

Exchange rapport

Escola Superior de Comunicação Social (ESCS) in Lisbon, Portugal

DESIGN, DIGITAL and TECH students

Questionnaire Study Abroad/Exchange

Where and when did you study abroad?

I went to Lisbon, Portugal on exchange in the Fall semester 2021-2022. I went to ESCS (part of IPL) in Benfica.

What KEA program did you attend at the time?

I studied Entrepreneurship and Design at Copenhagen School of Design and Technology.

What classes did you take during your semester abroad? Please briefly explain what each class was about.

Graphic Design

This course was primarily about Adobes Illustrator software and a bit about InDesign. You learn a lot about the software in a more technical way, and then through your projects you can get a bit more creative and get feedback on the design part of the subject. We had many exercises outside of class, but they were quickly made. Even though I'd had graphic design before I got a lot better during this course. The people who had never had graphic design or worked in Adobes programmes before found this course a bit more difficult.

History and Politics in the Contemporary World

This class were a bit more about history than politics, which I did not expect. The teacher taught this subject for the first time I 2021, and therefor had to get used to speaking in English and how to structure the semester. This subject is more theoretical than the others. Some themes were more interesting than others (racism, feminism, European identity and furthermore) Whatsoever I did like this course even though it was very theoretical, we had a good relationship with the teacher, and the atmosphere were good. We didn't have a lot of assignments and exercises.

Video Post-Production

This course was different than I expected. The teacher's primary focus is movies, and he is very passionate about movie editing theory. The first half of the semester was mainly theory, and it was a bit difficult to focus and understand the theory, if you do not have a lot of experience editing. The second half of the semester was for the two exam projects, where we were just editing in the classes. Don't expect small projects and a marketing point of view. The structure were a bit off, so I didn't gain as much as I was hoping.

Innovation, Technology and Society

This course was theoretical as well. I've had innovation subjects before and therefore I knew a lot of the theory (SWOT, Blue Ocean, forms of innovation and so on), but the course is very well structured, and the classes were engaging and not boring (each time). The teacher is very good, nice, engaged and motivating. Also, the workload was fair.

Photography

In this course we started out learning about the camera and its functions. We had some theory about different photographers and ways of shooting pictures. But it was mainly "self-work", where we had small assignments and went out taking photos. The teacher is very talented and nice. A lot of our classes were on national holidays, so I didn't have a lot of classes.

Digital Media Laboratory

This course was very different than expected, but I ended up really liking it. You have one assignment through the semester, and you must create a Youtube channel or a TikTok account and see how many views, likes and followers you can get. You must promote your channel on other platforms. You group up with your classmates and decide yourselves what kind of videos you want to make. Then in class the teacher gives feedback on your account and on your videos, and he talks about some theory of digital and social media. Very fun.

Academic Experience

How helpful was the receiving school in the process of choosing classes and settling you in?

As a lot of things in Portugal, ESCS was not very organized. They were poor in communication, and you can't really expect a lot of help. But they are very calm about it,

and if you are good at staying cool, it is not really a problem. I don't stress a lot, and I didn't experience any issues – but some of the others had more issues with the school.

The teachers on the other hand were very nice and helpful.

[What classes/study experiences did you find the most rewarding? Why?](#)

I really liked Graphic Design and Digital Media Laboratory, because I learned a lot of things, that I know that I can use forward. Many didn't like Digital Media Laboratory because it is very "free", and the teacher wasn't that engaged, but I liked the freedom and possibilities to express your creativity – also I learned a lot about digital and social media, video editing and promotion of own brand, because you must trust your intuition and see what works and what doesn't. In graphic design we learned a lot, and I got way better at for example Illustrator.

[What classes/study experiences did you find least relevant or least valuable to you? Why?](#)

I didn't find Video Post-Production that valuable because the focus was movies, that is not really an interest of mine. I would have hoped for a marketing point of view and more editing theory. Also, we didn't have small assignments and projects throughout the semester, so you didn't really get better at editing throughout.

Innovation wasn't that relevant for me, because I knew all the theory before, but I liked the class either way.

Also, the History class wasn't really new information also, but I also liked this one, because we talked a lot about history in our different countries and how that has affected how the culture is today. We were not a lot of people in this class, and it was very cozy – the teacher is super nice.

[What classes would you advice other KEA students going to the receiving school to choose or not to choose?](#)

That really depends on why you are going on exchange. If you are there for the school and to learn a lot, or if you are there to have fun and not worry too much about school.

I had some of easier classes with the smallest workload, and that worked perfectly for me, as I was mainly on exchange to have fun in Lisbon. But my classes were still interesting. The theoretical classes (history and innovation) were fine too because they were easy.

I would recommend Digital Media Laboratory even though it sounds a bit strange. Be picky about your group, find some people that you have the same interests as. We made travel videos and travelled together, and they ended up being my best friends in Lisbon. It is a good opportunity to do a lot of fun things.

Cultural/Personal Experience

What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?

- How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

I didn't experience a lot of difficulties culturally. But I also work very well in a southern European culture because it is much more laidback. Some people would have issues with the fact that you never really know anything, and you can't be sure of anything. No one is punctual (the teachers were usually 5-20 minutes late) and things are not very structured. I really like this way of living. The school wasn't helpful at all, which would be annoying if you needed some help.

Also, the school doesn't organize any social activities, they only have your classes prepared, and the social stuff you must figure out yourself. Don't expect to become friends with the Portuguese people at school.

What was the best cultural/personal experience during your studies abroad?

The Portuguese people are very nice and helpful. They are very laidback and wants to help you. I loved the city very much, and you can keep on experiencing the small streets, cute cafes, and cool hidden places around the city.

What advice would you give other KEA students going to study abroad at the receiving school?

Don't worry about all the formalities because it will all end up working out. Be open towards all kinds of people, events, and experiences.

Practical experience

How was the application process?

- What did KEA help you with?
- What help did you receive from your school abroad?

I received a lot of help from KEA, which made me calm about the whole process. I didn't receive a lot of information from ESCS, but you must trust, that they are handling it. If I had any questions, I asked my counselor at KEA. Also, if you have trouble with the school while you are abroad, KEA is available to help.

Did you have any practical difficulties settling down in at your destination?

- How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

I did not have any practical difficulties; the receiving school was not very helpful. But you arrive at the school and in Lisbon with a lot of other Erasmus students, so it is easy to figure things out and find help by the other students or at the student organizations (ELL and ESN)

Where did you live?

- Was it difficult to find accommodation?
- Was it expensive?

At first, I lived in Bairro Alto, which is the party district with all the bars and Erasmus Corner. I lived with 3 other students (not from ESCS), and my rent was 380 euros a month. I booked my room through Uniplaces, which is fine because it is safe and you can trust the landlord and page, but the booking fee is quite expensive. I had to move in November, as I only rented the room for 2 months (I didn't know how much party and music I would be able to hear from my room). My room number 2 was located in Bairro Azul, which is near the Sao Sebastiao metro station, which is a more quiet neighborhood, and a lot of my classmates live in the surrounding neighborhoods as well. It was also closer to school, but still close to the city center. I had a bigger room there and my rent was 450 euros. I found this room on Facebook.

It is easy to find accommodation. I recommend living near the blue metro line, if you're going to ESCS, as it is very easy to get to school then and into the city, but not further out than Sao Sebastiao.

What kind of expenses did you have in general?

- Did you spend more or less money than you budgeted with?

I spent less than I would expect because Portugal in general is much cheaper than Denmark.

I spent money on my rent, food, restaurants, clubs, drinks, public transport, and travels. It is cheap to travel, and it is cheap to eat out and stuff, so you can live quite luxurious if you want.