



EXCHANGE REPORT

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George Brown College
September 2020 – December 2020
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Introduction

I have always had this dream of moving to America to work. Therefore, I figured that it would be a great opportunity to go abroad, to Canada, to get a feel for the culture and everything. Sadly, due to COVID-19, I was unable to travel to Canada, since they added travel restrictions for pretty much any non-Canadian traveler. I did however decide to go forward with my semester abroad and follow along with the education online and this report contains my experiences and reflections of my semester “abroad”.



1. Where and when did you study abroad?

During my 2nd semester, I attended the exchange program between KEA and George Brown College (GBC) and their Computer Programmer Analyst program. The program focuses on project-based and experiential learning while offering industry-relevant courses.

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

At the time, I was studying Software Development at KEA.

3. What classes did you take during your semester abroad?

During my semester at GBC, I attended the following classes:

Advanced Database Development

The course introduced the most important aspects of the Data Definition Language (DDL), Data Manipulation Languages (DML), and Data Control Language (DCL). We made use of Oracle database using PL/SQL. The primary focus of the course was to build anonymous PL/SQL blocks, working with implicit and explicit cursors, create stored procedures, triggers and functions in a database and create and work with database packages.

DevOps

In this course, we were taught about the procedures, protocols and best practices that a DevOps engineer brings to a workplace environment to increase productivity. How to analyze and evaluate various developer operation implementations available and implement hands-on work using industry-standard toolkit (Git, Jenkins, Travis CI, AWS etc.).

Full Stack Development I

This course builds on the fundamental knowledge and skills required for full-stack development using the MERN Stack. We were taught React as a front-end framework, how to implement NoSQL databases (MongoDB) and how to work with the Express framework and Node.js environment. Having some knowledge of JavaScript and ES6 standard made it easier to comprehend the first few weeks of lectures.

Mobile Application Development I

This course provides hands-on experience in developing and deploying wireless applications on mobile platforms with a strong emphasis on Android. Coursework emphasizes how to create cross-device GUIs, handle events, access remote services and store and retrieve data on the device. It introduces also basic information on a cross-platform mobile development (React Native).



Web Application Developments Using Java

This course gave us the knowledge and skills required to develop web applications based on Servlets, JavaBeans, JavaServer Pages technology, Model-View Controller Architecture, and JavaServer Faces.

We also explored the technical details as well as best practices for designing, developing and deploying robust web applications. We were introduced to the capabilities and modules of the Spring Framework.

Academic Experience

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

Roughly 45 days prior to study start, my contact person at GBC introduced me to the program coordinator, to discuss classes for my exchange semester and provided me with a list of available classes. They were very helpful in getting me set up with my courses, although it took some time and emailing back and forth since some of the courses I had chosen had an overlapping time schedule. This resulted in me not being able to attend all the ones I wanted the most. We did however end up with five courses, with most of them being my first priority.

A week before study start, my contact person scheduled a meeting to check in with her, ask questions and make sure we had access to our GBC mail, their version of Fronter (Blackboard) etc.

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

I really enjoyed Web Application Development Using Java and Full Stack Development I. Despite taking a course in Java Spring while studying Computer Science at KEA, I was introduced to a lot more advanced features and power of the Spring Framework. Regarding Full Stack Development, everything was new except for NoSQL databases, which meant that every lecture gave me some new knowledge. Also, being introduced to the entire stack and the interaction between the layers in one course was very exciting and rewarding.

As for study experiences, I really enjoyed the way the semester was structured. We had weekly assignments and exercises which counted a percentage of your final grade. This really helped me to keep up with the classes and learn the material every week, compared to postponing the work until the final exam.



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

To be honest, I did was very happy with all the courses I attended. If I had to choose one though, it would have to be Advanced databases. Not because it was a bad course at all, but simply because I had already taken a very similar course at KEA prior to the exchange. The only real difference was that it was using Oracle SQL compared to MySQL, so at least there's that.

Multiple-choice quizzes. A lot of multiple-choice quizzes. Although they sound easy in theory, it took some time to get into the wording the different professors used. Also, this was the first time I have come across that kind of testing, since I've been used to oral examinations at KEA.

4. What classes would you advice other KEA students going to the receiving school to choose or not to choose?

I personally really enjoyed Web Application Development and Full Stack Development. I would however not advice taking a specific course, but instead look to fill the gap and enroll in courses that are not provided by KEA, to enhance your professional capabilities and competencies.

Cultural/Personal Experience

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

Due to the global pandemic, and the nature of online education, I sadly missed out on a lot of the social atmosphere of and exchange program. All things considered, I really enjoyed chatting with some of the Canadians while we were doing group projects.

We spent countless nights talking about everyday stuff, the similarities and differences of our countries etc.

Since I was unable to travel to Canada, I made a deal with one of the Canadians, that if I ever were to travel to Toronto, we should get together and meet in person.

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

Since I only have experience with following the semester abroad online, from Denmark, I would highly recommend that you do your best to stick to a “normal” sleep schedule as much as possible. The first two months I was doing that but as the semester progressed, I slowly pushed my bedtime. I felt like that had a negative impact on my daily life and my sleep in general.

Despite the semester being online and from Denmark, I would definitely recommend it. The change of scenery and a somewhat different way of educating is a great bonus to the regular education at KEA.

Practical Experience

1. How was the application process?

The application process was fairly straight forward with a step-by-step process and a list of important dates to make sure you met the deadlines for documents uploads etc.

a. What did KEA help you with?

KEA helped me make sure all the formalities were in order, and make sure that any issues or questions I had regarding travel restrictions, visa exemption etc. were resolved.

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

They were very helpful when I was deciding which courses to take. My contact person also made sure to check in from time to time to hear if we had any questions or just find out how we were doing.

Also, due to some mail issues I ended up being locked out of my Blackboard account shortly before having to turn in an assignment. My contact person was quick to get back to me to help resolve the issue, which was great.