

My Experience at Laurea

Where and when did you study abroad?

I did my study abroad semester at Laurea University of Applied Sciences, at their campus in Tikkurila, a town which is part of Uusimaa region, which is the region where the Capital city, Helsinki, is located. The duration of my exchange program was from August 2021 to December 2021.

What KEA program did you attend at the time?

I was in the fifth semester of my Bachelor in Business Economics and Information Technology, BE-IT.

What classes did you take during your semester abroad?

Please briefly explain what each class was about.

1. Data Networks and Information Security - The aim of this course was to give an understanding of what networks are, how they work and how security can be implemented within a network. Occasionally we had guest lecturers come and tell us about their experiences working with Network Security.
2. Web App Development with PHP and SQL - This course was mainly focused on using HTML, CSS and PHP to build a web application and then using SQL to set up the database. The idea is to create an app that can enter and retrieve information from a database. All of the classes that take place are aimed at helping you be able to do this, because this website is the project which your grade will be based on.
3. Cybersecurity Analyst - This is a technical course with a lot of information than the other courses but serves as a good introduction to the technical aspects of cybersecurity. It is centered around some virtual tutorials that are part of the CySa+ certification training. The content involves understanding cyberattacks, malware and security vulnerabilities. It also teaches you how to actively prevent these attacks. The last part of the course involves a hands-on lab within a virtual lab environment that allows you to actually put into practice the skills you have learnt during your education.
4. Cybersecurity Project - This course is done in collaboration with European network of cybersecurity centres and competence hub for innovation and

operations, abbreviated as ECHO. ECHO has a different number of projects and participants of this course have the task of working with some of these projects.

5. Information Security Management - Information security management course involves learning how to protect data and assets against potential threats and vulnerability exploits. It also involves learning how to handle the risk of the aforementioned tasks occurring. It also involves learning about the different regulations that have been put in place to safeguard data.
6. Web Content Management Systems - This course involves everything to do with having software that creates and manages a website.

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

I chose my classes prior to the semester. However, I had a course changed a few weeks after the semester had started. The academic coordinator was extremely helpful when I made this decision and he helped me catch up with the course that I decided to take as a replacement for the course I changed.

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

The Cybersecurity related courses were so fulfilling because they made me feel like I was doing what I was meant to be doing career wise. They actually helped me get an internship the following semester.

What classes/study experiences did you find least relevant or least valuable to you? Why?

Web development was the least relevant for me because it was not something I saw myself ever doing career wise. It is a good course nonetheless.

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

If you are interested in Cybersecurity please take all the courses I mentioned that are related to that. I heard a lot of bad reviews from my peers about laurea about service business management so please do not take that course.

What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?

I didn't have challenges because it is very similar to Denmark and I have adapted to the cultural environment here. It is really about finding people with the same interests as you. Some might be locals at your school and others might be people who do not even go to your school. Only thing I would say is that you really can't tell what Finnish people are thinking if you do not speak to them. They are not very big on facial expression. People most times even assume that they take themselves too seriously.

How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

It was during the pandemic so there was not much they could do to help really.

How was the application process?

Pretty straightforward.

What did KEA help you with?

KEA Global are extremely good at helping with the entire application process. They gave me all the relevant information that I needed for my application.

What help did you receive from your school abroad?

They helped a lot with finding subsidised transportation for exchange students, all the paperwork related to a residence permit as well as with finding accommodation.

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

Accommodation mainly.

How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

They were extremely helpful. They did everything in their power to help.

Where did you live?

I lived in a shared apartment. It had three bedrooms but one of them was empty.

Was it difficult to find accommodation?

Not really. All the furnished housing for exchange students got fully booked very quickly and I had to get unfurnished housing. But it was worth the wait in the end.

Was it expensive?

Not at all. Extremely cheap. It was heavenly priced in comparison to Denmark.

What kind of expenses did you have in general?

Rent, food, alcohol and transportation were the main ones. Transportation being travel within the city and out of the country as well. Alcohol is the only thing I can say is really expensive compared to Denmark.

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

It was way more than I budgeted for but in a new country you always have to prepare for unexpected expenses. It was all good in the end.

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

I think going for Afro Sunday was special. I love African music but in Denmark there really isn't a place that plays it much. However there is an African community there that organises a hangout every Sunday with Afrobeats, Rhumba and Amapiano (google the genres if you have to). And everyone was welcome. A lot of Finnish people would be there too.

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

Work hard and play harder. You will be on your own so take an interest in whatever you specialise in, but you will also be in a country you have probably never lived in so make the most of it. Be open minded to new experiences, but if it is not for you please do not force it.



This pic was taken at Suomenlinna, the national fortress of Finland.



This picture was taken during a welcome event for exchange students and freshmen. Don't really remember what the fuck we were doing but yeah.