

The background image shows a rooftop scene at sunset. The sky is filled with soft, orange and yellow clouds. In the foreground, there are several white pipes and a small white vent on the roof. In the middle ground, there are various antennas and a large white satellite dish. In the background, a tall, lattice-structured tower is visible against the horizon.

Host institution: ISCOM, Paris

Period of study: 08/02-2021 – 18/06-2021

Introduction

I decided to study abroad in order to challenge myself, get new experiences during the pandemic and improve my knowledge within the field of international communications. Concerning my expectations, I had no idea of what to expect from my stay abroad, since I did not get any tips from former students going to ISCOM. I was a bit concerned with the pandemic still going on, but I stayed optimistic about it.

I chose Paris because I have always wondered what it is like to live there, and it kept being a dreamy destination for me to think of. Furthermore, the school offered a great internationally recognized program, which was in line with my field of studies at KEA. I wished to broaden my international perspective and build up a toolbox for future jobs and academic projects.

- **Where and when did you study abroad?**

I studied at ISCOM in Paris from February 2021 until mid-June 2021.

- **What KEA program did you attend at the time?**

I studied at the top-up bachelor's degree in Design & Business with specialization in Brand Design.

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

During my semester at ISCOM I had more than 20 different courses. To mention some, I particularly liked the one about Graphic Design. Not all students had experience with the Adobe package, which is why we started with the basics, but quickly developed into more technical exercises. It was nice to get it refreshed and I also learned lots of new skills in the programs, due to all the graphic assignments we had to hand in continuously.

Another course I really liked was Branding. We had to choose a company, which we thought could use some change to succeed in a post-pandemic world. All lessons were small steps towards the final Brand book proposal, working on the DNA, customer journey, tone of voice etc.

I also found the course about Professional Project really helpful. During this course we worked on improving our résumés, interviewing skills and LinkedIn profiles. I gained great knowledge about what to highlight from my personal experiences and how to respond professionally to questions at a job interview.

Academic Experience

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

ISCOM was very helpful by email with all the procedures. I did not have much choice concerning the different classes only with two electives. The rest of the courses were obligatory, and they had gathered a very intense program.

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

I learned a lot from the course in Graphic Design. I found it interesting to get a deeper understanding of the different tools in both Illustrator, Photoshop and After Effects, which I would like to focus more on in future experiences. Furthermore, I found the French classes truly rewarding since I have never studied the language before. It helped me get a basic vocabulary during the five months in Paris. The professor certainly challenged me a lot by only speaking French during the classes, which made me gain improvements really fast.

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

I think the program had too many repetitions from previous courses we have had at KEA and from my AP degree at VIA. Perhaps it is inevitably to avoid this. Overall, I think the mix of courses were great, but it could have been reduced a bit. For instance, we had several courses about historical events, which reminded me of high school. Furthermore, we had two courses that were very similar. They were called Soft Skills and Intercultural Management and they both tapped into many of the same theories.

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

I guess future students going to ISCOM will not have much choice either, but I would definitely recommend choosing French classes as elective.



Cultural/Personal Experience

- **What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?**

I did not really experience any cultural challenges, but the language can definitely become a barrier in some cases.

- o **How helpful was the receiving school in this process?**

For instance, the school was very helpful getting help with metro cards or housing benefits (CAF) if you wish to get these. Otherwise, they have employees specializing

in all kinds of different areas.

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

One of my best cultural experiences have been together with one of the other Erasmus students. We were only 6 exchange students in my class, which is why I was happy to find someone I really connected with during the semester. We both experienced the lockdown together, finding new ways to explore Paris, which was great culture wise with no sight of tourists all over. Also, we experienced how the city blossomed after having cafés and restaurants closed for 7 months. Suddenly, we were all over Paris visiting all the famous monuments, exploring flea markets, eating snails, drinking red wine and so on.

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

Do not think too much about it. It will become intense, but I promise that you will not regret it. I was happy that I went on my own and that I found someone to spend time with both during lockdown and when the city opened up again. It is an amazing city to live in and explore. Try to get a bike or walk a lot if you are up for it. You can get a cheap bike and lots of other stuff on Leboncoin.fr – it is similar to DBA in Denmark.





Practical Experience

- How was the application process?

The application process was more manageable than I expected it to be, but of course, a lot of documents to fill out and upload.

○ What did KEA help you with?

KEA send me all the reminders on what to fill out and when, which was really helpful and organized as well.

○ What help did you receive from your school abroad?

They were good at following up by email and making sure everything went smooth with the application process.

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

○ How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

I did not have any practical difficulties, but the school is at your service any time needed.

- Where did you live?

I lived in the 15th arrondissement close to the 7th where the Eiffel Tower is located. It was important for me to find a nice place to stay, since most of the courses were taking place remotely. We only went physically to ISCOM once a week, so I decided to live on my own in order to focus on my studies online.

○ Was it difficult to find accommodation?

I found my accommodation through the Facebook group 'Danskere I Paris' by making a post saying the time period I searched for a place to stay, what I was doing in Paris and what I searched for. Furthermore, I would also recommend the Facebook group 'Padam Padam', which is a group for young, Danish people living in Paris. You can both search for accommodation, get tips and tricks, and ask any

questions you may have on your mind.

- **Was it expensive?**

You should expect Paris in general to be a bit more expensive than Copenhagen concerning accommodation. I paid around 1000€ + electricity per month for my apartment. One way to reduce your accommodation is by applying the CAF, which is a financial housing benefit like the one (boligstøtte) you can receive in Denmark.





- **What kind of expenses did you have in general?**

There are no expenses connected with the school, only if you wish to get a metro card. Otherwise, no books or fees in general.

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

I spend just around the budget which I calculated before going, but a bit more on accommodation and cultural experiences. I was lucky to receive a few grants in order to get a stable economy before going, which I recommend future students applying for in advance.

Conclusion

To what extent were your expectations met, both professionally and culturally?

I did not set too high expectations prior the exchange, mainly because of the pandemic still going on and the fear of it getting cancelled in last minute. Luckily, I was one of the few students who went abroad during that semester, which I am grateful for.

Professionally and academically, I learned how to manage my time with an extremely intense study program. I definitely got more disciplined by all the assignments and homework that were given during the semester and I gained lots of skills in the field of communication. Culturally, I got well adapted to the French way of living and managed to communicate with my basic French vocabulary and of course, English. I created lists in order to experience everything I had on my mind before going home and I really enjoyed exploring the city by foot. I would love to do it all over again!