

Hi! My name is Marie, and this is my exchange testimony for my exchange experience.

## **Questionnaire Study Abroad/Exchange**

1. Where and when did you study abroad?

I did my exchange program in Santander, Spain. From September 2023 until January 2024.

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

I study Entrepreneurship and Design at KEA.

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

I ended up taking 5 subjects with a credit of 32,5 points. I did so because I wanted to take some of the design subjects that my host school offered.

I went to Cesine Business and Design school, so they had a variety of different subjects in Design and Business. Where the design part also included subjects in fashion and interior design, it was only interesting for me to look at the graphic design subjects.

So, I ended up with 3 subjects in the business school and 2 subjects in graphic design.

My 5 subjects are as following:

**Business Plan:** The subject started with us individually presenting a business idea and then as a class deciding on the 5 best ideas. 5 groups were formed, and we had the whole semester to work on the idea in the form of written assignments. The classes were a lot of listening to the professor and not too much time working in groups.

**Digital Marketing:** A lot of talk about the current use of digital marketing with mainly examples of Spanish brands, but also general use and reasons. Mainly the professor giving lectures on the subject.

**Consumer Culture:** A subject explaining the history, psychologically and cultural reasons for consuming. The professor went through the whole timeline of consumerism – from the Egyptian time until now. With interesting assignments along the way.

**Editorial design and layout (Diseño editorial y maquetación.):** general graphic design with a big focus on magazine. It is a subject that stretches over more than one semester, so the local students are supposed to hand in a finished magazine in the summertime, so I was only a part of the beginning stages and brainstorming. But we did some other very fun graphic assignments as well.

Typography (Tipografía): Learning about the history of typography, different fonts and the simple, but complex anatomy of letters. Did some different assignments where typography was the main focus/element.



One of our projects for editorial design.

## Academic Experience

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

In general, the school was very sweet and gave the needed information. They are very slow at delivering information, but it is just in the Spanish culture and never ended up being an issue. It was a little overwhelming choosing subject because there was so many to choose from and the format where they presented it was a little confusing.

Luckily they were very easy to talk to once we got there and we had the first week to try out the subjects and see if we needed to change. A lot of us had problems with overlapping subjects in our schedule so we had to fix that by changing subjects.

I heard that in this spring semester they aren't as large with changing subjects, so don't know how it will be in the next fall semester.

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

Although they were in Spanish, and I didn't understand most of the classes. I found the graphic design subjects extremely inspiring. The teachers very so well-informed and passionate about their field and really wanted us to learn. I always left the classes very energized and inspired although it of course also was a little exhausting to try and follow along in Spanish.

In both classes they did some very cool assignments where I learned a lot but also were able to use what I already knew from back home.

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

Didn't really feel like I learned anything from the Digital Marketing class or the Business plan. Both classes weren't very well structured or prepared. It did feel like both teachers were very informed in their field, but I am left with a feeling of not knowing what I learned or what I was supposed to learn.

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

If you study entrepreneurship and design and enjoyed the classes in graphic design you already had with KEA, then I would advise you to look into the graphic design classes.

Understand that every class is in Spanish so maybe only do it if you have a little bit of training in the language. The school is also supposed to offer all materials in English and partner you with a tutor. I didn't get any of that, so be aware that you might need to work a little extra. All that aside those classes was a said the most rewarding.

I will not recommend Business Plan. The subject seems very interesting, but we sadly had a horrible teacher that had some "interesting" political views and choose to talk a lot about these subjects instead of teaching the class. He was often late and spoke Spanish for the majority of the class even though the subject is supposed to be held in English. The classes weren't very structured or prepared. He did also only substitute for the actual teacher and in my opinion was not suited for the job. Maybe the subject is better if it is the actual teacher running it.

## **Practical Experience**

1. How was the application process?
  - a. What did KEA help you with?
  - b. What help did you receive from your school abroad?

KEA was a great help to me in the summer, when I started doubting my decision and was unsure if I should follow through with my exchange. Other than that, they were great at answering any questions I had and help me get in contact with my host school.

The exchange coordinator at the receiving school in Santander was good at making online meeting a few times over the summer to answer questions and make an introduction to the semester. I only ended up attending one of them in September, but great just meeting him and getting some questions answered.

He also helped with searching for accommodation. He couldn't guarantee anything but gave some tips and shared a few Spanish pages where you could find housing.

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

Nothing at all. It was very easy getting everything done at settling in.

3. Where did you live?
  - a. Was it difficult to find accommodation?
  - b. Was it expensive?

I lived in the center of Santander in a 3-room apartment.

I lived there with a girl from my education at KEA and was lucky that she did all the flat hunting. Of what she has told it wasn't that difficult and we ended up finding a very nice apartment rented out by a couple while they were gone from the city.

We paid 390€ each every month with expenses paid separately. In general, a little less expensive than Copenhagen.



4. What kind of expenses did you have in general?
  - a. Did you spend more or less money than you budgeted with?

I ended up spending a lot more than I originally intended.

Expensive was in general: housing, groceries and then all the extra fun: Beers, traveling, shopping and dining.

I did not make a budget before, but heavily suggest doing so.

5. What kind of income did you have during your exchange?
  - a. Did you receive SU and/or Erasmus
  - b. Did you apply for any grants and did you receive any?

I only had SU and Erasmus. Did not apply to any grants.

## Cultural/Personal Experience

1. What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?

a. How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

There was a language barrier but took it as a fun challenge and manage to brush up my Spanish a little bit.

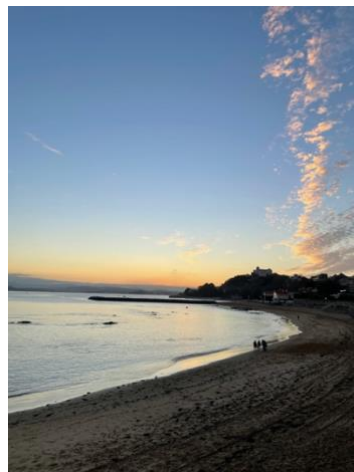
Otherwise, you just needed to get used to a different culture – opening hours, things being delayed. But nothing extreme that you just get used to.

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

Being so close to the water (beach/harbor) all the time. We were lucky enough to have a long warm summer and was still going to the beach in late October.

Meeting so many different cultures and experiencing a new life with them.

Everything was just working in a slower pace. Had a lot of free time to do whatever I wanted.



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

Everything is going to work out.

Take time out to enjoy all the beautiful nature around Santander!

