
ERASMUS EXCHANGE REPORT

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Preface

This report is about my Erasmus Exchange at Eram, Girona, Spain.
The report is made for students and teachers interested in Eram and Girona.
I have done my best to include as much relevant information as possible. The aim is to motivated future students to do an Erasmus in Girona.
Over the next pages, I will give an overview of my courses at Eram and share experience during my stay. The report will give the readers an insight.
Experience and strength will hopefully lead new students on the way to Eram.

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Introduction

The first day at Digital Concept Development was Monday the 23 of August 2016. Here KEA introduces me and the rest of the class for the possibility of spending one semester abroad with Erasmus program. It took less than 3 seconds to take that decision. Instantly I was attracted to Erasmus. I live for knowledge, creativity and get new experience in life. Meet different social culture and norms. Even I have grown up with 2 cultures. I am Danish /Spanish. Came from Fuerteventura to Copenhagen when 6 years old. I wanted to Study in Spain. Wanted to try it.

Giving this chance to study abroad was amazing. Going to Spain was perfect. In knew Barcelona quite well as my father grew up in inner Barcelona. So, I choose a new city, Girona. Which I did not know at all. Luckily, I got accepted at Eram in Girona. Going to Girona was totally new and a fresh experience. I wanted to learn more about the Catalan language and Culture. Know how they do it in the south of Europe, education wise.

Love the concept that you can study abroad with the Erasmus program. This is one of the great benefits of being a member of the EU. Before I travel I asked a Danish friend, Søren, who is the only close friend I know who has study abroad.” What can you tell about study abroad? “Søren answered: “5 months would be a snap with the fingers. Time will fly!”.

Now 5 months after, while writing this report, I can confirm it. He was right. My 5 months in Girona has just gone extremely fast. So, that is the first thing I have noticed. Time has gone so fast. And it has been a magnificent pleasure. Now I feel I know the city, the school and the culture. Remember dear reader: Time will fly away!

The Erasmus program gave me much need new experience and I have really learned a lot. How they do it in Girona. I have learned to response to an international and a Catalan environment. New study structures. Teaches and above all the other students gave my new insights. New insight to my pre-judgement about South Europe, Spain and Catalans. Happy that I took the chance and now I can share my experience. The varieties of programs at Eram was great. I chose Eram- University of Girona because it looks cool, fresh and creative. And I liked the Erasmus report (2014) from the former student, Paulina Okunyte. Her words gave me the last inspiration and motivate to choose Eram. Hope I can do the same for you.

Girona is a historic and very beautiful city, with many students, tasty food, culture and a lot of sports. And a cool Erasmus student network team. And it is peaceful, not stressed and hectic as I think Copenhagen and Barcelona is. Do not get me wrong, Girona is not a village. Girona has an official population of 97,586.

New in Girona

Girona is located 100 km northeast from Barcelona. I flew from Copenhagen to Barcelona with Norwegian for only 450 DKK. Bought the plane ticket in 2-month advance. From Barcelona Airport, I bought a ticket to the train. After 30 min, I was in Barcelona central station (Sants). Then I bought a new ticket to the fast train (Ave) to Girona. It on takes 38 min. Barcelona - Girona. And from Girona station, I walked 10 min to "Bed in Girona" hostel, recommended by Carolina from Eram. 18 euros per night. I stay at "Bed in Girona" for the first 16 nights. While waiting for my flat in Salt was free to move in. The first 2 weeks (24 January to 3 February 2017) I study a Catalan language course, level 1A organised by the Modern Language Service of the University of Girona. I strongly recommend take this course. It was great. And I meet a lot of new fellow Erasmus student from all around the world.

Then I finally move in my own student flat. Witch was in Salt, 3 km from Girona. Also, recommend by Carolina from Eram. 525 euros per month. It was good to live in the city Salt because the school is also located there. The flat was only 10 min walking to Eram. Salt is the "Nørrebro" of Girona. Just more multicultural. Over 77 nationalities are represented in the population of Salt. Of them is only 56 % Spanish. It is a nice place to live with an international ambient, all over Salt. I do not regret live in Salt. The Barri Vell (the old town) in the middle of Girona where most Erasmus students' lives are way to touristic and expensive. Not my flavour. Go for Salt! Great service from Eram to give the contact to a big and clean apartment in Salt. Other way to find a room is doing Search in Erasmus Girona group on Facebook. There is another Facebook group like ESN (Erasmus student network Girona).

The first thing you want to do, when you are in Girona is getting a Mobil phone card, I did that at Orange shop (15 euros). Got a new Spanish phone number and prepaid card. Next step, after you have a phone card, when you have secured that you have WIFI access, is to get a local plastic bus transport card. This you can only buy at the Girona bus station. And the bus driver only receive cash or the official plastic bus card with prepaid tickets (10 euros for 10 rides). After these, you are ready to study.

Studying at Eram

I studied Audio-visual and Multimedia at ERAM. It is a 4-year study Program. It is a private school. Eram is a recognized university degree assigned to the University of Girona. I was study courses together with students from all study year. I only meet 3 other Erasmus students at ERAM out of 400 Students. The first day at Eram we had a brief meeting with our contact person Carolina. Our international Coordinator at Eram. She presented us to Jordi, a young local student. Jordi showed us around explained everything good and clear. Carolina was very helpful in the process of choosing classes and Jordi good in settling us in. The whole process was straight forward. And no problem.

The school is very oriented on technical skills. Technical skills that you later can use when creating marketing, design or communication. The biggest challenge that I faced was the languages. It was not Spanish but 100% Catalan. In all courses. And Catalan to Spanish is like Swedish to Danish to me. It is having something in common. But far from everything. But if you can speak Spanish it is much easier than if only can speak English with was the case with my 3 other Erasmus students at Eram. A girl from Germany and 2 boys from Turkey. They could only speak English and their mother language. Still, they managed to go through the semester without big problems. All teachers can speak Spanish. And most English.

The method in Eram is that you email to your teacher almost every week. Either on Spanish or English. It is very common to have weekly communication about you work. About your lectures or assignments. The big difference between Kea Digital Concept and Eram multimedia and audio-visual is the following:

KEA is more about WHY

Kea is about strategy and conceptual thinking. Kea is theory oriented.

ERAM is more about HOW

Eram is practical oriented. Eram is about technical work. About learning how to use creative hardware, software and gear.

In the beginning, this big difference was a huge challenge for me. But also refreshing and in many ways fun. Fun but not easy. I am by nature more into strategy, why and big thinking. So, study hardcore creative production was a surprisingly slap in the face. However, I enjoy Eram. And it was, after all. A great new learning. Even I sometimes felt it a bit weird and off track. According to my 1 semester learning at Digital Concept Development and going directly to Audio-visuals and multimedia was a new way to go. For instance, the course "Audio-visual design" was about making animation and presentation in the program After Effects. After Effects is a huge and deep program. And I did have my hurdle working with this program. After Effects for a full course was almost killing me. Thanks to hard work, forced focus and will to learn I did manage to get a lot new knowledge from that course. Albert, the teacher was also good. This experience I did find the most rewarding. Because when I started I knew 0 % After effects. I was so bad at the beginning and I felt it was almost Impossible for me to "get it". And I did not give any motivation from the chosen "childish" learning examples with "flying birds" and

“jumping balls”. And After Effects is so complex and it is very detailed. And you can do a lot of creative production as for instance sound, animation, 3D, effects and Photo manipulation. It is motion graphic! I did learn new things about myself and how to handle a new knowledge out of my comfort zone. After all is very good to make design and presentations of Digital Concepts.

The course “Multimedia 2” experiences I found least valuable to me. The course “Multimedia 2” was a purely “web development” courses. It was about coding an app in JavaScript. And Because I am by de facto so much not a coder. And do not study web development. It makes no sense to me. Coding is not my life. And in the future, I will not do it. I will work with people who can coding or hire coders in India. At Digital Concept development in Copenhagen we have 0 % coding on the top up. I learned the basic coding like html5 + css3 when I study multimedia designer at Kea. That is enough for me. So “multimedia 2” at ERAM was totally not relevant or valuable for me. However, the teacher was super good and I did also like the students in the class. Great people.

COURSE

Multimedia 2

Warning! Unless you love coding do not take this class. It is only about coding In JavaScript. I do find this course relevant for a Digital Concept student.

Graphic Design

I love this class, very deep and good. High quality. A very good teacher. We learned a lot about design and visual communication. And how to follow steps. A very passionate teacher called Jordi.

Audio-visual Design

This class is 100 % After effect class. It is hardcore about learning this software. And if you do not anything about this program. You need to put some extra time on this course. I did see a lot of YouTube and Lynda.com videos to learn the basic stuff. This course demands hard work. Here I learned most. I learned things I never thought I could be able to do. But I was also the most difficult course to follow. I recommend it strongly. And you must Work hard on it.

Audio-visual Production

Again, a very practical course with focus on production. We did a Catalan Short movie. I was giving the sound department job. Even I have I directed a feature film (Slim Slam Slum, 2002) before an it was very valuable course. It was great to be a part of Catalan team doing this audio-visual production. It was many meeting, speaks, pre-production and long hours with production. This course was the most fun of all the course. I am most proud I have been part of. I did learn a lot about

sound and Catalan film production. A truly great course. I strongly recommend it for all. And a great teacher as well. His name is Tereza.

Business creation

This is course is the only one I found like 100 % like Digital Concept Development. A must has course. Two great teachers. I love this course. And for me the easiest course to follow. We worked with Business canvas model. And got a lot of PDF and slide to study. And did many presentations. This course was spot on. I feel grateful to being part of this course. I did feel it like it was flowing for me. From the start to the end. I will strongly "business creation" .

Advertising production

As former professional Copywriter at Saatchi and Saatchi, I feel home right away at this course. And for me, it was very easy And I did also give a speak in the class about me for former experience as a creative in one of the leading Ad agency in the world. A fun and relevant course. But for me personally, it was too easy and did not learned something in the course. But I was great to get refreshed my knowledge. And unless you have working as a creative in an Agency before. I would strongly recommend this course. Interesting and fun. And a good teacher, Pere. And many task to do. If you do not know anything about advertising you will learn many good things.

Social and Culture

The biggest challenges I did experience culturally while being in Girona was that I almost not had contact with Spaniards or Catalans. Unless in my courses. I lived in multicultural zone, Where I almost never heard Spanish or Catalan on the streets. I lived with 2 French roommates. At the hostel was people from around the globe. And Eram I talked mostly with the 3 others Erasmus students. My social life when I did not study was with the local Erasmus community. It is called ESN GIRONA. Erasmus Student network Girona. This organisation did a lot activities for all the Erasmus students. Here I meet like 100 other Erasmus students from around the globe. That was great. I had hoped to be more in contact with the local Catalans. But I really did not know why I did not happened. It is like a mystery for me. Catalans are open are and friendly people. But get closer to them was surprisingly not easy. I liked the Catalan people. But they quite different from the Spanish people. I did feel like I was in a new country. Not in Spain which I also love.

The best personal experience during my stay has been to meet all this wonderful people from around the world in a nice city as Girona. And being able to follow a Catalan school for a full semester.

My best advice to a new student going to Eram is be open and positive. And do not expect Eram do it like at KEA. And then do all what you can to mingle and live like the Catalans. The other internationals you will easily meet.

Do your best to fit in to the culture.

There is so much to see and learn. And last thing. Do not think about it. Just do it. Just go. Even if you are not well prepared. I never saw a sad or an angry Erasmus student here! By coming to Eram you will grow.

Practical tips

Process

The application process was surprisingly easy. But it took time. And many steps to do. KEA and Eram has been very helpful every time I had a question. Fast and efficient service. I did not have any practical difficulties settling down in at in Girona. Meeting 100 new Erasmus the first two weeks on the Catalan Course gave me a fast community.

WIFI

The only practical hassle dazzle I did have was the WIFI at ERAM. In my opinion, it was not easy to get access to WIFI. Unclear which username and passwords to use. And depending on which time or which course I was doing. I must use a new username and password. This was quite frustrating. When I asked about how to do it to other students is was always different answers. The WIFI acces was very unclear. So, my biggest advice is demand a clear overview over your access to WIFI at Eram. From day one. The first 3 month I use a lot of time every day to figure out how to get connected to the web. New students should make sure that they EASLY can get online every day. This the only thing I can say about ERAM that can be done 100% better. It should not be a problem getting online when study a digital education.

Flat

It was not difficult to find accommodation because I did take the first and best offer I got from Carolina from Eram. I shared the flat with students from France who studied at the Girona University.

Budget

The kind of expenses I did have in general was to Food, transport, coffee. Very basic needs. Then entrances museum, newspapers, books, writing arcticles and cinemas tickets. In the end I did spend more money than I budgeted in my head. Like 1000 euros over my 5-month budget. It is not cheap to live in Girona. Even it is cheaper than in Copenhagen. The euros running fast on basic cost. Like food, water, coffee and transport. I did not use much money on entertainment. I was only out clubbing one night. And do not drink alcohol. And went only out for the beach, one day, after all my exams was finish. In my Case rent was not the biggest cost. It was Food and transport who did it. Otherwise I do not where money went!

Food

The food in Girona is very good and high quality. Two formers World best restaurant comes from the Girona region. El Bulli. And recently El celler de can Roca. People in Girona loves food. To make it or to go out eat. Food is a corner stone of the social and culture life of Girona.

Conclusion

The conclusion is clear: *Go for it! Go for Girona! Go for Eram!* My best advice to a new student going to Eram is be open and positive. And do not expect Eram do it like home. And please do all what you can to mingle and live like the Catalan while you're at Eram. Do you best to fit in to the culture. There is so much new to see and learn. And do not think about it. Just do it. Just go even if you are not well prepared. I never saw a sad or an angry Erasmus student here. Watch out! Time will go super-fast and you will flourish.

Photos



**Girona! Cantem tots junts
I cridem tots fort Endavant!**





L'ESCOLA DE LA
GENERACIÓ
DIGITAL



Thanks to ERAM, KEA and ESN Girona.