

A short guide to moving to Denmark

Scope of this brochure

When you consider moving to Denmark to take up a position as a researcher at the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland (GEUS), a lot of questions arise that are not directly related to the position in question. It is of course a lot more complicated to overview the consequences of choosing a job in a foreign country than staying in your local environment under known conditions.

This short guide is made to answer some of the questions this dilemma raises, and to show where you can find further help to sort out the issues. Please, note that this brochure gives general guidelines and information, and it is not legally binding. Under each item you will find links that lead to the homepages of relevant authorities and organisations. There you will find the issues explained in detail, and also contact information so that you can get help in your specific case.



G E U S

Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland
Ministry of Energy, Utilities and Climate
Øster Voldgade 10, DK-1350 Copenhagen, Denmark

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Residence and work permits

In general, a foreigner must have a Danish residence and work permit in order to work as a researcher for longer than three months. The rules for residence and work permit differ according to citizenship as follows:

- Nordic countries - residence and work permit not required.
- EU/EEA and Switzerland – governed by the free movement of labour. Only, you must get a residence certificate upon arrival.
- Other foreign countries – must apply for residence and work permit before entering Denmark to take up the job. For scientists the Danish Agency for Labour Retention and International Recruitment endeavour a speedy procedure within one month after handing in the complete application. Even so it may take up to three months.

Spouses/partners and minor children may accompany a foreign researcher who is issued a Danish residence and work permit. The family must be able to support themselves.

You will find more information at www.newtodenmark.dk:
http://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming_to_dk/work/researchers.htm

Taxes

Income tax

It is common understanding that income taxes are high in Denmark. In return, a lot of benefits like health care and education are generally covered by the welfare society. The Danish tax system is very complicated and consists of taxation both by the government at three levels and by local authority, and by contributions to labour market. The taxes are balanced by deductions for, e.g. mortgage, unemployment insurance, some pension schemes, and expenses for personal transport over a certain distance from residence to work. Roughly estimated, the income tax is half the salary or less, depending on deductions for expenses.

You can read about the Danish tax system at www.skat.dk, choose English:

<http://www.skat.dk/>

Leaflets and brochures:

<http://www.skat.dk/skat.aspx?old=5378&filter=US&lang=US>

Reduced taxes for researchers

Researchers (with a PHD degree) recruited abroad and working in a Danish research institution are subject to especially favourable taxation. During your first years in Denmark, you may choose to follow tax scheme with gross taxation (percentage depending on period) plus 8% contributions to labour market. After this period with reduced taxation you will pay normal Danish income taxes.

You can read about the special tax in the leaflet *Taxation of the Salaries of Researchers and Key Employees recruited abroad*:

<http://www.skat.dk/skat.aspx?old=1200&vld=205948&lang=US>

Contractual conditions

Salary

Salary is principally settled by collective agreements between the Ministry of Finance and the Federation of Professional Association.

The salary is based on professional and personal qualifications, the quality of the performance of the task, and the balance in relation to corresponding positions elsewhere on the labour market. Elements in the scheme are basic salary, qualifications-related allowances, functions-related allowances, or one-off payments. In addition to the salary there is a pension scheme (see below).

The structure of the salary is described in the leaflet on public employment at hr.modst.dk:

<http://hr.modst.dk/Publications/2011/Employment%20in%20the%20Danish%20State%20Sector.aspx>

Pension

When you start a job as a researcher at GEUS, you will at the same time become a member of two pension schemes. One, called ATP, is established by law and concerns all employees on the Danish labour market. It consists of small monthly contributions from employer and employee.

The other pension scheme is more substantial and in accordance with the agreement between the Danish government and The Danish Confederation of Professional Associations. GEUS must pay a monthly contribution. Approximately 5.7% stems from your salary and 11.4% the employer. The system is well established so that a salary is offered to a candidate as a net salary. On top of this amount comes the pension contribution (17.1%). The pension schemes include old-age pension, disablement pension, and children's pension.

As a foreign citizen you have the possibility of taking out your pension savings if you leave Denmark. Upon your withdrawal from the pension fund, a charge of up to 5% of the savings will be deducted for administration. Furthermore, a government duty of 60% of the remaining amount will be retained.

Temporary employed foreign employees have the option to get a pension exemption. You will pay taxes of the total amount each month, and either have the "pension" together with your normal monthly salary, or pay the 17.1% minus tax into a special pension scheme that allows you to withdraw without paying further taxes when you leave Denmark.

You will find more information at www.atp.dk: <http://www.atp.dk/en/atp-as-a-pension-provider> and at the individual pension funds, e.g. www.mp.dk or <https://www.dip.dk/In-English>

Holidays

All employees are entitled to 5 weeks of holiday a year. The right to holiday and rules for obtaining holiday allowance is stated in the *Holiday Act*.

When you work and stay in the system for years, in effect you have paid holidays. The problem for newcomers is that you obtain the right to holiday allowance for the present holiday year (from May 1 to April 30) during the previous calendar year. For each month's employment you

earn 2.08 days of holiday. Until you have obtained this allowance you cannot be paid during holidays.

By collective agreement employees in the state sector obtain further 5 days off per year. There is a special set of rules for these extra days off. If you leave a position you will normally be asked to take as much holiday as possible. The employer will have to pay the rest of your 'savings' into a fund for your holidays in your next position, or if you emigrate to a country without this system, directly to the employee.

On top of this, Denmark has official holidays where employees have paid time off.

See main principles about holidays at www.workindenmark.dk:
<https://www.workindenmark.dk/Working-in-DK/Holiday-pay>

Health care

The Danish health care system is mainly financed by taxes.

Everybody who is staying in Denmark is entitled to hospital assistance in case of accidents or sudden illness.

Public health insurance

The public health insurance gives you free hospitalisation and primary care and subsidises prescribed medicine. It also offers schemes round pregnancy and child birth. The offers include consultations with general practitioners and midwives, and, if necessary, with specialists. All residents in Denmark are covered by the public health insurance. But you have to be formally registered at the municipal *citizen service center*, to get you CPR number (unique civil ID code). New-comers should be aware that the time for getting eligible varies with citizenship:

- Nordic countries - if you have a private address for the next 3 months, you can register at the local International Citizen Service upon arrival.
- EU – the Member States of the European Community are issuing a common European Health Insurance Cards free of charge through their normal sickness insurance companies till you can register at the International Citizen Service.
- Other countries – if you have your work and residence permit and a private address for the next 3 months, you can register at the local International Citizen Service upon arrival.

General information about Danish health care, preventive schemes etc:
<https://www.workindenmark.dk/Living-in-DK/Healthcare-services>

European Health Insurance Card

The member states of EU all issue a European Health Insurance Card to facilitate access to health care when you travel to other member states. This card is also used to authorise access to some social security benefits.

Citizens from the European Economic Area can find further detailed information about the health insurance here: <http://ec.europa.eu/social>

Private health insurance

Some citizens take out a private health insurance as a supplement to the public health insurance. This is to obtain larger refunds for dental care and medicine expenses and a more liberal choice of doctors and specialists.

Social security

The general rule is that foreign employees are covered by social security in Denmark and therefore pay taxes incl. social contributions (labour market contributions and special pension schemes) in Denmark.

Schemes concerning illness, childbirth, childcare and pension are covered by taxes. Parents with children residing in Denmark receive a quarterly tax-exempt family support per child after 6 months.

Employers are bound by legislation to take out insurance for the employees that covers accidents and short-term damaging exposure. Public employees receive full salary during illness.

But note that unemployment insurance is not covered by taxes or through the employer. It is up to the employee. Unemployment insurance funds give access to benefits in case of unemployment, unpaid holidays or maternity leave.

Foreigners working in Denmark are usually covered by the Danish social security legislation as soon as they start working. There are however, certain fixed waiting periods and special rules for some services. The rules depend on which country you come from.

You will find detailed information on rules and benefits concerning unemployment, occupational injury, family support, family allowance etc. at workindenmark.dk: <https://www.workindenmark.dk/Working-in-DK/Unemployment-insurance>

Social security is not harmonised within the EU, but to some degree schemes are co-ordinated between the EU Member States. Depending on the situation and nature of the social benefit, the European Health Insurance Card is used or common certificates, so called E-forms.

You will find more information about the EU coordination of social schemes here: <http://ec.europa.eu/social>

Accommodation

Property prices have gone up in Copenhagen, but are still low compared to many other European cities, especially in rental properties, as the rent is regulated by law.

Most Danes live in single-family houses. But in cities, flats are common too. It is possible to own, be a member of a co-operative, be a tenant or to rent on a short-term basis.

Most foreigners moving to Denmark rent their apartment or house. It takes approximately half a year to buy, and it may be convenient to start in a short-term accommodation. This will give you time to find the right neighbourhood and choose the housing type that suits your needs.

You will find detailed information about the various housing options and links to agencies at workindenmark.dk:
<https://www.workindenmark.dk/Moving-to-DK/Find-a-place-to-live>

Family issues

Child care

In most Danish families both mother and father take up jobs and careers after parental leave. The small children are taken to day care. There are wide and varied facilities for this in a municipal framework, and the systems are paid partly through local taxes, partly by the parents.

Find more information at [workindenmark.dk](https://www.workindenmark.dk):

<https://www.workindenmark.dk/Moving-to-DK/Bring-your-family/Childcare-in-Denmark>

Education

There is ten years mandatory schooling for all children. Basically education is free in Denmark, and the main part of the schools are municipal. Private schools are supported, but also demand a fee from the parents. There are private international schools round Copenhagen. The public schools often have introductory programmes to allow foreign children to integrate into the ordinary classes.

During upper secondary education and higher education the students are also supported financially with allowances from the state.

You can find more information about the lifelong education system, international schools and Danish courses at [workindenmark.dk](https://www.workindenmark.dk):

<https://www.workindenmark.dk/Moving-to-DK/Bring-your-family/School-and-Education>

Language

Danes are taught English at school and understand and speak it fairly. It is possible to get along with English. Still, Danish is the language spoken and also the working language in most situations at GEUS. Courses in Danish language and culture are offered at all ages and levels, including crash courses. The local authorities offer free courses to all foreign newcomers, and various educational institutions offer paid courses. GEUS expects all foreign newcomers to learn Danish, and GEUS contributes financially.

You can find more information about Danish courses at workindenmark.dk: <https://www.workindenmark.dk/Living-in-DK/Learn-Danish-for-free>

Transport

Public transport

The public passenger transport system in Greater Copenhagen is covered by one ticket system valid for bus, train or Metro.

Information about trains, busses and metro:

<http://dinoffentligetransport.dk/>

Travel planner: <http://www.rejseplanen.dk/>

Electronic ticket system: https://www.rejsekort.dk/?sc_lang=en/

Bicycle

Bicycle is a common way of local transport in Denmark, and you will see bicycle routes along many streets. You can bring your bike onboard trains.

Car

Car is not the most obvious choice if you live in central Copenhagen. As in many other cities, traffic is getting more intense, and parking prices are going up. For families living outside the centre, a car will be not only a convenient, but sometimes a necessary choice.

It may be necessary for you to convert your driving licence when driving in Denmark if the licence was acquired outside EU or the Nordic countries.

It is possible for foreigners to bring along their own cars to Denmark or to buy one. If the car is imported from outside EU, Danish duty and VAT must be paid. All cars must be inspected and registered. The registration duty is round 60-63% of the market price. You will have to take out a mandatory insurance for your car.

More information about transport and driving your own car here:

<https://www.workindenmark.dk/Living-in-DK/Transportation>

<http://www.working-in-denmark.com/Vehicles-Driving-Licence-1010.aspx>

<http://www.parkering.dk/>

General Information

General information can be found on the website for international recruitment hosted by the Danish Government: <http://www.denmark.dk>
Workindenmark – East: +45 72 22 33 00. Mail: east@workindenmark.

Working at GEUS

Working at GEUS means working at an independent research and advisory institute within the Danish Ministry of Energy, Utilities and Climate. The rules and benefits for government employees apply.

The organisation of GEUS is characterised by a non-hierarchical structure, easy access to management and a continuous open dialogue between management and employees. The working culture is team-oriented. All employees have an appraisal interview with their superior once a year, where the relationship between the overall performance requirements and the individual employee's assignments are discussed, as well as potential further education and career development. GEUS has favourable policies in a lot of areas concerning the employees, committed in the handbook for employees maintained on the intranet.

GEUS has staff members from various nationalities so that it is possible to benefit from the experience of other foreigners. Manners are easy and unceremonious at GEUS. There is a fitness centre as well as various social clubs.

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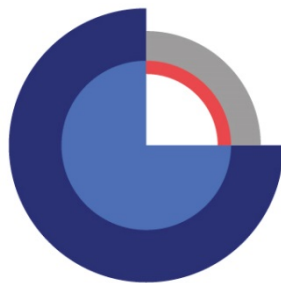
Comments and updates to kba@geus.dk

GEUS

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