

Exchange Report

Barcelona: University of Ramon Llull, LaSalle,

In my third semester, I decided to study abroad at the University of Ramon Llull, LaSalle, located in Barcelona. The primary reason behind this choice was my desire to immerse myself in a different culture and learn a new language. I was very excited to live on my own in a new city, to meet new people and simultaneously enroll in courses that would challenge me academically and facilitate personal growth. I anticipated acquiring a lot of knowledge and skills during my time at LaSalle, creating lasting memories along the way. Moreover, I eagerly looked forward to delving deeper into Spanish culture and getting acquainted with the captivating city of Barcelona.

My courses were primarily in business with a lot of focus on entrepreneurship and technological development. This report will delve into my experiences at the host university, the courses I undertook, and the impact the entire experience had on both my academic and personal growth.

1. Where and when did you study abroad?

My stay was from February 1st to June 15. Which was an ideal time, as the weather was warmer and lighter than Denmark and it only got better and better.

2. What KEA program did you attend at the time?

I study Design & Business, Fashion Management.

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

Foreign Language II:

Teacher: Adia Solé

Spanish, self-explanatory. I was very excited to start Spanish class again, I took some course during a long travel in 2021 and I loved it, but to be honest I didn't like the class and it kind of killed my vibe. I can't really put a finger on it, it just didn't work for me. I don't enjoy learning a new language in a big group and the way he was teaching just didn't resonate with me.

Macroeconomics:

Teacher: Ignasi Medá Calvet

Macroeconomics looks at economics at the aggregate level, usually at a national level, but also from a regional or global perspective. I saw this as an opportunity to take a course not available on KEA which would help me get into a master program later on, as it is often a requirement. Though Ignasi was a good teacher I had a lot of issues with this course. I was very unlucky with my class, it is a second-year course and my fellow students acted like we were in high school, or even kindergarten. Multiple times the teacher had to end the class because of too much noise. It affected my learning abilities a lot. Furthermore, the teaching method was very different and reminded me more of the American way of learning. There was a lot of multiple-

choice questions and they were very different formulated from what we learned in class.

Strategy Management for ICT Ventures:

Teacher: Fernando Sanchez

The course focused on formulating competitive strategies for business units, aligning functional strategies, and implementing strategies effectively. This was without a doubt my favorite course, Fernando is a great and engaged teacher and I could take the skills I learned and apply it directly to my job. My biggest recommendations. It was also a fourth-year course, and the students were engaged and eager to learn, which was not the case in all courses.

Digital marketing strategies

Teacher: Saeed Shah

The aim of the course was to provide a solid knowledge on each communication platforms, and how to implement consistent Social Media Ad campaigns to acquire new clients for companies. I don't really have much to say about this course. It was okay. The teacher was a bit unengaged and so were the students. I also found the level quite low and a bit outdated.

Brand management

Teacher: Ferran Blanch

The idea of the course was to understand the relevance of a Brand and how to manage it. I really enjoyed this course, Ferran was a great teacher and the students loved him which created a great learning environment. He was very engaging and passionate about his field which was awesome. This was also a fourth-year course and my fellow students were nice and engaged and there to learn, which again, was not always the case.

Entrepreneurial finance for e-business

Teacher: Ute Sonja Busam

Entrepreneurial Finance is primarily designed for students who plan to get involved with a new venture at some point in their career -- as a founder, early employee, advisor or investor - this sounds great, it was not. The course was basically a massive pre-bought assignment and we had to take new steps every week. Ute didn't know the material and couldn't explain us what to do, made even more difficult by her limited English. When we asked about questions, she would give us different answers depending on the day and say something completely contradictive to what was in the assignment or what she said earlier. I have never tried anything like this. I could write a lot about it but I'm going to go with I strongly don't recommend this course.

Social entrepreneurship

Professor: Miquel de Paladella

This course was an introduction to creating social impact through entrepreneurship. The main project was to create a business and basically solve a problem. I liked the course and I liked the professor. He was very engaged and wanted us to do good. There was a lot of groupwork in this course and often Miquel would divide the groups, which was be a bit of a struggle as not everyone put in the same effort and every assignment is graded. I do recommend this course though.

To sum it all up I think when choosing courses, if possible, choose fourth-year courses. I had a couple second year courses, and it was very apparent. The classes were way louder, and the local students were unmotivated. My best advice is to be as fast as possible when it comes to choosing courses or changing courses as there are limited spots. Another advice is to choose the electives over the mandatory classes, in my case, that's what most international students did and, I thought the teachers were more passionate about these courses.

Academic Experience

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

We had an introduction the week before, where we could ask questions and meet other exchange students. I don't think the school does a lot to gather exchange students right from the beginning and after the introduction there was nothing planned and it was up to us, which was a bit awkward. Thankfully everyone is in the same boat, but it is a big advantage to put on your positive-hat and be your most outgoing self here. At the introduction we were granted access to a platform called E-study, which provided us with comprehensive information that met our needs. I think the system is very confusing and it took me a while to figure it out. The school was very helpful in choosing courses, but you can read up on every course on their website, which should be fine.

The teaching style in the university differs significantly from KEA or Danish universities in general. It felt more like being back in high school, and they care a lot about attendance and participation. I did enjoy the more theoretical approach as it provided valuable knowledge however, during my stay I didn't write one academic paper and the level was in general quite low.

I saw another person write this as well: There is a LOT of group projects, too many in my opinion, and they can be challenging as some may not put in any effort or contribute. I had a lot of nights preparing a presentation last minute by myself because someone didn't do their part. If possible, I recommend forming groups with people you enjoy working with already, because it will affect your grade. Another thing worth mentioning, is that the students care a lot about the look of presentations, which is often the assignment, more than the actual content. I found that very frustrating sometimes.

Furthermore, it's important to keep in mind that there is a high workload with multiple projects happening simultaneously unlike at KEA, where subjects are typically combined into a few major projects per semester- At LaSalle each course has separate deadlines and schedules. There's also a significant amount of schoolwork to do. It is not hard, it's just a lot!

Practical Experience

1. How was the application process?

I found it easy and very straight forward from both sides. Don't have a lot to add.

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

The renting situation is quite difficult in Barcelona, that was the biggest hurdle.

a. How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

They did send a folder with some information, which was more or less it. It was fine.

3. Where did you live?

I lived in the gothic quarter (Barri Gòtic) in a studio. I love the area off season but after a while it got flooded with people which was a bit too much. The area in general is somewhat safe because there's a lot of people in general but you have to be aware of your surroundings. As a girl walking home alone at night, I didn't feel safe, luckily I had a friend that lived nearby who often walked me to the door. Sometimes I also met another girl walking alone and joined her.

a. Was it difficult to find accommodation? b. Was it expensive?

Yes, it was harder and more expensive than anticipated. There's a lot to say here, the housing market is awful in Barcelona, so many scammers. I booked through Housinganywhere which is a good security when moving in but they don't help you with anything after that. I believe it is the same with Spotahome. I still haven't gotten my deposit back and I'm pretty sure I won't ever see it. It is very common, and it was calculated in my budget but still annoying. The best thing you can do is to tell the landlord that they can use your deposit to pay the rent the last month you live there. With Housinganywhere or Spotahome you have to book as early as possible whereas Idealista is last minutes, so it depends on your temper. Be aware, Idealista has a lot of scammers.

4. What kind of expenses did you have in general?

a. Did you spend more or less money than you budgeted with?

I think I spend a bit more since I was working as well and spent most of my salary as well. I will say though worth every penny 😊 Renting in Barcelona is more expensive than anticipated. I paid 750 EUR for my little flat, but you can find a room in a shared apartment for less. I was eating out and going out a lot and even though it's cheaper than Copenhagen it adds up.

5. What kind of income did you have during your exchange?

1. Did you receive SU and/or Erasmus

Yes, both. I was also working. It worked out great for me but I wouldn't recommend working while abroad unless your work is very flexible and you are very comfortable with your tasks.

Cultural/Personal Experience

1. What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?

I think my biggest struggle was people being late, it really really bothered me. Also, because of the way the school is structured I felt like I was back in High School which also bothered me.

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

Living alone in a new country is amazing for personal growth. You have to do everything yourself and figure it out. I loved living by myself in a new city knowing no one experiencing new places and a new culture every day. Random comment, I have a boyfriend in Copenhagen, and it worked out fine, Barcelona is not that far away 😊

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

Choose your courses as fast as possible and change if you don't like it or end up in a bad class. Good teachers make a huge difference. Some courses have an exam, others just a presentation – the presentations are easier. Participate in class. Even though I wasn't a big fan of the school I would do it all over again.