

Isabel Patulski Nielsen

Isab985d@stud.kea.dk

La Salle

Ricardo Torres Kompen

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Where and when did you study abroad?

I studied abroad in Spain, Barcelona from September 2022 until the end of January 2023 at La Salle. I chose to study abroad because I think it is a great opportunity to learn new cultures and get out and experience life in other countries. I had also heard a lot of good things about it from friends.

What KEA program did you attend at the time?

I had just finished studying my third semester in Computer Science at KEA.

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

You have a lot more subjects in Spain compared to Denmark since each subject is only between 3-6 ECTS points. I had seven subjects; Web Projects, Software Methodology I & II, Datamining, Computer Architecture, Career and Technology and International Business.

In web projects you did not have to go to an exam. We spend the semester working on a program in JavaScript and HTML/CSS. To pass the subject you just had to deliver the assignment. The professor was a bit hard to understand and classes could be very dry. This was one of the subjects where I had the hardest time keeping up but it was only because I got enrolled in the course late and because of that it was too late for me to find a gruóp to work with so I had to do the project alone.

Software Methodology I focused a lot on diagrams and use cases. Here we did not have an exam either. Instead we had to deliver three group projects throughout the semester. The professor in this subject is very good and you can tell that he loves what he teaches.

Software Methodology II was the subject I enjoyed the most. It was a mix between learning SCRUM/Agile development and then a bit of programming in Java. It reminded me a lot of "SystemUdvikling" and how we were programming the first semester of KEA. We had two professors. One in agile development and one in programming. The professor in agile development was engaging and found fun ways to incorporate agile development in assignments (we had an exam where we should build a bird out of lego for instance, and to

build the best bird we had to use some of the tools we had learned). The professor in programming was the same as the one I had in Web Projects. Again, it was very dry lectures and hard to understand what he was saying. We had two assignments and two exams (midterm and final)

Datamining was about mining data :) We learned different algorithms to do so. It was a very hard but very rewarding subject and the professor was good. We had three assignments during the semester and two exams.

In Computer Architecture we could choose if we wanted to participate in class and deliver the assignments and then not have to go to an exam or if we just wanted to go straight to the exam. I tried to participate at first and deliver the assignments, but ended up being too stressed and therefore chose to take the exam instead.

Career and Technology was a very chill and “easy” subject which was nice to have since some of the other subjects were very hard. It was about how you should behave when you make presentations and generally how to behave on the work market. We had a couple of small assignments but it was never a stressful subject. The professor was very good and was interested in her students. She also gave good feedback.

International business was about how to run a business or expand a business internationally. We had some group assignments and one exam. The professor is good but he can be a bit difficult to understand sometimes.

Academic Experience

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

Not very good. I had a lot of trouble choosing my subjects and because of this I enrolled in some of my classes very late. The reason I had a lot of trouble was because my contact person in La Salle had way too many students to look out for and did not have enough time. He also misunderstood a lot of emails or answered slowly which made the process even longer. The rest of the university was very good though. They helped a lot and Anne was also a big help. But in the end it all worked out. Some classes i did not get enrolled in before the end of October but the professors were very nice about it and helped me catch up in most of the classes.

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

I liked Software Methodology I the most because it was a good combination between technical work and group work. Furthermore, one of the teachers was very good and the assignments and exams were very fun.

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

Web projects or Computer Architecture. Computer Architecture because it was very hard to keep up in class. Even though it said you did not need to have experience, a lot of the other

students knew a lot about the subjects and most classes were just a discussion between the students and the teacher on how to design a CPU for instance. I think it is a very fun subject if you have some previous knowledge of computer architecture. Web projects were not a good subject for me because I enrolled late and did not have a group to discuss the work with. The professor was also a bit dry as mentioned before and overall it was just not a subject I would choose again.

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

I would recommend the Software Meth. subjects (both I and II). It has some good professors and good lectures. I got most out of these subjects. I also really liked career and Tech. Since it was more relaxed and nice to have a break from all the programming.

I would not choose Computer Architecture if you do not have some basic knowledge already. You have to be very passionate about the subject to participate in the discussions. If you choose to take the exam instead of the course you should know that it is a very long exam (45 minutes). It is one on one with the teacher with no preparation, so it is a lot harder than the vocal exams in KEA, where you prepare a presentation and usually only get “grilled” for 10 minutes. Furthermore Data Mining is very hard if you struggle with math.

Cultural/Personal Experience

What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?

I did not really experience any challenges. Except maybe getting used to the late dinner time and siesta.

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

The students at La Salle were very welcoming and even invited me and another Danish exchange student to go to a ski cabin for a weekend. I was very surprised at how many people were looking to get new friends when you went out, which was really nice, because you always came home with new contacts.

I also joined some facebook groups and my best advice is just to be very open to every social event. Say yes even though you are tired. I did this the first month and within two weeks I already had a good network with whom I still hang out with now.

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

Find some of the students from the Social Club! They are very sweet and open. They have great advice and host fun activities, so they are a great place to start when you don't know

what to do in Barcelona.

Practical Experience

How was the application process?

I was stressed about missing deadlines but Anne was quick to answer emails and was always ready for a quick meeting if I had any doubts that could not be handled over email. Also, you should know that you should not stress with the Spanish school system. We did not know which classes we could take until a week before school started. It was also very chaotic to get information on what we should attend at the social events (what was for Erasmus students and what was for normal students). But La Salle was also very quick and helpful to answer emails as soon as they came back from summer vacation. So my best advice is to not stress if you think you might have missed something, they just prepare the school year a lot later than at KEA.

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

No, fortunately I have friends already living in Barcelona and some other friends who had previously been on exchange in Barcelona so that helped a lot. I already knew the city quite well and traveled there with another Danish exchange student, so we had each other for support. We arrived in the end of August and had two weeks before school started, which was also really nice, and relieved a bit of the stress for finding accommodations.

Where did you live?

I lived in an area called Borne which I would really recommend. It's nice and cozy with a lot of charm but without all the tourists. It is also very central. You can walk to the beach or walk to Plaza Catalunya. Most times we went out to bars. It was also within walking distance from Borne.

We did find apartment hunting a bit difficult. We used the website/app called Idealista. We had booked a Hostel for the first week and got really lucky with the hunt, so we found and moved into an apartment Friday. I would recommend others using Idealista as well and instead of mailing you should call the apartments you are interested in. We did not get any responses to our messages or emails, but as soon as we started to call the agencies instead it got a lot easier.

We found an apartment with three bedrooms (two double one single), air conditioner, two balconies, one French balcony, kitchen with washing machine, living room and dining room and two bathrooms for 625 euro, so it was a lot cheaper than Copenhagen.

What kind of expenses did you have in general?

Since i had already had friends who had been on exchange in Barcelona I made my budget according to theirs and it somewhat held up. I spend most of my money on going out or eating. It is very cheap to do both (unless you have to go to a club, then it is expensive), but because it was cheap I lost track and did both a lot in the first and the last months. I did not go on that many trips but I know some of the other exchange students spent a lot more than me because they also went on Erasmus trips and traveled a lot.

Transportation was very cheap, you can get a metro/train card for around 40 euros for three months which I did. I spent more money on groceries than expected. I thought that it would be a lot cheaper than Denmark but most of the groceries cost the same as in Denmark.

I am very happy that I made my budget bigger from the beginning and saved up a lot beforehand so I did not stress about money and I did not feel like I missed out on anything.