

Exchange semester- LISBOA, PORTUGAL



Audrey Fryman

Universidade Europeia-
IADE

Beatriz Nunes

Fall semester 2019-2020

Dear future **exchange student**,

If you have the chance to go on an exchange, **DO IT!** The process is long, and complicated (depending on where you go), you may face cultural differences, as well as difficulties with the accommodation, school and/or with the people you meet. Perhaps you will face difficulties with your receiving university, like I did. Maybe you won't have the stereotypical experiences, waking up to a sunny sky and party atmosphere every day. Or maybe it is exactly the way to picture it. An important thing to remind yourself, is that you make it your own; take it as a learning experience and do what you want with it!

There are many positives and negatives to doing an exchange, which will be outlined in this report. A lot of variables which are difficult and important to take into consideration. Overall the experience is well worth it, a time in your life you will be able to happily look back on. Traveling and meeting like-minded students from all over Europe or the world is such a fulfilling experience. You will not only get the chance to develop your artistic perspectives, but you will get inspired and gather new ideas. It will leave you with friends and contacts all over, you can visit at any moment. These friends you could potentially have for the rest of your life!

Additionally, you can experience a process different from your home country. Analysing the cultural differences in the school environment as well as the everyday is so interesting and powerful! Just having that perspective will come in handy and it will not only help you now, but in the future when applying for jobs. But it will give you the chance to have a new perspective that will allow you to relate and work with people from all over.

I am not going to lie, there are parts of going on exchange that people don't talk about that are not so fun. Such as the confusion when you first arrive in a foreign country with a foreign language, the loneliness of not having that many close friends or just missing your friends back home. But all things considered, it's so worth it! An experience you won't forget or regret!

All the best, Audrey ;)

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
Experiences at Host University	4
Courses	4
Multimedia Design:	4
Communication planning:	5
Audiovisual productions and communication:	5
Online Marketing:	6
Portuguese course:	7
Social and Cultural Experiences	8
My social and cultural experience	8
Life in Lisbon	8
Places to go	8
Alfama	9
LX Factory	9
Sintra	10
Lisboa- Cascais	10
Trip to Porto	11
Almada/ Setubal/ Caparica	11
Nazare	12
Networking/ making friends	12
Practical Information	13
Accommodation	13
Expenses	14
Conclusion	14

Introduction

This report will outline the elements of my experience during an exchange semester in 2019/ 2020. It features information on the academic life, the social and cultural aspects as well as personal experiences. I have been studying multimedia design at Copenhagen School of Design and Technology (KEA) since 2018. KEA offers a lot of interesting courses, with a lot of practical information, but not exactly everything I was looking for. I wanted to study in a country with more sun and gather new experiences.

I grew up in an international bilingual family, always moving between the US and Denmark. In other words, I am literally the product of two people from opposite sides of the world, who went traveling and fell in love. As a result, I have always had an inclination to go traveling and experience the world for myself. Before starting my studies, I took many longer travels around Europe, to the US, and Australia. With these experiences and wanderlust fresh in my mind, I was desperate to follow this feeling and go out in the world again. Additionally, I am always looking for a chance to get out of my comfort-zone and create new experiences and memories.

My upbringing and natural love of traveling was a main contributing factor to going on exchange in the fall semester of 2019-2020. I wanted to combine it with my curiosity of how different countries approach design and how they learn. For example, the culture of the country usually influences the way schools are structured, and how students learn. Furthermore, there are so many approaches to creativity and design, every institution and person has a different approach. Going on exchange is a good way to experience these differences, as you learn from the locals as well as from the other exchange students from all over.

The last step was choosing an institution. This was tricky, since I had a very tight student budget, which eliminated my first choices of Australia or South Korea. However, this proved to be in my advantage when I learned about the potential of ERASMUS grants and the cheaper options in southern Europe. From all the stories I had heard from my Portuguese friend, I had always wanted to explore the country. Going on an ERASMUS there was the perfect opportunity!

Before arriving there, I tried very hard to minimise my expectations. I did so in an effort to be thoroughly surprised with the outcome. However, based on the lack of communication beforehand, I did expect the school might be a bit more disorganized than what I experienced in Denmark. I arrived in a country in southern Europe expecting to be a little confusing and disorganized. Overall I was very excited to dip into the Portuguese lifestyle. Such as eating whole fish, having nice beers out in the open, and trying to learn the language in order to communicate with the people.

Experiences at Host University

The lifestyle in Portugal is very relaxed, calm, where everything comes at its own pace. It is important to remember this attitude is reflected in all aspects of life in Portugal, including the professional and academic. Therefore, any official process is extremely slow, and unforgiving. Which is a funny contrast to the organised culture I grew up with in Denmark. For example, when I arrived I wasn't even in the system yet, and I wouldn't receive my schedule until a month after school started. The international office tried very hard, but there were no descriptions of the courses. The process of applying or changing classes was very long, as everything was manual and there was no central online system for it. That made it a bit difficult to settle into the routine of studying in Portugal. But this is a perfect opportunity to do some research and create new experiences beforehand.

Although my focus is design, half of my classes were centered around marketing and advertising. It was important for me to expand my knowledge and try something I didn't have much experience in. This knowledge will be applied in many aspects of my work in the future. For example, it will come in handy since I am planning on starting an internship at a small advertising agency (focusing on design, of course) here in January. Featured below is a full description of the courses I took at IADE:

Courses

Multimedia Design:

This course was a little different from multimedia design in Copenhagen. We focused on learning new techniques with Premiere Pro and After Effects. We focused on creating animations and creating art through motion with film. It was challenging in the beginning because I have no experience with After Effects, but in the end became the most rewarding. After realising it was a complicated marriage between Illustrator and Premiere Pro, it slowly became a bit easier to navigate. Some will say that the course is a little pointless unless you want to become an animator. However, with the trends shifting over to all forms of video, I believe it was incredibly useful and interesting.

The course was taught in tutorial mode, where the teacher would guide us step by step through the various processes and techniques used in After Effects. This was incredibly useful to me, since it allows you to follow along with the teacher and enables you to properly learn it. This is different to the Danish method of teaching at KEA, where

we were required to learn the programs on our own. This is not always the best, since you are not able to ask as many questions. Personally I did not manage to learn everything on my own, since it was difficult working in the Adobe projects and coding with HTML. Furthermore, I personally prefer this setup, as opposed to the Danish method at KEA. Finally, the teacher was incredibly helpful, ensuring each student had the tools for the future and the projects to add to their portfolio.

The teacher, Carlos, is Italian and had relocated to Portugal. He was encouraging and motivating, while still putting the students best interest first. I would highly recommend his classes.

Communication planning:

I learned a lot of marketing techniques and knowledge in my communication planning class. This includes applying the SOSTAC method on creating a communication campaign for an NGO. As well as learning how to apply a storytelling method on a product campaign. All of which was fairly new information for me.

At first, I found this course very challenging, since many people were third year marketing and advertising students, who already knew all the information. Additionally, the course was partly in Portuguese as many of the students did not speak very much English. However, it was interesting to apply my design skills in a new context. Furthermore, it gave me more confidence as a designer and allowed me to see real life examples of how design can be used in many aspects.

The teacher, NAME was very hands off, allowing the students to work in their individual groups, on the project at hand. It was useful, since we were able to ask questions regarding the various tasks. However, the teacher was so experienced in the field, and personally I would have loved more information and teaching from his perspective.

Audiovisual productions and communication:

The main focus of this course was working on and perfecting our skills in Premiere Pro, in order to create films for advertising. We had two classes a week, with different setups. The first class was taught in a lab, where we got new information and techniques for working in Premiere Pro. Later in the semester, we could work on our final projects and get additional information or opinions from the teacher. Since I already had a good foundation in Premiere Pro, that part was pretty simple. However, most of the knowledge I acquired was through figuring it out on my own, through tutorials and trial and error. So it was nice to learn the “proper” or easier ways of completing simple

tasks I wouldn't have learned otherwise. This proved very useful, for not just the final exam project but it is a useful skill to apply later in life.

The second class of the week was in a viewing room, you could say. A dark room in the basement, with a projector and a few chairs. This was where we had our more lecture- style classes. His lectures were completely unplanned, but yet always so inspirational. Each class started with a set of planned slides, that branched out in different directions. For example, showing us how light and shadow was used technically and poetically in the Revenant. Or how a portugese film was the perfect example of a well-directed short film. We would discuss different styles of cinema, and his current favorite. All whilst showing cases of real life examples to demonstrate the lessons on lighting, sound, and design principles. Additionally, he talked about his own experiences in filming and with web design for reference. It gave a better overview of how the technical and practical information could be used in real life.

Although the classes were always interesting and inspirational, they were not always effective or that useful. For example, each class went so off course, we didn't always have time to finish the subject. This resulted in each subject dragging on for a few weeks, and we never really got the chance to finish all the information. However, if you want to have many interesting conversations about different forms of film and analysing film, this is the course for you! The teacher, Rui, was really the person that made the class so interesting. He had so much knowledge on the course, as well as on many different subjects. His classes were never long enough to capture all the information he had to say.

Online Marketing:

This online marketing course was only 3 ECT points, so we only met once a week for an hour or so. In my opinion this course was not valuable or useful at all. Of course it was a shorter class so there was not time for that much. The course was specifically an ERASMUS course, taught in English. The teacher, NAME, was a PHD student, who obviously had a lot of information on the subject. She knew about every subject, and was very helpful and even offered to meet with the students after class. However, the knowledge we were presented was mainly just the terminology regarding marketing online and e-marketing, most of which was common knowledge. Such as how cookies work, and how to write for SEO, without having any practice or practical information. The teacher even told us to take a seperate digital marketing class at some point if we wanted to actually learn how it works. That shows how much useful information we actually learned.

However, we did have to do two research projects/presentations regarding what we were learning. For example, we examined two companies, Brick and Mortar, and Pure Play. In the presentation we had to show how the companies use these digital formats, and the positives and negatives of each. It brought marketing into the real world, and opened our eyes to different ways to set up a company. Additionally, for the final project we had to analyse the interactive communication strategy of two different companies. We had to give examples and show how they reached, involved, converted and retained their customers. This final exam project was difficult but in the end quite interesting and useful. It was a challenge to find the information, especially since one of the companies we chose was Apple, whose marketing strategy defines the term "less is more." In the end, through this project, we were able to expand our knowledge beyond what we learned in class.

Portuguese course:

Although I did not include the Portuguese course in my learning agreement, it was incredibly useful in navigating Portuguese life and culture. Although it is a little bit difficult to fluently learn another language in such a short amount of time (less than 5 months exchange) it is worth it to know the basics of the host language. Or at least enough to get around. As a lot of people didn't know English it was helpful to be able to talk about simple things, order food, beer, or figure out how to get around on the public transportation.

The course in itself wasn't too useful, as it was mostly grammar towards the end. This was a bit pointless, as there wasn't enough time to learn it properly as Portuguese grammar is so complicated with so many verb conjugations. However, the beginning was incredibly useful, as we learned to recite basic portuguese phrases. I had some Spanish background in school, so learning to read and write was quite easy, but pronouncing Portuguese was the most difficult. It was almost a Russian sounding tone, so coming from an American/ Danish background was really hard to mimic.

Social and Cultural Experiences

My social and cultural experience

Personally, it wasn't so difficult to adjust to life in Portugal. My background of moving around and traveling gave me the tools for an easy adjustment. Of course the Portuguese lifestyle is easygoing, therefore very easy for most people to fit into.

However, it can be frustrating that the receiving university was not organised at all. Many students, including myself, had not yet been registered in the system. It was

very frustrating for a lot of people to get their classes or to change their classes. Nor did they help the incoming students adjust to life in Portugal. Most of the help was through the different ERASMUS or students organisations. So go to them, and ask around to the other students, they are very helpful! Be prepared that EVERYTHING will be very, very slow. I have mentioned this previously in this report, but nothing will come easily and every official process is painstakingly slow. But spend your time waiting on relaxing, going to the beach, talking to a new friend, having an espresso or beer, or both, and enjoy life as the Portugese do! ;)

Life in Lisbon

IMPORTANT LISBON TIP: You cannot wear heels in Lisbon, since the hills are so steep. Additionally most of the sidewalks are super slippery, since they are paved with slick stone. It is very slippery and hard to walk down, even when it is not raining. SO, I would recommend having shoes with rough soles, even flip flops and shoes with flat bottoms, such as Vans are hard to walk in.

There is an endless amount to do in the greater Lisbon area. The city itself is filled with colourful tiles and beautiful old buildings. Spend several days lost in the narrow alleyways and beautiful colours. Below I have included some of my favorite places I visited and would highly recommend.

Places to go

Alfama



For example, the Alfama area is filled with old apartment buildings, up and down a steep hill with old residential buildings, cafes and viewpoints. One of the main attractions is Castelo de São Jorge, where the picture above was taken. It is worth a visit, as it is only 5 euro with a student card, but a lot of schools have organised trips there with the international students. A little less known bonus is Miradouro da Senhora do Monte. In my opinion one of the best viewpoints in the entire city, it also has a little bar and art gallery called the Secret Garden. You have to enter through a little door in the fence, so it almost feels like you are a party in someone's garden.

LX Factory

A really cool artistic hipster location is LX Factory. An old industrial building, and its container converted into bookshops, art studios, cafes, restaurants, and bars. Since it was close to my apartment, I would go all the time for art supplies, good food or a drink.



Sintra

A really nice and easy day trip from Lisbon, is Sintra. A beautiful old royal city, about an hour away from Lisbon city center. This is where the royalty of Lisbon lived, and thrived until about one hundred years ago. Today it mostly protects monuments, the whole city is under UNESCO protection. It costs about 5 euro round trip to get there but it is included in the transport card if you buy it for the greater Lisbon area. Each castle is about 5-10 euros, but be prepared the castles are quite far apart so you may consider paying for a bus or Tuk tuk as well. There's so much beauty to see! I went twice (with my mom and then with friends) and I only managed to see one castle, Quintas da Regaleira



Lisboa- Cascais

One of the easiest ways to get to a beach from Lisbon is by taking the train from Cais do Sodre. From there on, you can buy a return ticket to Cascais (also included in the greater Lisbon transportation card) for 5 euro. Cascais is the gateway to the crazy nature and cliffs you can find in Portugal. The beach at Cascais is quite small and usually really busy during the summer, but you can stop at one or two of the beaches before. I would recommend Estoril or Carcavelos if you want to go to the beach! Carcavelos in particular is a great place to take beginners surf lessons or just relaxing. The pictures attached are at sunset after a long day at the beach. The photo to the right is taken during winter time, where it had been 20C all day and we only needed a sweater a night.



Trip to Porto

One of the trips I took whilst being in Lisbon was with the ERASMUS Lisboa organisation to Porto. I would highly recommend Porto, it has lovely landscape, food (try

the Francesinha), Port wine (of course), and viewpoints. From Lisbon, you can reach Porto by bus or by train from 15-40 Euros.



Almada/ Setubal/ Caparica

Another good day trip from Lisbon is to go to the other side of the harbour. There are so many cheap and beautiful things to see and do. Such as surfing in Caparica, hiking to the Cristo Rei, hiking around in the natural parks of Setubal or Sesimbra, or eating the famous seafood. The photo below shows my group in front of the 25 of April bridge at the Cristo Rei point. The other, features my friend with our amazing seafood in Sesimbra.



Nazare

A truly insane and magical place to visit is Nazare. This is the location of the Guinness World Record for the biggest wave ever surfed, on November 8th, 2017, when Brazilian Rodrigo Koxa surfed a 24.38 meters wave. Now, every fall it is a huge tourist attraction for admiring the intense nature. You can reach the bus by renting a car taking the bus (20 euro return ticket.)



Networking/ making friends

Of course making new friends is a stressful aspect of moving to a new city, and can also be difficult to do without the proper resources. Personally, I stayed in a hostel for the first month (due to problems with accommodation.) That was a great way to meet people in the first few days to take day-trips with or to go out. However, not everyone has accommodation problems, such as myself, so there are a couple of different tips I have to meeting friends:

Finding the ERASMUS organisation in the city is a good way to go. They usually have multiple events and resources to go to in the first couple of days. Whereas it is not necessarily a resource people use the entire semester, it is an excellent source of information about the city and to make fast friends.

It can be a little more difficult to directly approach the locals, as they already have a scheduled life with friends and family. But they are generally super open and friendly to foreigners, depending on the location of course! Additionally, it can be helpful to get into the culture, knowing a local to give you advice on where to go and learning about the culture. Additionally it will give you a good reason to return to the country, as there will be people to stay with and/ or to visit, as opposed to just making friends with the international students. On the other hand, it can be really rewarding to befriend the other international students, then you have a network of friends around Europe or the world. This gives you the chance to visit them in new countries after your exchange.

Practical Information

Portugal's culture and natural beauty have always caught my attention, but as living in Portugal can be done relatively cheap was a definite plus for the bank account. Additionally, there is the possibility of applying to an ERAMUS grant, which eases the worry of money.

Accommodation

I was lucky enough to find my accommodation through a friend who was also coming to Lisbon to do an ERASMUS. Her boyfriend's friend had an airbnb close to the city that we could rent out as an apartment. As it was rented out privately, we were able to rent out for a little cheaper. I had a smaller room (approx. 10m square) and I paid 300 euro a month (approx. 2250 DKK.) The cheapest price for a small room was 250 euro, but on average most people were paying around 350-500 euros.

Our apartment was located in between Campo de Ourique and Alcantra, close to LX Factory. The area was very very local, as it was mostly residential. There, I was met with all walks of Portuguese life; the old dressed up grandmas wondering down to get their daily coffee, the local children playing in the street, the drug dealers gathered around their usual bar, and my favorite, the random older guy living behind us who raised chickens and pigeons and housed stray cats. It was a funny experience, but one I would not trade for any other fancy flat!

When choosing your accommodation, make sure to check the area first. If you are coming from the Danish prices take advantage of it, and find something closer to the city, it will still be cheaper than in Denmark. Barrio Alto is the party district, but can usually get pretty loud. I would personally recommend Principe Real, Santa Catarina, Santos, or Madrogdra. They are very central, safe but still a little bit more quiet whilst being 10-15 minutes away from the action.

I would also recommend having a couple of roommates, as most people get closer to their roommate than the friends they met at school. Personally, I would have liked to live with more people, as it is a good experience to get really close to a few people. Additionally, I would advise against using Uniplaces, as you have to pay ahead of time without being able to see the apartment. I have also heard some horror stories with crazy landlords operating out of Uniplaces.

Expenses

Lisbon, and Portugal in general is pretty cheap. You can get a nice, good quality meal with drinks for less than 10 € (approx. 70 DKK) and my daily coffee at the university or local café was only 55 cents! That considered, I did spend a lot more than expected. Perhaps because it was so cheap I was not as careful with my money as I usually am in Copenhagen, where I can barely afford going out. Groceries are very cheap, depending on what you are buying, of course. Lidl and pingo doce were both great. I usually spent about 20 € (alcohol not included) a week on groceries, and was able to get a nice variety of fresh fruits, veg, and different . As mentioned previously, rent was pretty cheap (300€) and we split the household expensive. It would normally come to about 20-30€ per person a month (split 3 ways.)

In Lisbon you can get a transportation card to get all around the city. For 30 euro you can get all around the city and the neighboring cities. Whereas for 40 euro you get the whole greater area, so you can get to Sintra, Cascais, or the other side of the harbour with Almada or Capirica. However, depending on where you live you might not need it. I would usually walk the 30 minutes to school because it was usually sunny and the busses are always late. Another tip: ubers and bolts are very very cheap. So going home from a party that was usually the way, since public transport can be unreliable, especially at night.

Conclusion

Going on exchange is such a fulfilling experience. It is a new form of traveling. Where you are able to immerse yourself into a country in a new way. Being able to study there allows you to engage with the other local students to get a new perspective.

I can't say taking an exchange in Lisbon met my expectation, because it was entirely different than anything I could have imagined. The people you meet entirely change your perspective on a place, and heavily influence your experiences. It can allow you to see new places in which you wouldn't necessarily go. Academically, I was surprised with the Portuguese influence on the projects and our slightly dysfunctional schedule. Overall a great experience, which is worth giving a go!