

Questionnaire Study Abroad/Exchange

1. *Where and when did you study abroad?*

Winter 2017, Toronto, Canada
Ryerson University

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

Digital Concept Development

3. *What classes did you take during your semester abroad?*

- **Entrepreneurship in Creative Industries (CRI 400)**
This course is concentrated on entrepreneurship in the creative sector, and lectures have both a teaching and ‘workshop’ components, and seminars are designed to continue experiential learning through discussion and student initiatives. Assignments are designed to grow entrepreneurial competencies, facilitate team building and cooperation, and develop critical thinking skills. (2 classes per week; 1 lecture, 1 seminar)
- **Project Management (CRI 500)**
This course teaches aspects of project management including project planning, budgeting, financing, scheduling, cost control, procurement and contracting, and provides practical tools and techniques that apply to any creative project. Taught through lecture with hands-on exercises. (1 class per week: 1 lecture)
- **Design and Layout (GCM 130)**
This course teaches how to interpret a design brief, how to work with a client to create a design that fulfills client specifications, and how to prepare a design that will adhere to output requirements. Emphasis is placed on solving problems in design, and the principles of design. A lot of exercises and assignments! But fun since it’s design. (2 classes per week: 1 lecture, 1 workshop seminar)
- **Digital Project Lab (RTA 924)**
This course comes very close to what we do in Digital Concept development; an opportunity to use design-thinking principles to solve real-world problems. Build digital prototypes in an interdisciplinary team, grounded in modern and mobile platforms, and work with professors, mentors and advisors to learn new development and production-skills in digital creativity, collaboration, programming, demo videos, documentation and presentation skills. (2 classes per week: 1 lecture, 1 seminar (usually in succession) a lot of work outside of class!)

Academic Experience

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

I had a few emails sent to me with information on the multitude of courses that I had to choose from – I did not receive help in the process of choosing courses other than a few answers to questions I had. In terms of settling you into the university, the international department has a few events in the beginning of the semester to encourage mingling with other exchange students and Canadian students. They also provide A LOT of information on the university, life in Canada and the campus in general. They are available any time you need to talk, even held a few online vide call sessions before arrival – and they put a emphasis on you seeking them out if you feel overwhelmed.

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

I, surprisingly, found the design course to be very rewarding. Even though a big part of the course strives to teach illustrator and work with the program in general (which is knowledge I already had), it taught a lot about perfecting my work, fine-tuning materials for print, and adhering to customer needs – I learned a lot about the industry. The entrepreneurship course had some very interesting panels, and also gave us the assignment of finding and interviewing two successful entrepreneurs, which also proved very insightful. The Digital Project Lab course proved to be hard work, but also introduced me to some people and gave me the opportunity for an international internship. The teachers were also very friendly and accomodating.

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

I learned a lot from all my courses, but entrepreneurship in creative industries proved to be the least valuable or relevant course for me. We studied creative industries and talked to and about entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship, but the context was Canada, and the assignments and seminar contents didn't provide me with as many valuable insights as I would've liked. Project management was also lacking in terms of practical use of the theories and tools that were taught – which I fully believe is necessary to truly learn this craft.

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

In terms of choosing the right courses for Digital Concept Development, I would say that the **Digital Project Lab** course was closest in both theory and practice, to what we are taught at home. The **Design and Layout** course was a delight, both in terms of the teaching methods but also the practical assignments (if you like to do a lot of design work). **Project Management** taught me a lot of theory, but it requires you to incorporate these theories in practice during your own project management endeavors - elsewhere. If you can do that then expect to learn a lot from it.

Cultural/Personal Experience

- 1. What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad, and how helpful was the receiving school in this process?***

I adapted fairly easily (but maybe not so strange for a person that's attended many schools in the past, moved around 20 times and lived on 4 different continents already – I couldn't speak for people who are attached to 'home'). Toronto is a very diverse city – lots of different nationalities, but people are exceptionally friendly. Go out, have fun, stay engaged – travel if you can find the time – most importantly, stay open and make friends.

The international department at Ryerson offered a lot of information regarding the cultural change we were about to undergo – and extended an offer of help anyone if they felt the need to talk.

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

Making some very nice International and Canadian friends, doing activities with said people – travelling, going to restaurants, events etc., all these experiences are what make an international exchange interesting and fun.

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

Stay engaged. Go to class. Make friends. This is what will keep you going – especially since there's a lot more assignments and theory to munch through. An experience abroad is what you make of it - so stay positive and active during your stay – and enjoy visiting and experiencing another culture.

Practical Experience

- 1. How was the application process? What did KEA help you with, and what help did you receive from your school abroad.***

The application process was easy enough, information was given through KEA – some applications and documents have to be in order. I spoke with my own teachers about the courses I was to take, and they helped me with deciding which courses would fit in terms of the theory being taught at home. Ryerson provided help in the form of assistance and answering of any questions that you might have – also made sure that I got into the courses that I applied for. In the event that you want to switch courses etc., that's on you to do – through Ryerson's online service, but you were free to ask and receive help from their international office. As I mentioned earlier, they also did a few video call sessions with students before the semester began, to provide more information and answer questions in a live format.

2. *Did you have any practical difficulties settling down in at your destination? How helpful was the receiving school in this process?*

The school provided a link to a few student houses etc., but applying to them and getting access is all on the students themselves. I applied to Tartu College without much difficulty, had a room within a week of applying.

3. *Where did you live? Was it difficult to find accommodation? Was it expensive?*

Place: Tartu College.

Application process: Easy - you have to pay for the last month in advance.

Description: It was a nice place to live - nice neighborhood. Tartu college is a huge apartment building with 18 floors, multiple apartments on each floor / 6 people per apartment. Each student has a room and access to kitchen, with individual cupboards and mini-fridge/freezer, and 2 bathrooms. The rooms are not huge or very new but it's pleasant enough, and the security is good.

Price: I paid around \$750 Canadian dollars; equal to about 3800 kr.

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

I spent a little more money than I budgeted, but mostly due to activities with friends (which is expected regardless of budget). Food is NOT cheap - in most cases I found them to be the same as DK food prices.

That concludes my experiences on Ryerson University and Toronto.

HvA - Hogeschool van
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Introduction

I've chosen to study abroad, because I wanted to see more and experience other culture. I already study in different country, as Denmark is not a country I was born and raised in. I love travelling and experiencing more, and given an opportunity I decided to apply. I haven't been in Netherlands before and I was dazzled by Amsterdam and people living there. It's such a great place, I feel like everyone should go there and see it for themselves. I was expecting to meet new people, learn something that will interest me and experience other culture. My every expectation had been met and even exceeded. I was so impressed by Netherlands, that for my next semester I searched for an internship in Amsterdam and managed to find it, so I could spend more time in this lovely place.

Experiences at the host university

For my fourth semester of Computer Science I was able to choose from couple different thematic semesters at HvA. I was thinking about Big Data and Mobile Development but ultimately I chose the latter. I wanted to learn more about it and see if that's something that I might enjoy doing in the future. Dutch semester looks a little different from Danish one. It's divided into two smaller parts. Because of that, in the first part of my semester I was attending classes called Mobile application development and Mobile design and prototyping. Both classes ended in the middle of the semester with the exam and shortly after that new classes started. In the second part of the semester, I studied Mobile society and Mobile infrastructure and security. Beside that I had two courses that lasted for whole semester. It was a mobile project and we had to go to the company twice a week with a group we were assigned to, and Dutch learning classes that I really enjoyed. Mobile development classes focused on Android but the teacher would help even if somebody wanted to learn about iOS. Prototyping taught us how to plan out layout for our app, so the user's experience would be the best it can get. It's especially important with mobile apps, because attention span of average person is very short. Mobile society taught us about different parts of mobile gear. Mobile infrastructure and security focused on backend. Big project that lasted whole semester started at the beginning. Our teacher chose groups and assigned us randomly. Companies that applied for working with students presented us their ideas and after that we had some time to consult what we heard with the rest of the team and pick which company we would like to go to. We made a priority list and gave it to our teacher who took it under consideration while assigning us. It was really nice to work for a company, even though we had to go there twice a week and spent there a normal working hours. I learnt a lot during this time. We had a lot of freedom during the development process, even though we had to fulfil requirements. People at the company and teachers were always helpful and easy to talk to. They were eager to help with any problem and listened to troubles we were facing.

I learnt how to develop applications for Android and Hololens. I also found out that I really enjoy it and want to learn more about it. Java stopped being for me such a problem when I started making an application for Android. I also learnt Unity and C# as it was a requirement for developing for Hololens. I had to work with Microsoft AR glasses for the company and even though my group encountered a lot of troubles while working with this gear, we enjoyed it. There is not that much documentation about it or tutorials, which made it much harder

experience, but also challenging. We also had problems with deploying our project on the Hololens. Virtual machine wouldn't work on our computers, which meant that we could only test it during days that we were at the company on the actual gear. But those problems were only caused by project that we received from the company. Other groups worked with Android or iOS. Even though I felt irritated at times, those obstacles helped me to learn more.

I liked the whole process, but keeping an updated logbook through whole process was a little hard for me. I didn't see a point in keeping it. I always forgot to write in it, but fortunately my teacher was very understanding.

Social and cultural experiences

Erasmus organisation that runs in Amsterdam was very helpful during my first few weeks in Amsterdam. Even before classes started we were invited for bunch of parties where we were introduced to other international students. I met a lot of amazing people with whom I still keep in touch with. At first we were divided into smaller groups. Each group had two Dutch keepers that helped us break the ice and get to know Amsterdam better. Bigger parties happened quite often at the beginning and all international students attended them. I met people from all around the world. Later in the semester we didn't have as many parties but it was understandable considering that most of us were focused on assignments and projects. We still had some amazing events each week organized by other students working for this organisation. Also every week there was an international night at the bar where we had a special discount.

Dutch people are very welcoming and most of them speak English. I've never had any problem with communication. They are understanding and willing to help in any situation. Amsterdam is a busy city at every hour. There is always something to do. I attended many events that I found online or on facebook. There is a place for everyone, bars are not the only popular places. Whenever I had a short break in-between my classes I would go to café place nearby school with my classmates.

I met most of my friends during introduction days, in school and through my other friends. Some of them we met by accident and started to hang out shortly after. There are many places where you can meet someone in Amsterdam. Introduction days and attending Erasmus events are the best opportunity to meet someone at the beginning to not feel alone. After that, it's much easier, because you already have someone who's in the same position as you.

Practical experiences

It's hard to find a place to stay in Amsterdam, just like in Copenhagen. I was lucky and HvA helped me find a really nice apartment close to the centre. I accepted an offer and got every documentation needed for registration in Netherlands. I was also lucky enough to be able to extend my rent, so I wouldn't have to look for a new place during my internship. I took a plane from Copenhagen. Flight was fairly cheap and there are a lot of planes going between those two cities. Schiphol Airport is quite close to the city and metro is right there.

I have few shops around my place, so I mostly cooked for myself. From time to time I would go out with my friends for a meal. It didn't cost much, but we didn't eat around the centre where there are many restaurants for tourists. I travelled everywhere by bike, because I like biking and because I didn't feel like spending money on metro and buses. There are bike lanes everywhere so it's very safe. People in Amsterdam drive a little aggressive in comparison to Danish people, but I've never had an accident. I would advise either buying a bike or renting it, so you could enjoy Amsterdam more. I got lost couple of times, because of the canals and small streets looking similar but thanks to that I saw parts of the city I wouldn't have seen otherwise. People steal bikes so it's smart to have a good chain and pin it to something unmovable, like a bridge. I heard that some drunk tourists like to throw unchained bikes into the canals. Nothing happened to my bike, but it's always smart to be careful. Normal beer at the bar is usually 0,25ml and costs around 2-3 euros. To get a bigger beer you have to specify that you want a big one. After certain hour some bars asks for a small amount of money to enter, but most of them are free. Bars and pubs in the centre are really nice, but I always liked places where are not so many tourists. There are many great bars all around Amsterdam and I would advise to go there and see which type you like the most.

Conclusion

I loved the time I spent in Amsterdam and I'm really glad that I went there. This city is amazing and Dutch are great as well. I can recommend it and HvA. If you are thinking about learning more about Android or iOS, Mobile Development is the best course to take.