

Questionnaire Study Abroad/Exchange - Julia Just Holch

1. Where and when did you study abroad?

I studied at George Brown College on their Jewellery Arts program from 9th of January to 21st of April 2023.

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

Jewellery, Technology and Business.

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

In the first months we had 3 courses. "Projects" which was a design class where we got different design tasks and had to make them as models and then in silver. "Gemsetting" was obviously gemsetting and we were taught to set stones in different kinds of settings. "Industry skills" was a technical course, where we got a "recipe" on some tasks fx a hollow box ring or a solitaire ring and we had to do it as perfect as possible.

Academic Experience

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

The setup before attending was a bit confusing, there were many documents, things to pay or sign in to, but it was manageable. The courses was already chosen for us and after signing most things, it was pretty straight forward. They were very helpful at the school to secure that we were settled and got a good start up.

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

I loved all of our classes but I will say that "Industry skills" was especially helpful, as I learned many new technical skills to use in the future.

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

“Projects” because it was very design process oriented. This is something we work a lot with at KEA, so it didn't feel as if I specifically learned something new.

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

All classes are great, which is lucky since you can't choose yourself.

Practical Experience

1. *How was the application process?*

It was a bit complicated in the beginning, you really have to dive into the startup documents that George Brown sends you and the new platforms they use, otherwise it can get a little confusing. Ask your supervisor from KEA or the contact person from the institution, they are very helpful!

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

Not really. The school gave us equipment and workbenches so everything worked out fine, I basically just showed up.

3. *Where did you live?*

I lived with one of my classmates from KEA in a 1 bedroom Airbnb, 10 minutes walking distance from the school. I will really suggest finding somewhere to live close to the school, max. 30 minutes in transportation. The school days can be very long and if you want to experience things outside of school, this is very helpful. It's more expensive so you need to apply for funds to be able to pay it off. And I mean really expensive. My roommate and I shared a bed in a tiny studio Airbnb but we still payed around 25.000 dkk each for the 4 months we lived there. It can also be very difficult to find something in Toronto, so look in good time.

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

Plane ticket was around 5.000 dkk. Rent was around 25.000 dkk for all 4 months. Food is approximately the same price as in Copenhagen, takeout is a bit cheaper. School is also an expense you have to be prepared for at the end of the semester. I paid around 7000 dkk at the end of the semester for tools and materials (if you want the things you made, I suggest you take most of them with you!). I was following my budget pretty well, but I used maybe a little more than expected. Then again I didn't want to limit myself on experiences. I also suggest keeping some savings to travel around beautiful Canada!

5. What kind of income did you have during your exchange?

I had a small saving already. I survived on that, SU, Erasmus+ and funds. I received 3 grants and Erasmus+. I suggest getting "Legatbogen" and apply for as many as you can.

Cultural/Personal Experience

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

Toronto is a very multicultural city and people are very friendly, so I will almost say I didn't experience any.

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

Hanging around with the friends I got in school was amazing. I got some amazing people into my life and just experiencing the city through their lives was fantastic! The weather is also a big difference. If you would mind the cold and a lot of snow, don't go :) I thought it was exciting to experience their winter storms.

After finishing school I traveled to Vancouver and took a road trip up through the rockies. This was maybe the biggest cultural experience, as nature is so big and wild! In the small cities there's authentic indigenous art and land and it's amazing to experience.

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

Be prepared to spend some money, it is not a cheap exchange to go on.
The school is really good if you want to advance your technical skills. The general skill and the tasks are at a higher level than at KEA. Try to have money to stay a little after school ends. That's when summer starts and that's all they will talk about ;)
But go if you want to challenge your skills! I already wish I could do it all over again.