

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & DESIGN

EXCHANGE REPORT – PARIS 2020

KEA – COPENHAGEN SCHOOL OF TECHNOLOGY & DESIGN

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EFAP – École des métiers de la communication



BASIC INFORMATION

COUNTRY: France

CITY: Paris

School: EFAP - École des métiers de la communication

PERIOD: 10/09/2020 - 18/12/2020

KEA PROGRAMME: Entrepreneurship & Design

EXCHANGE CLASSES: 6 courses

1. INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION:

A course about marketing theories and how to communicate in modern times. We studied big companies and the course ended in a marketing competition where each group had to make a business model for an assigned company.

2. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION & MARKETING:

This course was all about digital tendencies and social media platforms as well as their influence on the world. Part of the course was about improving personal branding including tips on LinkedIn. We made a promo video for the school, EFAP and a video CV to boost our LinkedIn.

3. CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION:

A course focusing on communication between cultures. We talked about everything concerning cultural differences between countries and their cultures, as well as the psychological aspect behind it. We had to do a commercial project where we compared TV ads from different countries but for the same company.

4. CULTURE FRANÇAISE (FRENCH CULTURE):

This course focused on the culture of France and included local tours in Paris, cheese tasting class, wine knowledge and lots of other interesting activities. The class combined fun activities with very relevant information. The tests made you remember the stuff and you could use the knowledge in your private time in Paris.

5. INTRODUCTION LANGUE FRANÇAISE (INTRODUCTION - FRENCH LANGUAGE):

A course meant to teach you all the basics of the French language and more. We learned how to introduce ourselves, talk in shops like the bakery and at the grocery store. We learned to talk about our neighborhood and in the end how to have a real conversation. The class is explained in English but taught in French.

6. FASHION COMMUNICATION:

A course all about fashion, design, and commercials in print and online. Throughout the course we learned about how fashion brands make capsule collections and the marketing work behind it, leading up to a final presentation where individual groups had to create their own capsule collection with a marketing plan.

Academic Experience

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

It was fairly easy in the beginning where they sent me an updated coursebook where I could see and choose my classes via email. However, the electives were not in the coursebook and we got them two days before we had to make the final decision about which classes we would like to attend.

Before the school started, we had two very long, but informative introduction days before the classes began. Here the three international coordinators would help us with practical information, like how to set up a bank account as well as apply for the French housing support called CAF. I chose not to sign up for any of the two because I found it problematic and too time consuming. After returning back to Denmark I can say that I had no problems using my danish bank account the whole time, and I know that some of my classmates haven't received their CAF money yet.

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

I found the classes and teachers to be very professional and friendly in general. I especially liked the professor Mr. Guillaume who taught the classes of Integrated Marketing Communication and Digital Transformation. He was a big part of making my exchange semester unforgettable.

Guillaume was always prepared for his classes and only taught what was important for the class. The projects and homework were hard/challenging, but really made you learn the topics. Guillaume also made a group for his classes where we uploaded homework etc. but he also used his spare time to update us on the COVID-19 situation with lockdown and curfews, he warned us about terror attacks and just helped us out if we had any questions.

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

Before going to Paris, I thought my most interesting class would be fashion communication, which happened to be the exact opposite. The teacher was very monotone and taught in a very non-pedagogic way. She didn't really know how to teach and therefore the whole class ended up not liking her classes. I don't really know the reason, but we only had these classes every three weeks, so it was very easy to forget everything we had been talking about in the previous classes.

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

I would recommend all of the classes except the fashion communication class but especially digital transformation and Integrated Marketing Communication due to the high level of engagement and a great professor.



Cultural/Personal Experience

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

One of the main cultural difficulties I experienced was definitely the level of national security of Paris compared to Denmark. I learned that I feel very safe in Denmark which I did not always do in Paris. This is especially due to the fact that I unfortunately had a couple of unpleasant experiences - a robbery in the metro and an assaulted robbery. I was very unlucky to I experience these things and it is not something that happens to everyone; therefore you should mind the surroundings.

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

The whole city of Paris was mesmerizing especially during the summer. I really enjoyed my stay and I think the best cultural experiences was the **food**, the **architecture** and the **friends** I made along the way. The city has a lot of culture and diversity which is very interesting.

The French gastronomy is amazing, and I ate so much great food while being on my exchange. The taste of the French food combined with the Parisian vibe is fantastic, especially during the summer.

Another thing I realized in Paris is that everywhere you look, there is something pretty to look at. A monument, a beautiful building, an attraction or a cozy café are always in eyesight - so the architecture really amazed me.

In terms of friendships, I found it really easy to make new friends and I really made some special relationships in Paris. Of course, I became friends with the people from my class, some closer than others. I also joined a WhatsApp group for exchange students and went to run with them once. It was very nice, with about 15 people from different countries. Lastly, I also have a great relationship with my three roommates from Paris and I wish to visit them in the future. Although I made a lot of friends and got to meet up with them, I feel like I would have met a lot more friends if it wasn't for COVID, but that's just life.

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

One advice from me, if you're planning to study at EFAP, is to always be patient. The school can seem to miss structure compared to KEA and this can sometimes be challenging/annoying. There are some issues that you have to figure out yourself and the school is a little bit outdated - for example they keep their weekly timetable in a PDF version that they send to your email every week and a lot of stuff is very bureaucratic. I really learned that KEA is such a great school because of this.

Practical Experience

1. How was the application process?

I think the application process through mobility-online was very easy. Sure, there is a lot of paperwork, but my best advice is to just do it as soon as you can and fetch the documents quickly.

Another advice would be to take a quality copy of: Passport & ID-card and keep an electronic copy somewhere safe – Maybe you're going to need it.

a. What did KEA help you with?

Hanne Vang was a great help and really does an amazing job. Before applying for Paris, I was meant to go to Toronto, Canada, but the exchange ended up being cancelled due to COVID-19. Hanne quickly helped me to see which other destinations were still available, despite being very late in the application process and helped me to apply for Paris, and for that I am really grateful.

b. What help did you receive from your school abroad?

When things got worse with the COVID-19 restrictions in the summer, there were of course a lot of doubt to whether it was possible or not to go on the exchange. I messaged the international coordinator at the receiving school, but they had already gone on summer break, leaving no response for a whole month. They were back in office about a week before the classes were to begin and it was therefore not possible to get a response on questions during this period, which was a bit chaotic and stressing.

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

Not really. I think the switch from Denmark to Paris was really easy. I just flew down and started my adventure immediately. I didn't have to have a new bank account, had internet on my phone and didn't have to get a new sim card. I didn't bring any cash because a lot of places use Mastercard.

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

EFAP was quite helpful in the process of finding accommodation, by offering a special deal to live at ODALYS. I found it to be very expensive, compared to the quality. I didn't want to pay 900€ a month to live in a room that looked like a hotel room for three months.

I asked for other ways to find accommodation and Lisa, the international coordinator sent some links, and a discount code to uniplaces.com, which is a great website, you just have to be quick and make a decision before everything is booked.

Where did you live?

In the beginning I was living at my good friends' mother-in-law's house. She agreed to host me for one month. It was a very nice building and a nice neighborhood in Montmartre, close to Sacre-Coeur and a perfect start to my exchange. Afterwards I found a flat in a Facebook group that I joined. A big room in an apartment on the 8th floor with a view over the city and the Eiffel tower – amazing.

a. Was it difficult to find accommodation?

It is extremely difficult to find accommodation in Paris, even during the pandemic with less tourists. I tried some websites before traveling to Paris, but was afraid to get scammed, so my best advice would be to either live with someone you know or rent an Airbnb for the first month. It is a lot easier when you are already in the city. I will recommend finding Facebook groups etc. where people rent out rooms though.

b. Was it expensive?

The price was very good for me. As I mentioned, I didn't pay any rent the first month and only paid 700€ a month in the flat I moved into afterwards. I know a lot of people pay a lot more and the average rent for a room is up to 900€ a month.

3. What kind of expenses did you have in general?

A big expense in Paris is definitely the rent. The whole process of finding accommodation, in the first place, is as mentioned, extremely difficult, and the prices aren't any relief either. I was really patient and ended up finding something fairly cheap at 700€ a month

I definitely ended up using more money on restaurants, foods and drinks that I had originally planned. I don't see this as a bad thing as I learned that I should take the opportunity to enjoy my time in Paris, because it will never come back.



The international class and teachers at a floating art museum that is owned by the school.



View from my 1st accommodation in Montmartre



View from my 2nd accommodation in the 10th arrondissement, with view of the Eiffel tower and sports court

Overall Experience – Conclusion

Despite the pandemic and the whole situation of the world, my exchange in Paris was without a doubt one of the best decisions in my life. I learned so much both academically and about myself and life. I was pushed to be on my own and had to figure out everything by myself.

The first two months was like a cliché Paris fairytale, amazing weather, people on every café and a special vibe. I had the chance to see the city, had drinks with my classmates and even went hiking outside of Paris.

The next and last months were gloomier. We had to stay indoors and couldn't hang out with friends or go to school. Fortunately, I had some very nice roommates that I had great experiences with. The French lockdown was very tough, compared to the Danish, but as mentioned, it also taught me things.

My very last, but biggest advice would be to go on an exchange, it's an experience you won't get anywhere else.



A picture from a hiking trip to Fontainebleau outside of Paris with my roommate.



A picture from the 2nd introduction day. The school took us on a sightseeing boat tour.