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Exchange report

At CESINE Centro Universitario
Santander, Spain

By Ilie Diana Izabela

Top-up in Design & Business

Specialization - Communication Media & Design

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Hi :)

My name is Ilie Diana Izabela and I am currently studying a Top-up in Design and Business at KEA – Copenhagen School of Design and Technology.

I decided to do my exchange semester in Spain and more specifically in Santander, as it was the best option for what I was looking for. I've always been drawn by the Spanish vibe and with this exchange, I had the opportunity to live it.

For my exchange semester, I decided to go to CESINE Centro Universitario in Santander, Spain. It is a private university in Spain, very well equipped and organized. The system, the teachers, and the classrooms were very well maintained and prepared.

My choice was based mostly on the fact that they offered courses in interior design and one of my main goals was to try that out, so I decided that CESINE would be the best option for it. Trying surf was just a bonus :)

In the following pages, you can find out more about the experience there, info about courses, the city, budget, accommodation, and other useful tips.

Enjoy!

-Diana





Courses

These were the courses that I got enrolled at:

1. Interior Design Projects II
2. Marketing Plan
3. Social Media Management
4. Editorial Design and Layout
5. Business English

These weren't actually my first choices, but in the intro period I was able to change my course preferences, and then these were the final ones.

I also enrolled in the Spanish course, but because I was moved from the beginner's class to the intermediate one because of my schedule, I dropped out as I couldn't keep up with the level of that class. It is a great opportunity to learn Spanish, so if you have the time and the schedule availability, I would totally recommend you to take that class as well. To be honest, I regret now that I dropped out in the end...





 <p>2º PUBLICIDAD 2021-2022 AM21210 Desarrollo de Planes de Marketing / ...</p> <p>75% complete</p>	 <p>2º Diseño Gráfico 2021-2022 GR21207 Diseño Editorial y Maquetación ...</p> <p>45% complete</p>
 <p>INTERNACIONAL 2021-2022 IN21S204 Business English S2 ...</p> <p>75% complete</p>	 <p>INTERNACIONAL 2021-2022 IN21S215 Social Media Management G2-S2 ...</p> <p>84% complete</p>

Photo with a few courses from the campus (Virtual Campus Cesine)- their main platform

Interior Design Projects II

During this course, I was able to discover the world of Interior Design. Along the course, we had different projects about how to design an exhibition, how to redesign a restaurant, how to use a space more efficiently, and other related projects.

Sometimes we went to visit the project location, companies, or exhibitions related to the course in order to understand better the industry.

The class was very small, it was just me, another girl and the teacher in the beginning, but after a week or two, other 3 girls joined the class.

Useful programs and softwares for this course: **Autocad, SketchUp, HomebyMe**



Photos with my solution for the Final project (TFC Project)

Editorial Design & Layout

During this course, I learned how to design a book & magazine. From all the necessary sections to InDesign tips, this course taught me so many useful things. It was in Spanish, so I couldn't understand everything all the time, but I managed. My classmates who knew some English helped me along the course.

The teacher was somehow severe, but in a good way, I took that as a challenge.



Photo of the magazine created for the final (group) project by all the class.

Marketing Plan

Marketing Plan was one of my favorite courses at CESINE. The classes were very interactive and the teacher was giving us real cases to work with during the class, so we would actually be able to implement what we were learning during the semester.

The teacher was very helpful and understandable. Anytime we had a request or a question he helped us.



Social Media Management

My second favorite course at CESINE was Social Media Management. This was part of the English school and was tough in full English.

During this course, I was able to work on real cases regarding social media and also learn new things.

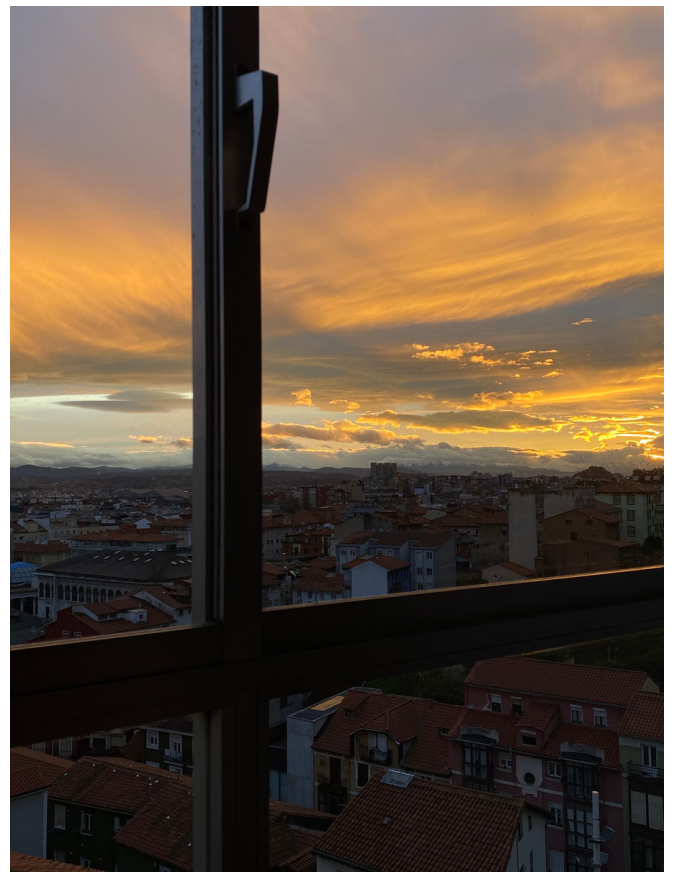
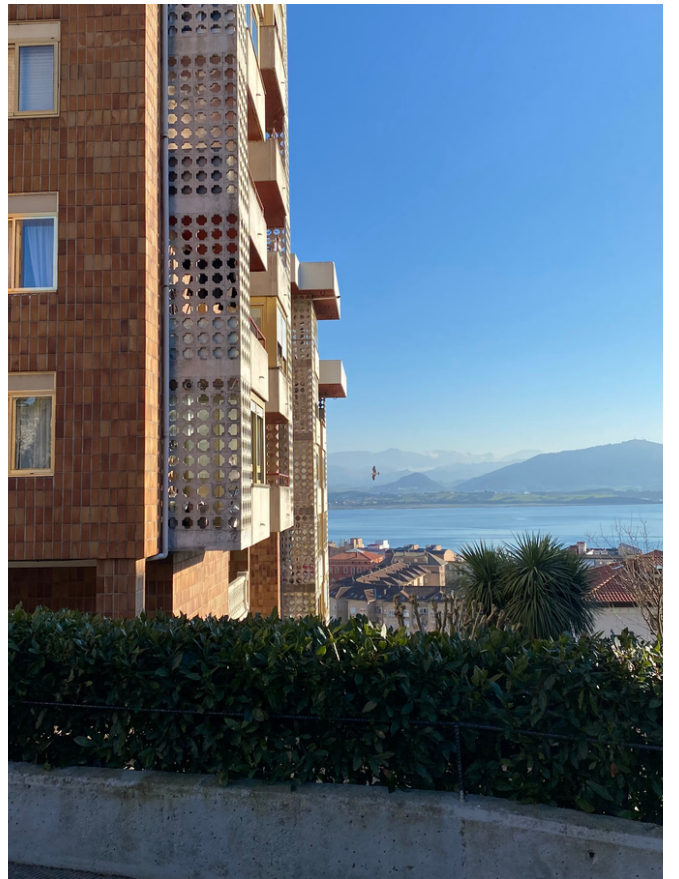
My favorite part was the presentation style and how the teacher explained everything in a very clear way.



Business English

During this course, we did presentations on different topics. The focus wasn't on the English, but on the presentation skills and teamwork. We got grades based on how well we were able to present in front of the class. This was my least favorite class, as I found it quite useless.





Academic info

Lea, the Erasmus coordinator from CESINE was very helpful and every time I had any question or request she was there to support and guide me.

I consider that the **Editorial Design and Layout** class was the most rewarding class, as we teacher was well prepared and the projects were challenging, but very well formulated and structured. It was more difficult than the other courses because it was in Spanish and the teacher had difficulties speaking in English, but with the help of the other students, I was able to work it out eventually.

The least relevant course that I took was **Business English**, as the teacher was not really teaching us anything related to the business English phrases or expressions. It was all about presentations and the level of the class was quite low. If you have a higher level than A2, this class might be irrelevant to you. The only thing that I found helpful was the presentation skills development, but other than that it didn't exceed my expectations. Also, the teacher did give relevant grades and feedback, and that affected the final grade in the end.

When it comes to the course choice, I would advise you to choose mainly based on your preferences, if you really like a subject take it, because otherwise, you will end up spending your time and energy on something that you actually don't enjoy or find useful and will be demotivated.

CESINE got 2 sections when it comes to their courses selections:

- **The Business School**
- **The Design School**

All the Business courses are in English mainly and the Design ones are in Spanish (with English support sometimes), so be aware of that.

I had 2 design courses which were in Spanish, and I managed, but it was more challenging and consuming overall.

You will have approximately one week to change your courses and decide on your final ones, so don't stress too much when you choose them in the first place.

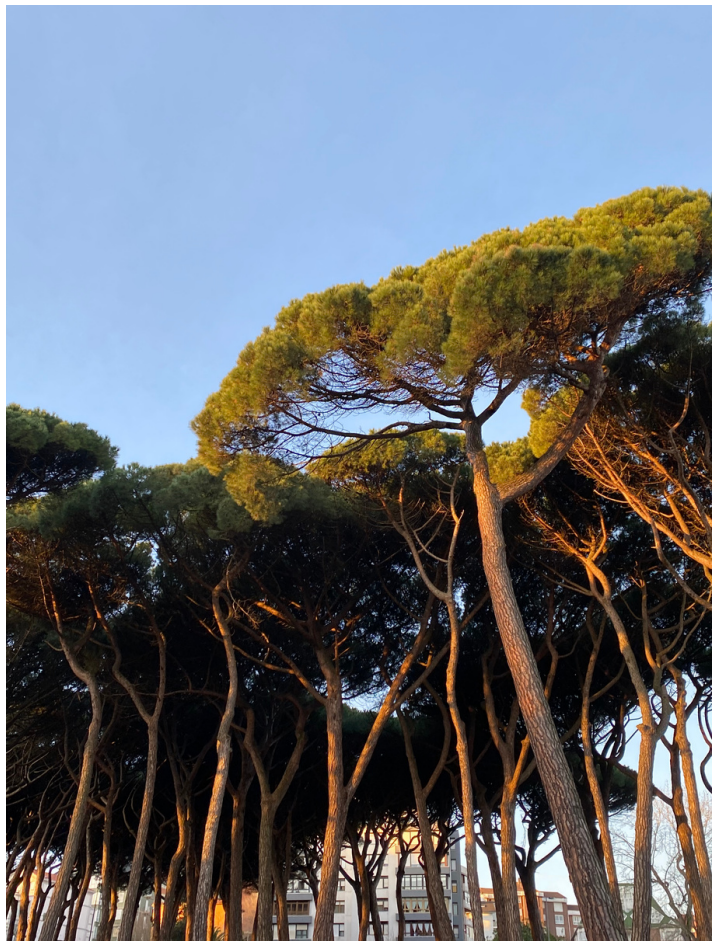
Cultural/Personal Experience

During my stay in Santander, I encountered a few challenges with the language, as most of the people there didn't speak English, so it was hard to communicate.

The receiver school helped us with that by offering us a free extracurricular Spanish course.

The best part was that I was able to connect with so many international students and make so many friends. There were a few Spanish people with whom I was speaking English and I was able to interact with them as well and discover the culture and the town better.

Santander is well known for surfing, so I enjoyed that as well in there.



Practical Experience

The application process was quite easy, I had the support of the KEA coordinator all along the way, so whenever I encountered any difficulties she guided me. CESINE helped me as well along the process, but not as much as the KEA coordinator.

The receiving school helped us with a complete guide, which was very helpful for formalities.

For instance, in the guide, I had advice about accommodation and where I can find it.

I searched for a room on **Emancipia**, a company that works with apartment owners and rents places in Santander. I considered that this was the safest, and most convenient option, so I chose them when I chose my housing.

I rented an apartment 5 min away from school, which was perfect. It was 200 euros/ month + 60 utilities.

My main expenses were for groceries, parties, and fun, but also trips around Europe. Because of the bad financial management, I actually spent a lot more than what I expected... so my advice would be before you spend your Erasmus money try to manage and plan then somehow. :)

Recommendations

- Try surfing
- All the courses required time and quite a lot of effort. We had an assignment or two for each one every week. It was quite a lot and especially for the design courses the workflow be aware that it might be a bit overwhelming, so be prepared for that and organize everything well, so you don't miss any assignment or submission.
- Focus on budgeting and your finances. The Erasmus money will mostly cover the rent only, so make sure you have some savings or other resources in place.
- Try to hang out more with the Spanish people, they are very nice and friendly. Be patient with the people who don't speak English that well, they are doing an effort to talk to you actually, appreciate it. :)
- There will be many French people in Santander, so expect to hear and maybe even learn some French.
- Try to learn Spanish while you are there, it's not that complicated and it will be easier to learn it while you are there. You can practice it with the local people. Learn some basic expressions in order to manage well at the store, in the restaurants, etc.
- I would recommend you to avoid renting directly from the owner, as they might be problematic in some cases.
- Get an apartment next to your school, as you might have the courses at different parts of the day and you don't want to spend all day traveling back and forth.
- Join ESN and get to know more people and the surrounding places by joining their events and trips. (they also have many discounts - including with Ryanair)
- Enjoy!

Conclusion

All in all, I would totally recommend you to try an exchange experience. I would suggest you choose a bigger city if you don't have any specific reason why you would go to Santander.

Overall, my experience was good, but the city was a bit too small for the full six months.

You got this! Enjoy :)



Contact

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