

Exchange in Ghent, Belgium

September 2022 to January 2023



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INTRODUCTION

Where and when did you study abroad?

I studied from September 2022 to January 2023 at Artevelde University of Applied Sciences (Artevelde Hogeschool), which is situated in lovely Ghent in Belgium.

What KEA program do you attend?

I study multimediadesign at KEA, and I went on exchange during my 3rd semester, as this was my only possibility to study abroad. Of course, it's also possible to go abroad for the internship, but I did not prefer that.

What classes did you take during my semester abroad?

During my semester at Artevelde, I had 6 different courses. Some were mandatory for me, as I needed to get 30 ECTS points for the semester, as each course will only be x ECTS points worth.

The mandatory ones were:

Ethical and Responsible Entrepreneurship

Innovation management

Prototyping

The courses I chose myself were:

Creative Writing

Neuromarketing

Story Design (my "expert track" which meant that the course was taught twice a week)



Leeuwstraat, my favourite campus of Artevelde. It has Harry Potter vibes, and I really liked the charm it has.

It's not too hot in the winter, but bring an extra sweater, and you'll be fine:)

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

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

The receiving school didn't really help me much with choosing classes, as I pretty much handled that myself. I calculated which and how many courses I needed to complete, and then I applied for them in Mobility Online, which KEA helped me with a lot. I am sure, if I had emailed the host school, they would not hesitate to help me.

What classes and experiences did you find most rewarding?

The classes I found most rewarding were: Prototyping, Story Design, Neuromarketing and partly Creative Writing. Creative Writing was more rewarding on a personal level rather than a professional one, as we worked with opening our creative mindset, stepping out of our comfort zones and writing in new ways. It wasn't as commercially focused as I thought(hoped) it would be, but I would recommend both the class and the teacher; Jan Jorissen.

All courses had group projects as their preferred workingform, which was a nice way to work, but of course also a challenge (I'll get back to that). Both Prototyping, Story Design and Neuromarketing gave me tools, that I think I'll be able to use in my future. Story Design has a focus on storytelling as a tool in marketing. Neuromarketing focuses on the brain, and how we interpret input both consciously and unconsciously, which was very interesting. Prototyping taught me the importance of testing out concepts before I move on with them.

What classes and experiences did you find least rewarding?

None of the classes were as I am used to from KEA. This is not necessarily negative, but just different, and something I needed to get used to. The pace was not too fast, which is very different from what I know, but it is necessary, when you work with many different nationalities, and you want everyone to get involved in the classes.

Both Ethical & Responsible Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management were courses, where I unfortunately wasted my time. I didn't see the point of the classes, and I did not feel like I learned anything new. All the teachers were very nice, but I did not learn much from it.

What classes and experiences did you find most and least relevant and valuable?

Story Design, Neuromarketing and Prototyping were most relevant to me professionally. Innovation Management and Ethical & Responsible Entrepreneurship were neither relevant or valuable. E&R almost didn't have any classes, as we only had class every other week, and then there was a fall break, and then the teacher couldn't come, so I think I only attended class 4 times, whereas the last one was for presentations.

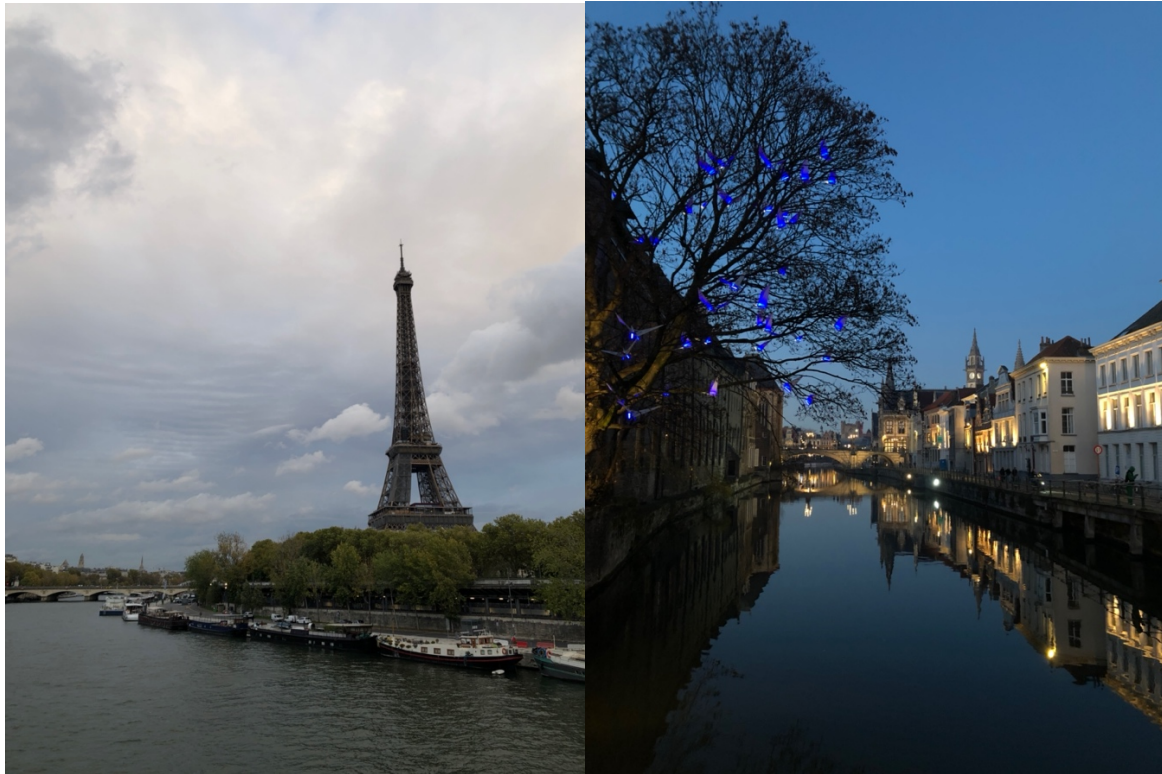
What classes would you advise other KEA students to (not) choose?

I would definitely recommend Creative Writing if you like to be creative and step out of your comfort zone. The class was very self-reflective, which I personally liked a lot, and

our teacher; Jan Jorissen; was very enthusiastic.

I would also advise you for Neuromarketing, as it gives a good view on how the brain works. Unfortunately I don't think the teachers were the very best, but it also depends on the students of the class. In our class, there were a lot of students who didn't respect these teachers, which caused less focus. But the topics and the assignments were very interesting! Also Story Design with Catherine Ongenae was great, as long as you make an effort yourself (but that goes for every course!).

If you can get rid of Innovation Management and E&R, I would advise you to.



Even though Innovation Management is a course I wouldn't recommend, I was happy that I attended it, as it came with a study trip to Paris.

We had to pay everything ourselves, which we were not informed with beforehand. Others got mad about this, but I just felt lucky to be able to go to Paris. It was a great experience!

This is not Paris, but Ghent. Such a beautiful city, with so much charm and cute little areas all around.

Personally, I didn't like Korenmarkt, which is the center of the center. I preferred the areas along the water, or around Vrijdagsmarkt.

CULTURAL AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad

I don't think I had experiences that I would call "challenging", as I had a nice time being abroad. The only thing I would like to highlight is that you will be introduced to students and group projects where you don't have the same standards. Some don't understand deadlines, others don't prioritize school work as much, while others may be just as passionate as you are. Of course this depends on who you are, but I went abroad to learn new things, and I did, but I also worked for it, did my homework and chose my group members wisely. If you are just there to have fun, you will for sure also be able to find others who feel the same way as you.

What was the best cultural/personal experience during my studies abroad

I loved being able to meet people from other cultures and countries from all around the world. In my dorm kitchen I met people from both Romania, Poland, Germany and China so there are plenty of possibilities to meet new cultures.

As I was there around christmas, I also loved hearing about other's traditions.

Personally, this experience has been a good way of getting closer to myself, as I naturally spent a lot of time on my own, which I knew I would like, but I actually didn't feel lonely at any point. I enjoyed my own company, but I also went to bars, cafés and on trips with classmates which was equally as nice.

Others really liked to party, and they also found their own crowd who they could do that with, so there really is a part of Ghent for everyone.

What advice would I give other KEA students going to study abroad

Stay open minded, especially the first month, and be ready to step out of your comfort zone. As we all go abroad alone, we are all searching for a group of friends to hang out with, and find comfort in. Therefore, as long as you are open and talk to others, it will all come naturally. The more you give, the more you get is really the spirit of going abroad, I think.



THE PRACTICALITIES

How was the application process, and how did both KEA and the host-school help?

The application process was naturally long, as you apply a long time before you actually get accepted and go. But I just used my coordinator; Anne Dibbern, a whole lot and asked her whenever I was in doubt of anything - also very small things. I would rather ask her one time too many and be sure that I did it all correctly.

The host school didn't help much, but that is only because I didn't ask them for help. During the process, I naturally got some emails from them to inform me about the process from their side.

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

No, not at all. But I know that the host school would've helped me if I needed it.

Where did you live?

I lived in a large student dorm in the center of the city(almost). It is called Savaanstraat, and it is a part of the official housing that is offered by Artevelde. It was not difficult to find, as I luckily got assigned it by the school, because I applied for it.

To get housing from Artevelde, you need to apply for it. Make sure that you look at their housing brochure before the application portal opens. Get a good look, and figure out where the houses are, where your campuses are, and where the citycenter is. I made a list of the ones I would like the most, and the moment the application portal opened, I filled out all the forms as quickly as I could. I think that is why I got so lucky, because there is only a limited number of spots!

Others lived in AirBnBs or other student dorms called 'Upkot', which were also very nice! I had a room that was around 16-20 squaremetres, and I payed 370€ for it. Everything is included (wifi, electricity, heating, water).

What kind of expenses did you have in general?

When I first got there, I wanted to make my room look nice, as it isn't too personal to live in a square room with white walls. I bought a bookcase from a "Kringwinkel" (secondhand shop), some posters, kitchen utensils (Action! is cheap) and so on. So getting settled was a little expensive, but I chose that myself.

I bought a tram/buscard for 3 months, which costed me 81€, which was a good purchase as one of our campuses was far away from the city. I also got a 10-ride trainticket, which was around 50€, but the trains in Belgium are not like in Denmark, as they rarely check your ticket. My other expenses were groceries and café trips as Ghent has a lot of cute cafés you should try! Groceries (and everything else) are cheaper in Belgium than in Denmark, which is a huge luxury. Make sure you also take the time to visit other Belgian cities (Brugge and Antwerpen), and Paris is only 1,5 hours away!

I spent a little bit more money than I thought I would, but I also allowed myself to go to cafés several times a week.

