

BERLIN



3RD SEMESTER 2016-2017

Beuth Hochschule Für Technik - WS 2016-2017

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Introduction

My name is Kathrine and I am 25 years old. I'm studying BA of Architectural Technology and Construction Management (Danish), doing my 3rd semester abroad in the winter semester 2016-2017.

This report will cover my study abroad in Berlin, which took place from September 2016 to February 2017.

I will explain some of my experiences and the reason why I chose Berlin as exchange destination.

I had a lot of reasons to go to Berlin, some of the reasons was that, I have lived in Germany for two years before I started studying on KEA. In those two years I learned to speak German – which helped me a lot on my exchange.

I always loved Berlin and its contrast to Copenhagen, its story and the different between east and west Berlin.

The building industry in Denmark co-operates a lot with Germany, and needs young and involved employees who speaks German and know about the German culture.

The last and maybe most important thing was, that I didn't want to live more than a short flight away from my boyfriend back in Copenhagen ☺ and I must say – with only one hour flight and about 500 kroner, it was one of the best places for me to be an exchange student.

Finally choice of destination

Before definitely choosing Berlin as my destination, I had some other cities in mind – London, Krakow and also outside of Europe – such as Brazil, Australia and USA. I had a talk to the always helpful and kind Sofia, at the international office, who gave me some aspects, what to think about before I chose my destination. Some of them was:

- What did I expect to get out of my exchange? (language, social relations, something special to write on my CV (compared to my classmates) etc.

- If I had a boyfriend/girlfriend, could I live 5 months without that person?
- The university and its focus areas? (design, technical etc.)
- “Erasmus” financial support within Europe.

That was just some of the aspects Sophia asked me think about – before making my decision.

Before moving

Before going on exchange you need to fill some documents, that needs to be handled over to the exchange university and in my case to the “Erasmus” administration. It’s something that’s needs to be done, which is also the most boring part of it. But you will find out, that KEA, and the administration are very helpful and effective compared to, in my case the German office.

When you get your accept from the German university, which mostly is a standard procedure, you need to make you “*learning agreement*”. I was very confused, because I was told that I should just had to go to the homepage and have a look at the subjects – and just choose whatever I wanted. But at the end I just chose the subjects from the 3rd semester (30 ECTS points). After 1-2 weeks in Berlin I changed some of the subjects.

I recommend that you ask your contact person of your faculty, to help you with your choice – because some of the subjects are combined with each other.

I took “Part I” a German language course, to get to know the other exchange students. I can only recommend you to take this course. They make different levels to give you the best help they can.

If you like to get to know some other Danish people, there are many Facebook groups – who are willing to help you with almost whatever questions you have (called “Danskere I berlin”)

A place to live?

There are different ways to live in Berlin the cheapest and easiest is to get a room through the university (dome) or find your own WG (room in a shared apartment). If you do so, you should expect to pay around 250-450 euro pro month.

I lived in a dome (1-room apartment) close to Potsdamer Platz – which I paid 350 euro pro month. It's a bit more expensive than the domes where you share a kitchen and bathroom – but for the 50 euro difference did not matter. I don't want to live around 10 other students 24/7. So the "Studentenwohnheim" near Potsdamer Platz (it's called Hafen Platz) was the best choice I made – easy and cheap

If you want to rent an apartment through university – have a look at this website:

<http://www.wg-gesucht.de/en/>

<http://www.studenten-wg.de/>

[http://www.studentenwerk-](http://www.studentenwerk-berlin.de/en/wohnen/studentische_wohnanlagen/hafenplatz/index.html)

[berlin.de/en/wohnen/studentische_wohnanlagen/hafenplatz/index.html](http://www.studentenwerk-berlin.de/en/wohnen/studentische_wohnanlagen/hafenplatz/index.html)

The first week in Berlin

Within the first couple of days in Berlin, I will recommend you to go to "Bürgeramt" which is the Danish "kommune". You need to register that you are living in Berlin, according to German law. The "Bürgeramt" needs a copy of your passport and some documentation of your German address. You will get that from the dorm, if you choose to live in one of those.

After being registered as a Berlin citizen, you are able to get a German bank account.

It's easier for you to pay your rent and pay in the German shops/super market, if you get an EC-card, which is the German type of "debit"-card.

I went to Deutsche Bank and got a bank account for free. You just say that you are staying for 6 months as an exchange student – and then close it afterwards.



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You probably also need a German phone no., I brought “aldi-talk”, which is a pre-pay number. It’s easy and cheap, compared with the other companies, which is pretty expensive in Germany. It’s easiest to buy in the super marked – but you can have a look at the website: <https://www.alditalk.de/>

Internet.... I can only recommend you to do it from the beginning. Ask your neighbor or buy it yourself.

I had O2, which I also found as the cheapest and easiest. They had a “young/student-offer” and took “only” 3 weeks processing to get it work.

Vodafone, Telecom ect. sometimes has 2 months of processing.

Be aware of the subscription period – often they have 2 years - but not the one I found by O2 ☺

As soon as you get those things done, you don’t have to think about it when you are starting at the university. At that time you have a lot of other things to think about ☺

No panic, just get it done ;-)

..... You shall not register yourself out of Denmark (otherwise you don’t get SU).

The university – Beuth

In the beginning of the semester you pay around 250 Euros, it’s a student fee and gives you free public transport within the zones A/B/C from the 1. October until the end of February.

You need to be aware that the German semesters don’t follow our semesters in Denmark, they start in October and ends in February. In my case the professors helped me getting my exams rescheduled at the end of January – that is no problem, you just need to tell them in time.

The classes often starts at 8.30-9.00-9.30, it depends on the professor. On your week schedule they all says 8.00 o’clock, but it’s not the case. The professors will tell you in the beginning of the semester.

The first week you need to find working groups in some of the subjects. It’s not the funniest part, but you just need to jump into it and ask those you think look nice and fits you ☺

I was the only exchange student on the bachelor of architecture, and needed to



find out everything by myself. In the beginning I really did not think it was funny, but after a few weeks I spoke with almost everyone – they all knew my name (Kathrine - the Danish girl from Copenhagen) But I definitely didn't know all of their names ☺

The German students are very kind, helpful and interested in you, and what you're doing in your home university.

My choice of subjects

I have had 6 different subjects (30 ECTS), all of them where in German. I will make a list with pros and cons:

B14 – Gebäudeentwurf 3: Is about how to design and plan a building. It's the typical architect subject as you would imagine it. We got a piece of land, and some conditions to be aware of. It's actually close to what we do at KEA, because this subject is together with another subject (*B15 – Entwerfen und Konstruieren*). I really liked this subject ☺

B15 – Entwerfen und konstruieren: Is how to construct a building – the typical “konstruktør” work, with detail drawings, sectional view, materials and German building law. I thought it was very nice to combine those two subjects, because it's close to each other and you work on the same building project – just from two different aspects.

B16 – Städtebau und Entwerfen 1: This subject is how to plan an area with more buildings. I thought it was different than it was – with more practical information about to plan a new town or a part of a town. I learned a lot, but I also thought it was a bit too “crazy”, who they wanted us to plan the town. We didn't have to do anything that needed to be able to build. But altogether it was fun not always to think about “how is this possible to build”.

B17 – Planen der Tragkonstruktionen 2: The typical engineering subject! It's actually just a math subject, where you need to calculate how much the construction will be able to bear. If you don't like math – don't choose it! The professor Herr Widjaja is Chinese, so if you don't good understand German, he would not be easy for you to understand. Widjaja is a very kind and helpful person – and he made a special oral exam for me and another exchange student, which helped me to get throw his subject ;)

B18 – Bauaufnahme und Baugeschichte: This subject is split in two different subjects. *Bauaufnahme* is about how to draw an existing build in archicad/revit. In this case we went to a church and got different parts, that we needed to draw. I got an easy one – because I was working alone. You either work in groups of two or alone. It was easy for me to do, because I knew how to paint in revit.

Baugeschichte is the typically history subject. It's interesting if you like history, and would like to know something about the German and international building history. The exam is a multiple-choice test, which you will be able to answer if you join the classes.

FRED 1: This is a 1. Semester subject, which I choose because I changed a subject after arriving at Beuth. Is a drawing subject. You don't need to be a good drawer, but you need to

like to draw. I actually thought it would be easier than it was 😊 you need to make 100 small drawings in a little book with A5 size of papers – furthermore you need to make 12 pieces of A2 drawings the classes during the semester. It's a cool subject to learn how to draw – but you need to like to draw – and I didn't like it that much as needed. But I got throw 😊

International buddy

Beuth University asks you, if you would like to have a German “buddy” to help you with all the practical things. I was very lucky with my buddy, it was a guy named Ole, who became a good friend. Ole are going to KEA on his 5th semester (summer 2017). He helped me pick up my key to my apartment, get a phone no, nice places to eat, to go out etc.

Ole and I also practiced Danish – and he became pretty good at it 😊 I'm looking forward to help Ole in Denmark for the next year.



I can only recommend you to get a buddy – to make it easier to socialize and figure out the German way of living and behaving.

Need to see!

Berlin is a wonderful city – big and crazy 😊

I have had some nice experiences around the city that I would like to share with you.

Go to “**markthalle 9**”, which is the German papirøen/Torvehallerne. It's a lovely place to have lunch on a Saturday. At Thursdays they have “streetfood Thursday” which is very nice, but also a bit crowded. <https://markthalleneun.de/>





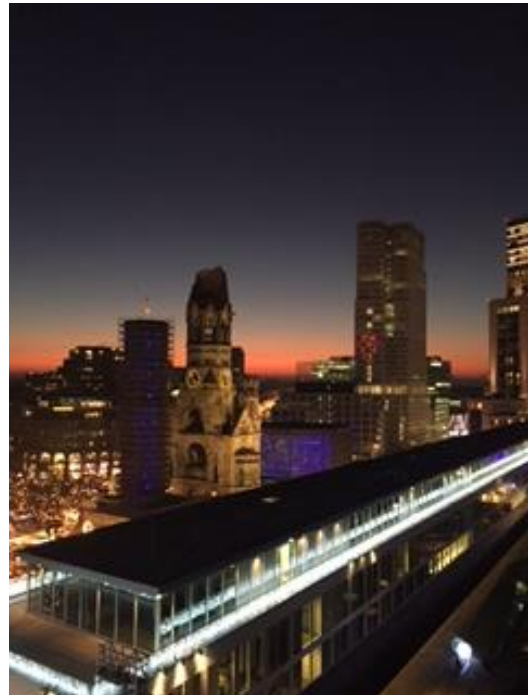
“**Reichstag**” is a very nice place to see all over Berlin. It’s the top of the parliament, with an audio guide and a beautiful view. You need to book at least 3 weeks in advance. [website to Reichstag!](#)

Bikini Berlin is a nice shopping center close to Kurfürstendamm. At the end of the center there are a hotel with a beautiful view from the sky bar called **Monkey-bar**. It’s a “must-see” to enjoy a cocktail or a beer on a sunny day.

<https://www.bikiniberlin.de/de/home/>

[http://www.25hours-](http://www.25hours-hotels.com/de/bikini/restaurant/monkey-bar.html)

[hotels.com/de/bikini/restaurant/monkey-bar.html](http://www.25hours-hotels.com/de/bikini/restaurant/monkey-bar.html)



“**Weihnachtsmarkt**” Are the German kind of Christmas marked. They are amazing and they are all around Berlin. It gives you the most wonderful Christmas feeling – you can’t avoid to see some of them during end of November and whole December.

Berlin has so many things to see – this is a VERY small part what I experienced in my Exchange Semester in Berlin.

If you have any questions about your stay in Berlin – or insider knowledge (good and bad), please just contact me on my e-mail, and I will do my best to answer you 😊

Enjoy you stay – You will not regret it!

- Kathrine



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