

## Exchange in Santander - Spain

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## 1 Introduction

This report contains experiences from studying abroad on the 5<sup>th</sup> semester in Santander, Spain. It has to be taken into account in the report, that the Covid-19 Pandemic was ongoing both before my travel, but also during the stay in Spain, which made things a bit more difficult and special for me. It was a very hard decision whether or not I wanted to go on the exchange because of the situation, but I finally choose to go, and it was a great experience for me.

I have always had eager to travel and to seek new adventures, and have before travelled around the world by myself, so this was a great opportunity for to get away from comfortable Copenhagen, to Santander in Spain to mix up my studies a bit. The exchange abroad is a great way to widen your cultural experiences, and to be able to almost for free, to live in another country is a very special experience and is in my opinion something everybody should try. At the same time as I was choosing to go on exchange, I was actually running a bit dry on my studies in my 4<sup>th</sup> semester and had a bit of a hard time to convince myself to continue, but with the chance to go to Santander in Spain I choose to continue with my studies. I choose Santander in Spain, because of their beautiful culture and landscape, and to be able to study, go to the beach after school, hiking in the mountains etc. was for me very special to be able to experience.

### 1.1 What classes did you take during your semester abroad?

At Cesine you had to choose 4 different classes in order to obtain your 30 ECTS points which is demanded for you to receive your Erasmus+ funding, but also to go home and continue with my studies. In all 4 courses your are handing in 5 activities, 2 progress tests, a group project and a final

exam throughout the semester (Quite a big work load when you hear it, but is not that bad) I choose the following 4 courses:

**Creating a Winning Business** – Creating a winning business was a course where you had to come up with your own business idea, propose it for the rest of your class and then elaborate on the idea you want to join in on for the rest of the year (Your friend's idea might be better than yours). You are steadily writing a report through the semester, which ends up in a final exam. Your grades and exam are based on this project throughout the whole year, and the final grade is calculated from your process and your final exam.

**European Business Perspective** – This course is mainly about import and export from and to the EU. You are getting a bit of perspective on how the EU works as an institution, political aspects, legislations etc. You are receiving a knowledge especially of the Single Market of the EU, but also different free trade agreements between countries etc.

**Digital Marketing** – Digital Marketing gives you a brief understanding of how to do digital marketing in practice. You will be given some practical examples of what different companies do concerning digital marketing, different strategies and how to execute your own strategies in order to obtain more digital traffic and sales for a company.

**Social Media Management** – Social Media is very alike the Digital Marketing, but is focusing more on Social media engagement on the digital marketing. The teacher is the same, and the tasks are very similar, so I would recommend only to take 1 of the 2 courses.

## **2 Academic Experience**

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

It was quite hard for me to find out which courses I could choose, but at the end they were helpful to change the courses for me, so I could get what I wanted. It is a bit hard to figure out where the courses that they offer are located at.

### **2. What classes/study experiences did you find the most rewarding? Why?**

The European Business Perspective gave me a lot of knowledge of the EU as an institution and the Single Market that I didn't know before. It gave me some tools that I can bring with me, if I in the future will work in a company where we have to export or expand to other countries.

### **3. What classes/study experiences did you find least relevant or least valuable to you? Why?**

The Creating a Winning business for me a very hard course to find any value in. The teacher was very confused, and it seemed like we were a little behind all the time. And all of a sudden the course was over. Both the digital marketing and Social Media was academically easy courses with the same teacher, but it was some easy ECTS points to achieve, but academically I would recommend only to choose one of the 2 since they are much about the same subject.

## **3 DESIGN, DIGITAL and TECH students Cultural/Personal Experience**

### **3.1 What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?**

As mentioned earlier, I have before travelled by myself, so I'm good at habituation at new places so I didn't find much difficult. It would have been a major advantage if I had taken some Spanish courses before coming, and also to seek Spanish classes while you're here in order to learn more Spanish people, but because of the Covid Pandemic you were sticking a lot to the same people, which in this case was the other exchange students. So I would say my biggest challenge was to get to know local people, and sometimes also to understand the language since its not a touristic city, so they demand the Spanish language from you.

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

The school tried to help us with a bit of cultural presentations, recommendations and what to do around the area. Luckily for me I lived with a Spanish girl who could help me understand the covid situation deeper, and also help at restauratns etc. Besides presentations in the first 2 weeks, the school didn't help much with my cultural experience.

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

To be able to go to school and surf at the same day. The Northen coast of Spain is also a very beautiful place to visit and very underrated in my opinion so you have a great opportunity to travel around in small local cities for example Bilbao and San Sebastian which is quite nearby. A lot of the

other exchange students have actually broad their cars, so it was easy to get around if you were friend with some of them.

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

Get a Spanish course or 2 before going there to get the full experience, and consider to take classes while you are there. If you're able to drive there by care it would also be very beneficial to do small weekend trips, but also to drive to small beaches and hikes nearby.

## 4 Practical Experience

1. How was the application process?

Very easy actually. Only thing I was concerned about was the Covid pandemic. All the practical stuff with applications forms etc. is quite easy, and you can both call and email Anne Dibbern who has helped me a lot in the whole process. Only thing was that it was a bit hard to figure out which courses you could pick, and the Spanish university was a bit uncertain with what they offered, but we figured it out in the end.

b. What help did you receive from your school abroad?

Not much to be honest, be sure to contact them as early as possible, and maybe even call them to be sure to get a quicker answer on your concerns.

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

Not really since I was lucky to live with a Spanish girl, but all exchange students helped eachother to settle and do some stuff together. Besides that I was invited to an Erasmus facebook group and whatsapp, which made sure that some activities happened, but it wasn't much since the Covid-Pandemic and restrictions made it a bit more boring since we could maximum be 10 people together at a time. I had a little difficulty to find a place to live, since I didn't knew where it was best to live concerning my school, the city centre and the beach, but I found something very nice in the end.

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

They tried to send some contacts I could text or call regarding the place I could live, but it wasn't really much help to find since most of the companies that you could reach out to was very Spanish,

and not so English talking. The school also tried to have some social activities, but it was very hard to both participate and plan for the school because of the pandemic.

### 3. Where did you live?

I lived in a pretty nice apartment 10 min from the city center and 30 min walk from Sardinero beach. We lived on top of a hill which was both good and bad. I lived with 2 roommates which a lot of people did. It could have been nice to know where it was nice to live before regarding both school and placement.

#### a. Was it difficult to find accommodation?

A bit hard to find accommodation to start with, but I used a company called emancipia which helped me find a place. Their website is not so well translated, but just text or email them and they can help you find a place. In general their service level was not the best but it was okay.

#### b. Was it expensive?

I think my rent was the highest of all I knew there at around 540€. I know people there who didn't pay more than 200€ a month, which is in my opinion very cheap. So in general it was not that expensive to live there.

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

Not much more than rent and food and gym. Those ran up to maybe 800€ a month, which is again in my opinion not that much. It all depended on how much you went out to eat and drink in the night, but otherwise it's quite a cheap place to live, since it's not very touristic and the rent could be very cheap.

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

Actually I spend less money than I budgeted with, but you can really feel that you are from Denmark and get your SU, which is making you one of the wealthiest students that are on exchange.