. One weekend, we made an excursion with L. in Germany by bus but I wouldn't recommend, as we couldn't reach home and had to call our flatmate to pick us up.

Approximately half of my weekends were spent with Danish friends I had previously met or with my partner and his family. These moments helped balance the quieter periods.

#### 4. The budget

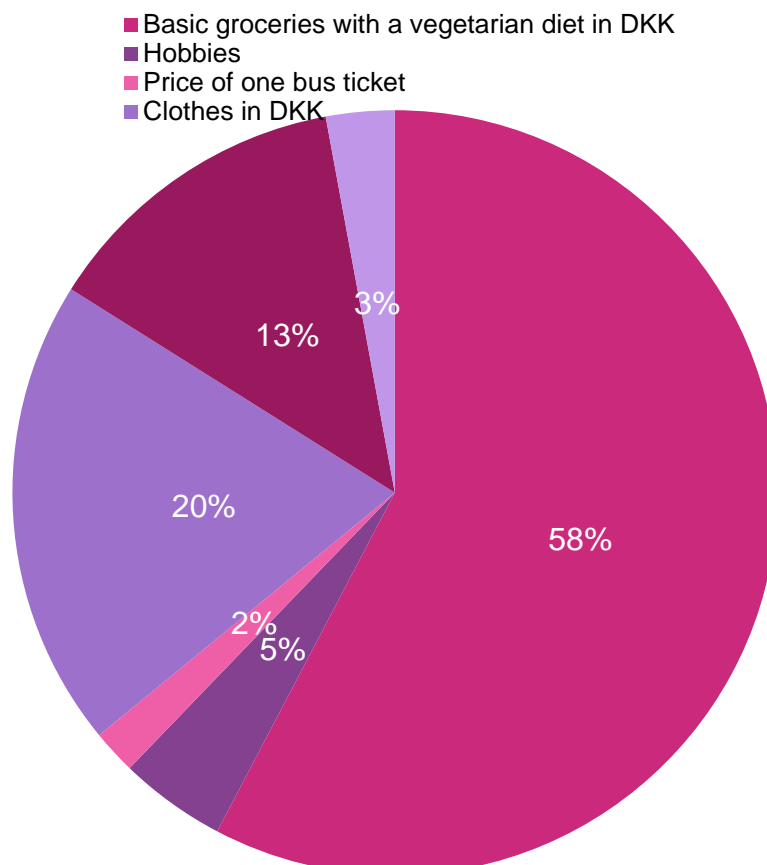
**Accommodation:** Originally, it was discussed that I could potentially stay in a flat in Sønderborg, where my internship took place. However as mentioned above, accommodation in Aabenraa was provided by the museum, and we were able to use the laundry machine without additional charge. However, my flatmate paid approximately 370 euros per month for her room, as her internship was with the Gymnasium in Aabenraa rather than the museum. To my knowledge, all other interns were required to pay rent. Therefore, this is an aspect that should be discussed in advance during the interview process, as the conditions may vary. The apartment was acceptable overall, although it was relatively old and not fully cleaned upon my arrival. Additionally, it was not properly furnished at first, and we had to request additional items, which were eventually provided. However, communication with the person responsible for managing the apartment was sometimes challenging and not always pleasant.

**Commute:** My commute from Aabenraa to Sønderborg was covered by the museum. I initially paid for the transportation costs myself and was reimbursed at the end of each month. In the final weeks of my internship, I worked alongside another intern who had been paying for her own transportation. After learning that my commute was reimbursed, she inquired about the possibility of reimbursement and was granted the same arrangement.

For this reason, I would encourage future interns to clarify financial terms in advance and not hesitate to discuss or negotiate practical arrangements when appropriate.

I spent around 705 euros in consumer goods (traceable with the receipts I kept) and this pie chart represents a segmentation of 522 euros. I chose to not consider the receipts bought during my trip with my partner in Hamburg and some other personal purchases that are too niche to be put in these categories. A big missing part is here transport as I bought online train tickets when I went on excursion. One time I went with two people from the German community for groceries in Flensburg, This allowed me to purchase vegetarian products that were not easily available in Denmark and to stock up on items for several weeks. Otherwise, I bought some cosmetics in Denmark, some in Germany. If you are interested in the details, you can find the entire board at the end in Annex 1.

Two significant price differences compared to Germany concerned hygiene products and medicine. Hygiene products, particularly menstrual products, were considerably more expensive than in Germany. It may therefore be advisable to bring sufficient supplies for the duration of the stay. Regarding medicine, I noticed that prices were relatively high. For example, medication for motion sickness cost approximately 10 euros for a small package of 10 tablets. Bringing necessary medication from home may therefore be practical.



Finally, my flatmate L. got a massive sunburn in August, so if you plan to hang out by the beach during the summer, bring some sunscreen. It seems like Danish sun is a bit more sneaky since it is never super hot or bright, but sunburns happen.

## 5. Perspectives

### **Relevance for my studies**

This internship was directly relevant to my academic background, particularly in relation to cultural studies and institutional analysis. Working within a museum dedicated to the German minority in Denmark allowed me to connect theoretical knowledge about minority politics, collective memory, and identity formation with practical archival work. Handling historical documents, transcribing letters, and observing how local history is curated for the public deepened my understanding of how historical narratives are constructed and communicated. It also highlighted the responsibility cultural institutions carry when presenting sensitive historical periods.

Even if I did not accomplish everything that I wanted, the internship enabled me to apply theoretical knowledge in a practical setting while gaining insight into the operational realities of a small cultural institution. While I was not able to complete all of my planned projects, I was able to translate theoretical knowledge into practice and develop a realistic understanding of the daily operations of a small cultural institution.

### **Relevance for my career**

The internship fulfilled my primary objective: gaining a first impression of working life in Denmark. From a career perspective, this experience allowed me to realistically assess both opportunities and limitations within the Danish job market as a foreigner.

It became clear that, in a smaller country such as Denmark, professional opportunities may be more limited compared to Germany, particularly within the cultural sector. Language proficiency plays a decisive role. For this reason, I intend to continue improving my Danish skills and aim to reach at least B2 level in the coming year in order to expand my employability.

Although I am interested in pursuing a position within a museum or cultural institution, I am also aware that the cultural sector in Europe is currently facing structural and financial challenges. This internship helped me approach my career planning more realistically and reinforced the importance of maintaining professional flexibility. At the same time, Denmark maintains strong economic ties with Germany, which may create professional opportunities for German speakers.

Additionally, the experience confirmed that I am comfortable working in an office environment within a cultural context. As a freelancer, I had previously questioned whether a more

structured institutional setting would suit me. This internship demonstrated that I am capable of adapting to such an environment.

### **General conclusion**

Compared to my experiences in Germany and France, where professional relationships may become more personal more quickly, the Danish approach appeared more reserved but also more structured. While closer interpersonal dynamics can facilitate connection, they may also blur boundaries. The Danish model, by contrast, allowed for greater predictability and autonomy in daily work.

I gained a clearer understanding of Danish workplace culture, particularly the emphasis on personal responsibility, respect for individual time, and a clear separation between professional and private life. In my experience, interactions in Danish workplaces remain professional and respectful, with limited intrusion into personal matters. This can contribute to a calm and predictable working atmosphere.

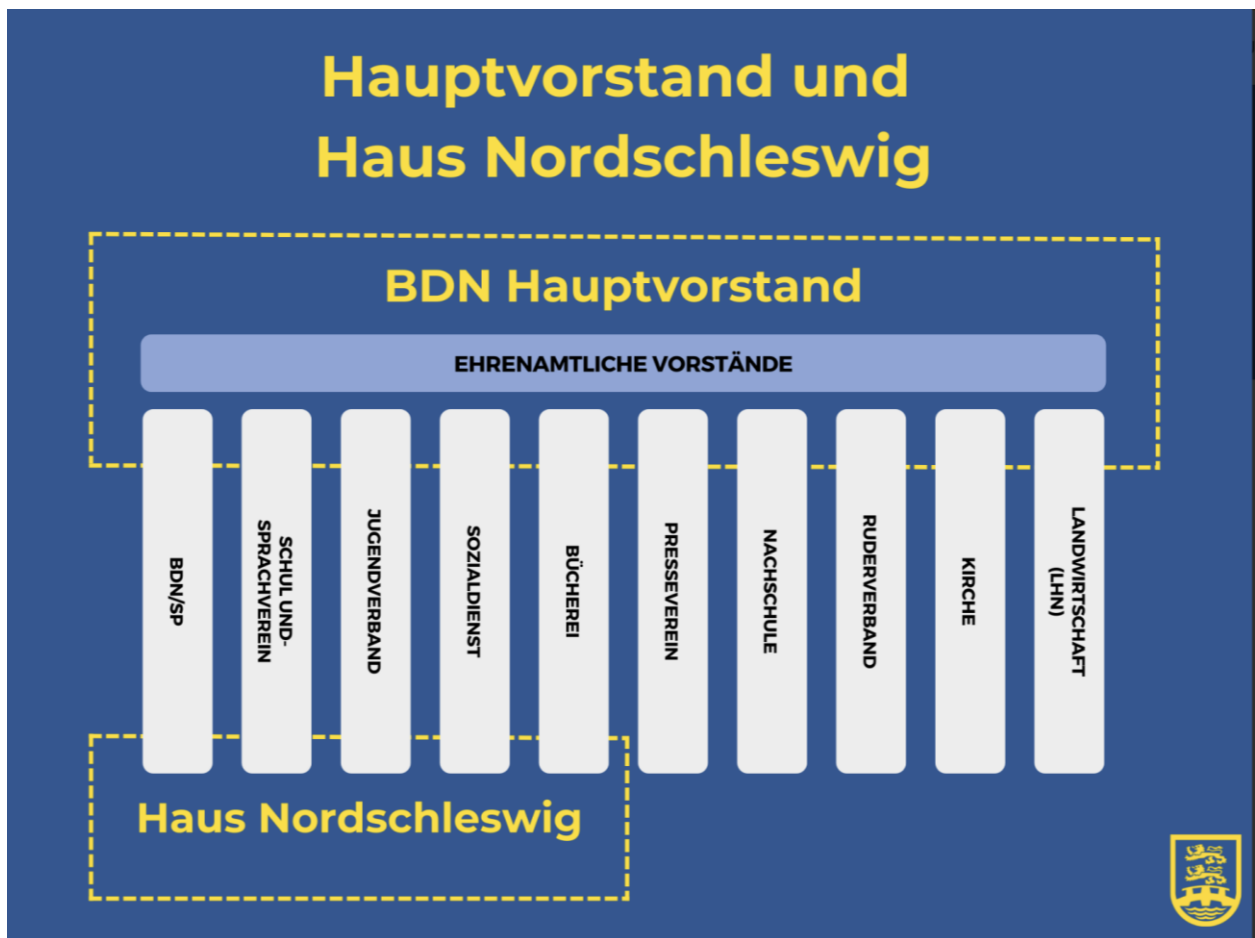
Overall, this internship not only expanded my professional competencies but also helped me clarify my expectations regarding future work environments. It strengthened my intercultural awareness, highlighted areas for personal development—particularly language skills—and contributed meaningfully to both my academic and professional orientation.

### **Annex**



*Picture of the view from my bus-stop*

**Annex 1: Organigramm from the different structures present at Bund Deutscher**



**Nordschleswiger**

**Annex 2: Excel spreadsheet of my documented expenses + small comments**

