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Ramon Llull University's ESDi · Higher School of Design

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A vertical photograph of a narrow street in Barcelona. The street is flanked by tall, multi-story buildings with balconies. Several strings of warm-toned, round light bulbs are strung across the street, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere. A black street lamp is visible on the right side of the frame. The sky is a pale, overcast blue. The word "BARCELONA" is centered in a white rectangular box with black text.

BARCELONA

Hola Amigos!

Here's a bit of information on Barcelona and the school located in Sabadell to help you choose whether this is the right destination for your studies abroad.

Note that the school is located outside Barcelona and that there are two trains which lead to the school.

One is the Renfe R4, an older train which isn't always on time, but if it is, this is the fastest way for many.

Another option is the S2, which takes a bit longer, but is a newer train and is always on time. We always took the S2 to school, and only a very few times would take the R4 home. The S2 would take us about 1hr and 10-15 minutes from our place in the middle of Barcelona to school.

Watch out for pickpockets in Barcelona. Although I didn't experience it myself, I know of some who have gotten their phones stolen.

Research which neighborhoods are safer to stay and see if you can find an apartment around there. Keep in mind that you might want the place to be close to a train station that can easily take you to school.

You make your own schedule at school, and we'd make it so that we had Mondays off. Highly recommended to have an extra day off if you have the possibility.

We had 10 classes in total and they were a mix of 1st year classes, 2nd year graphic design and audiovisual classes and a 3rd year class.

Check Facebook events or search on Google to see what's happening in Barcelona. We managed to find and attend a film festival this way.

There's also lots of markets happening around town and this may help you locate them.

September and October are months you should spend on exploring. Go on trips! Mid November all assignments suddenly hit and when you finish one, another shows up. You'll have assignments during the Christmas holidays as well. The amount depends on the subjects you've chosen. The same probably goes for the spring semester. Use your freedom wisely the first two months.

1. Where and when did you study abroad?

Autumn semester in Barcelona. Or rather, Ramon Llull's ESDi is located in Sabadell, which is approximately one hour outside Barcelona with public transportation.

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

Multimedia Design

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

Communication (2nd year course):

An information-heavy class with Mikki Larrea about the means of communication. It is not a class that will be teaching you rhetorics, but rather a deep dive into paintings, photography, filmography, etc. and its history. Has one or two group assignments during the semester, and Mikki is a very nice teacher with lots of energy.

Art Theory and History II (2nd year course):

Focuses on art after 2nd WW with Jeffrey as your teacher. Very kind man. It is yet another information-black board-and-power point-heavy class. You'll have approximately 2 individual essays to write during the semester. I'd recommend his classes for sure, but the essays are nothing to be excited about. He also teaches Art Theory and History as well as Design Theory and History in the first year.

Audiovisual Projects 1 (2nd year course):

A class presented as being for both Spanish and English speakers, which Franco Pinel makes sure holds true. He translates everything into both languages and is a very kind, laid back, positive teacher.

The class mainly consists of doing your own projects, whether individually or in groups. It is for those interested in filmmaking for sure. There are 3 assignments during the semester, and the assignments require a bit of effort as they're assignments such as recreating a scene or shooting a short film. 2 of the 3 assignments were in groups.

We had this class overlap with another and we were allowed to leave earlier to attend the next class.

Technical Drawing (1st year course):

The least recommended class unfortunately. 5-6 assignments during the whole semester, but you ought to

ask yourself whether you need these skills in the future. Talking to students from the years above, it seems nobody liked this class, and all of them had a different teacher. This is a class you risk failing even if you attend every class and work hard, because only perfection is accepted. The assignments are very time-consuming as well. If you're up for a challenge like I was, go for it. Otherwise stay away if you can.

Computing 1 (1st year class):

Basic introduction to Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. With experience from KEA you should have no problem with this. Sergio is a young teacher who doesn't have much patience (not good if you're teaching how to use these software...) but I had no problems with him whatsoever. In fact we joked around a bit and if you even have questions regarding things such as 'what should I do in Barcelona?' he's quite helpful! Does have quite a few assignments but they're usually simple if you have a bit of experience. And you do also learn a few new things.

Literature and Communication (2nd year class):

I had a lot of good and kind teachers at ESDi. Dani Canto is probably in the top 3. I was skeptical about this class, but it is much more interesting than it sounds. However, it may only be for those who do the autumn semester, as it's a half-year course. There were four assignments during the year but they were simple. The main focus is how companies communicate to you - and it's not a very literature-heavy class, although it sounds that way.

Business II (3rd year course):

Only 3rd year course we had, as it was in English. John Correa joins Dani Canto in the top 3 of best teachers. A fair share of the teachings provided is something you will already have heard about at KEA, but it is entertaining nevertheless and you have an advantage. Bit of group work, nearly no assignments.

Representational Drawing (1st year class):

Representational drawing with Gabriella Cohn is the exact opposite of technical drawing. Gabriella is super cool, artistic, kind, knowledgeable and inspiring. It is very much a class to unfold your creativity. It doesn't include much theory, but rather puts you to work with a paper and a pencil, drawing all kinds of things in nearly every class,

from people to objects to shapes.

Highly recommended to get your creativity flowing.

A few assignments about presenting the work you made.

Form Theory and workshop (1st year class):

Right after representational drawing we went on to have Form theory and workshop with Gabriella. It is basically the same concept as Rep. Draw, but with materials.

Assignments consist of creating things and presenting them using your major (in our case Audiovisual). A great handful of assignments, but they were the most fun to do, and I'd always challenge myself to surpass expectations.

Sociology (1st year class):

Another class with Mikki Larrea. It may not have been my favorite class, but the knowledge provided may have been the most important. I recommend having both communication and sociology together. They're both heavy power point classes where Mikki mostly talks like a waterfall while trying to encourage others to do the same. Having both classes with Mikki we were able to combine our group essays in both classes into one - highly recommended.

Honorable mentions?

Your first week of school is very much a week where you try out different classes, because some might not have been what you expected or they simply overlap!

Us being two from KEA, we decided to try out different classes that week to see which one we found best. Here's what we found out.

Introduction to projects was a very low-level introduction to design thinking and is not worth your time. Talking to first years at the end of the semester, they did not like it either.

Projects 1 for graphic design - I made it to one class and wasn't too impressed. As a filmmaker this is when I found that Projects 1 Audiovisual was also in English.

Photography 1 seems like a fine class. It was however overbooked and I sacrificed it for Representational Drawing as I already have photography experience. If you do too, consider Photography 2, as it seems to be a class where the teacher also translates to English.

Computing 2 is if you want to continue coding, however

you'd be starting from scratch and I do not believe you'd have the patience for that.

Academic Experience

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

Very helpful. Paula Gomez was always ready to assist if you had any questions, both on email or at school.

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

Sociology - tough class to hold focus in but very important information in the long run. Take notes.

Computing 1 - Looking back I actually learned a few new things which I'm grateful for.

Rep. Draw and Form Theory & Workshop - You got to be creative.

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

Technical Drawing.

Not very relevant. Very time-consuming.

Didn't help that we had a selfish teacher, she's since quit and you won't have her, but the structure of the class will remain the same.

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

Look into 3rd year classes which may be in both Spanish and English if you'd like to learn something new, because it does get boring to have it all repeated eventually.

You might start feeling that a lot of first and second year classes and their assignments are just time-consuming if you already have the knowledge and experience. Go through the list of classes I took during the semester and see which ones sound the most interesting to you.

Cultural/Personal Experience

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

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

Cultural challenge is not speaking Catalan or Spanish, but it wasn't a big deal. I happened to befriend internationals who either spoke the language or were in the same boat as I.

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

Life hack: Google 'Free museums Barcelona'.
Go to all the free ones when they're free.

During my stay I'd spend a lot of Sundays in museums. Some were definitely better than others, but that depends on your preferences. I liked Museu Blau and CCCB. Other museums, which are never free, are still worth visiting, for instance CosmoCaixa.

Visit 'the bunkers' right before sunset. You won't regret it.

Take a trip to Montserrat when you get tired of the big city.

Another special experience was getting to Mirador Del Semafor. Not many know of this place. I found it on google maps and went with another student from school.

After the last day of school we celebrated it by going to Andorra, booking our trip through the 'Erasmus Bcn' app. My only regret is that I didn't book more experiences through this app, as the prices are quite affordable.

If you're here during the autumn semester, attend the La Merce festival and research what to do and where to go. The street festival is quite big in Barcelona.

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

Befriend a lot of people the first day of school, because some of the other Erasmus students won't have the same classes as you, and you might never see them again if you don't. Half my group of friends here I didn't really have classes with, but we became friends on the introduction day.

Download WhatsApp...

Practical Experience

1. How was the application process?

a. What did KEA help you with?

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

Tiresome process. Not too difficult though.

I recall the school abroad being slow at getting back to us. All other students had gotten their acceptance letter while we were still waiting to hear back.

Our coordinator Anne was always ready to help and fast to respond to Emails. Much appreciated!

Same with Paula. She was also quick at responding to emails if you needed anything from the school abroad.

Any questions you had regarding your application they were ready to help.

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

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

No difficulties really. First day the coordinators also did a presentation which would cover a lot of useful information, for instance what train tickets to get etc.

3. Where did you live?

a. Was it difficult to find accommodation?

b. Was it expensive?

I stayed in the very center of Barcelona with two other girls from KEA, where one of them was my co-student and attended ESDi with me. Our apartment was located close to Palau de la Música Catalana

They found the place before I arrived in Barcelona.

They found it through an agency and we had to pay an agency fee a little shy of 4000 dkk each.

Monthly rent was 4625 dkk.

The apartment was nothing special, my room was super small and I would spend most of my time in the living room instead. But it was good enough for our stay.

Research which parts of Barcelona are the safest. Our street wasn't the safest and there was some trouble happening outside once in a while.

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

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

Expenses to be expected

- Grocery shopping
- Restaurants and bars
- Transportation
- Shopping
- Rent

Otherwise you spend some here and there on small things and journeys. In the end I didn't spend much more than the Erasmus grant and the SU.



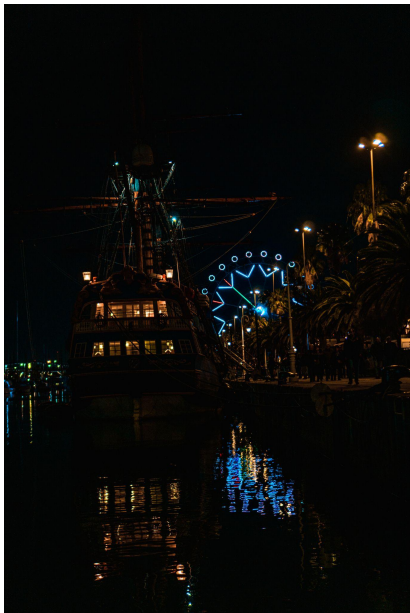
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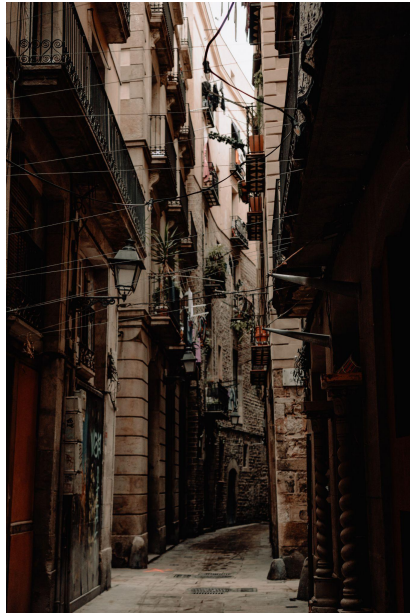
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Barcelona



Docks in Barcelona



Streets close to my place
in Barcelona



La Boqueria by La
Rambla



Mirador Del Semafor



Building in the center
of Barcelona



View from Tibidabo



View from the bunkers



Architecture around the
Gothic area



View from Andorra