

Exchange Report

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GENERAL INFORMATION

WHERE AND WHEN DID YOU STUDY ABROAD?

I spent my summer semester 2021 at FH Salzburg in Austria.

WHAT KEA PROGRAM DID YOU ATTEND AT THE TIME?

I was an international 3rd-semester student of the top-up program Web Development.

WHAT CLASSES DID YOU TAKE DURING YOUR SEMESTER ABROAD?

I took various courses - technically, design, but also culturally oriented. From the international office courses, I took the "German language" and "Working in Multicultural Teams". From the MultiMediaArt department, I took "Visual Communication", "Multimedia Project", and "3D Specialisation". And finally, from the MultiMediaTechnology department, I took "Web Development" and "HCI Studio".

And some of my works:

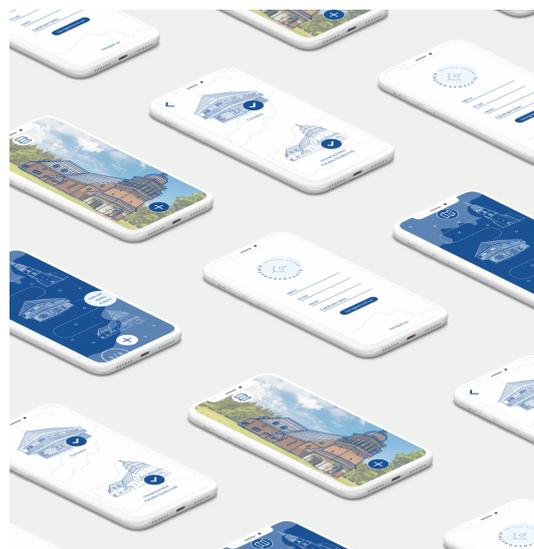
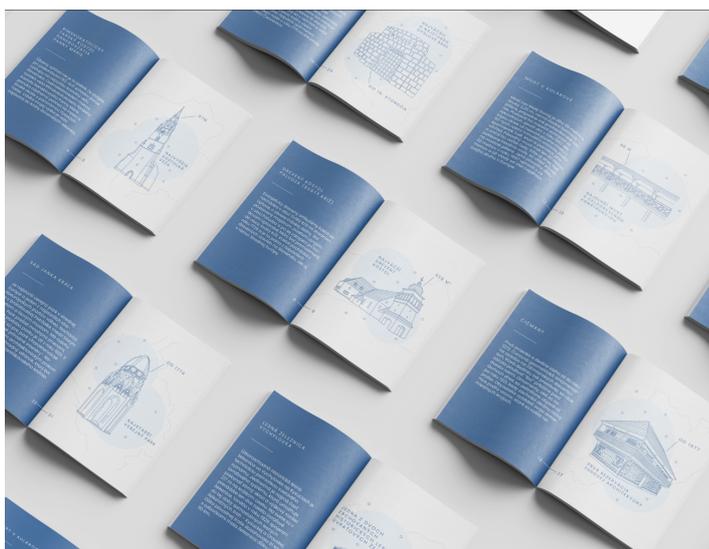
Web Development: <https://andreamakarova.com/fh/>

HCI Studio:

<https://www.figma.com/file/wiJKMOLmPdZzqAwHRY2C55/SmartFridge-App-Wireframes?node-id=0%3A1>

GENERAL INFORMATION

Media Project:



3D Specialisation:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tQ0Stdm5vBSy0_bZ0JgiPILbCuFY3u4w/view?usp=sharing

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

HOW HELPFUL WAS THE RECEIVING SCHOOL IN THE PROCESS OF CHOOSING CLASSES AND SETTLING YOU IN?

FH Salzburg was very helpful before starting the exchange when I had to adjust courses to the KEA curriculum. They had an individual approach and offered me also courses, which were not in the course catalog. It was a bit more difficult when I started the semester. I had a problem with the online platform they used during corona time. I was not added to the classes and communication was a bit chaotic. It took me quite a long time to find a person who could add me to the team, therefore I missed several lectures. On the other hand, it was an unusual situation, and I understand they were not that familiar with online teaching, which caused my problems. Other than that, everything was smooth, I got great guidance from the international office, which helped me to settle down very quickly.

WHAT CLASSES/STUDY EXPERIENCES DID YOU FIND THE MOST REWARDING? WHY?

The most rewarding classes were Web Development and "HCI Studio", but also "Working in Multicultural Teams". Even though we started "Web Development" with basics I had already known, I broadened my knowledge of CSS and JavaScript. We implemented our gained skills in real life and I created a website for my father's business as my final project. I found it very edifying. Another interesting class was "HCI Studio", where we went deeper into human-computer interaction. Again, education was based on project work and what is more, I had an opportunity to get to know local students more, as they were part of my team.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

We had a super chilly teacher, whose feedback on our work was very enhancing. Our final project was an interface of the smart fridge application, which was created to fulfill users' needs. "Working in Multicultural Teams" was a revival to design and tech classes. I met there not only Erasmus, but also Austrian students and I found out a lot of new information about others, but also my culture. Overall, I had a nice combination of classes, which made my semester diverse and enriching.

WHAT CLASSES/STUDY EXPERIENCES DID YOU FIND LEAST RELEVANT OR LEAST VALUABLE TO YOU? WHY?

The biggest disappointment for me was the "Visual Communication" class. It didn't meet my expectations, because it wasn't related to my studies. I think it should be offered mainly to product design students, who want to improve their sketching skills, as sketching was a core part of the course. On the other hand, I learned something new and we had a very passionate teacher, who respected our level of sketching skills and helped us even after the lectures. I do not say it was a bad course, but it was extremely time-consuming for me with zero experience with product sketching. It was not connected to multimedia at all, so I would think twice about taking this course next time.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

WHAT CLASSES WOULD YOU ADVISE OTHER KEA STUDENTS GOING TO THE RECEIVING SCHOOL TO CHOOSE OR NOT TO CHOOSE?

As I said before, I enjoyed all my classes and would recommend all of them except Visual Communication, but if you think about taking "Multimedia Project 2" and "3D Specialisation" you should have at least a basic knowledge of German because most of the classes were taught in German. I could speak in English, but I can not imagine not understanding a word in German. I would also recommend taking a "German" class, it will help you not only with language skills, but you will make new friends there, as the class is very interactive.

CULTURAL/PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU EXPERIENCE CULTURALLY WHILE BEING ABROAD?

The biggest challenge for me was the language. I learned German at my high school, but I wanted to improve it to be able to have a simple conversation with locals and to be able to take classes taught in German. I can not think about anything else that was challenging, but I come from a similar culture, and being an international student in Denmark prepared me for cultural differences.

How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

FH Salzburg was super helpful. The international office offers a great variety of courses, which help to deal with cultural challenges. I took two courses from their department and I could not choose better. "German" helped me to understand locals and my courses and "Working in Multicultural Teams" raised my awareness of life approaches in different cultures.

WHAT WAS THE BEST CULTURAL/PERSONAL EXPERIENCE DURING YOUR STUDIES ABROAD?

Definitely nature. I love hiking and exploring, so Austria was a paradise for me. I visited many gorgeous views, waterfalls, lakes, towns, and gorges. There are also many skiing and water sport possibilities, which are located really close to Salzburg. Another reason for choosing Austria could be beer and food.

CULTURAL/PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

It is delicious and it is a big part of their culture, you can find several breweries and many Guesthouses in Salzburg. And it tastes even better with a group of friends.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE OTHER KEA STUDENTS GOING TO STUDY ABROAD AT THE RECEIVING SCHOOL?

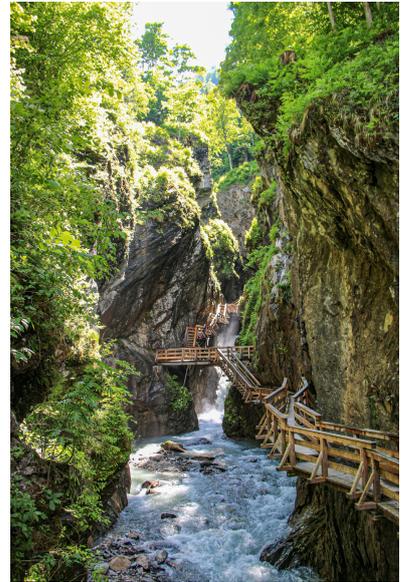
Buy a regional train ticket and travel as much as possible. It costs only 150 euros for a semester and allows you to travel limitlessly throughout the region of Salzburg. Another good deal is a seasonal skiing pass, which can save you a lot of money. Another useful tip is to live in Campus Urstein, because most of the students live here, which means a great student life. There are always BBQs and volleyball matches going on. On top of that, you can go to the school in slippers, as it is a building right next to the dorm.

CULTURAL/PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

PHOTOS



CULTURAL/PERSONAL EXPERIENCE



CULTURAL/PERSONAL EXPERIENCE



PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

HOW WAS THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

The application process was smooth, I got clear instructions. The only problem was with my courses because we had to find a proper replacement for 2nd-semester KEA courses. It took some time, but both institutions were extremely helpful and found courses for me.

What did KEA help you with?

As I said, Anne did her best as always. She communicated with FH Salzburg and found the perfect combination of classes for me. She also answered all my questions very promptly and helped me with everything.

What help did you receive from your school abroad?

Amelie from FH Salzburg collaborated with Anne and I am really thankful for them because they arranged everything regarding courses for me. Amelie also helped me with accommodation and other practical matters.

DID YOU HAVE ANY PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES SETTLING DOWN AT YOUR DESTINATION?

I have some trouble because of the corona restrictions. I had to undertake a quarantine, which meant that I could not leave my room and shop for groceries. Other than that, there was no mentionable problem.

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

FH Salzburg dealt very well with it. They assigned us buddies, who assisted us during, but also after mandatory quarantine. We also had virtual coffee meetings, where we discussed all our inquiries. Another tool that helped us to settle down was a welcome week, where we got useful information about the schooling system, dorm, registration, and much more.

WHERE DID YOU LIVE?

I lived in Campus Urstein, which is located in a calm area right next to the school in a village Puch bei Hallein close to Salzburg. I had a small apartment with its own bathroom and kitchen and a nice view of the mountains.

Was it difficult to find accommodation?

It was easy, I just had to reserve a room and pay a booking fee. We got an email from the school with instructions about booking, so I did not have to stress about the accommodation.

Was it expensive?

I paid 405 euros for the room, which is not a little, but it had good value/price ratio. I had everything that I needed there and my Erasmus grant covered it.

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

WHAT KIND OF EXPENSES DID YOU HAVE IN GENERAL?

My biggest expense was accommodation and food. Another sum went to transportation and entertainment, which includes eating out, sports, cable cars, and entrance fees for tourist attractions. I also had to buy equipment for "Visual Communication", which was not cheap.

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

Yes, I remained within the budget, but I heard that some students spent huge amounts of money, mainly on traveling and eating out. I think it depends on the lifestyle one has.