



MY EXCHANGE SEMESTER
IN PARIS, THE CITY
OF LIGHTS

Introduction

For me the Parisian dream and imaginations you have for the city, truly got fulfilled. To wake up every single day facing the Eiffel Tower views outside my window, and to constantly be surrounded by the most beautiful and breathtaking views and architecture is something I appreciated every single second.

It was many times I walked along the Seine and just had to stop by the river and pause what I was doing for a second, in order to really take in everything, I were lucky to experience during my months abroad. I have been living abroad in different cities for almost five years now, and I have loved all places in different ways. But Paris did truly affect me on a deeper level and the Parisian charm that you might think only exist in movies, was truly my everyday life for 5 months. The lively city makes you feel like that there are no dull weekdays, more that every single day is seen as a good day to I didn't know what I was expecting before arriving to Paris but the constantly growing love for the city and the new incredible friendships I have gotten, will be brought with me forever.

Of course, my months abroad also have come with some tougher moments as well. However, in between the critical point of views I will highlight in this review, I still want to convey that everything with my exchange semester have been worth it.

Where and when did you study abroad?

I was happy to be admitted for an exchange semester at the communication school ISCOM Paris. My studies abroad covered the period from February 2022 until mid-June 2022. Paris was my first priority, so I became thrilled by the thought of spending several months in the city that I hadn't explored so far.

What Kea Program did you attend at the time?

I am currently studying my top-up bachelor in Brand Design and my exchange semester fell into place during my 6th semester at KEA.

What classes did you take during your semester abroad?

Almost each course at ISCOM covered 1 ETSC point (with exception for 3 courses) which means that I almost had 25 different courses during my semester abroad. Each ETSC point covered 15 hours, which meant I had approximately 15x30 h of class during my semester. This is a common structure for ISCOM, and I was therefore in need of choosing almost every course that was stated on their course catalogue.

Many of the courses I studied, had already been touched upon at KEA and I also feel that many of the courses at ISCOM, more or less covered the same things even if they were structured differently by the teachers. I will therefore highlight some of the courses, which had more impression on me.

Graphic Design:

Since there was a wide range on the graphic skills/levels in my class at ISCOM, we first began with the basics within the different ADOBE programs, before we gradually developed and investigated the more complexed things. We had several assignments within both In-design, photoshop and Illustrator, where different elements had to be included and conveyed in a creative way. The graphic teacher was helpful and well knowledge within her area and way of teaching.

Sectorial Marketing:

This marketing course was held by an involved and great magister. He had his own company and could show and teach us from his own and real perspectives. This course covered different marketing elements that I haven't been introduced to before and I got great insights into new strategies and structures. To give some examples, I now have knowledge about both ambushed and ambient marketing (and everything that comes with it), which I haven't been introduced to before.

Copywriting:

Since ISCOM is a communication school it was a lot of focus on learning about marketing and how to communicate well in order to succeed. Copywriting isn't anything I have been studying before, but this course truly made me see the importance of how much well-chosen words and sentences can convey a trustworthy appearance such as it has a huge effect on marketing and sales. Important aspects and structures are here being taught and even if the course sometimes felt pretty heavy, we had an invested teacher who made the learning methods more fun.

Shopper Marketing:

As an elective course I choose to study Shopper Marketing. I wasn't very much aware of what it would contribute with, but it ended up being a course that gave me new kind of knowledge that I hadn't been studying before. This course focused on the importance of reading your customers and how you can affect shoppers in different ways in order to receive their attention. The course can be described as: *“Shopper marketing is an approach that implies enhancing consumers' shopping experience at the point of purchase”*. Some of the elements that we looked into was fx. “How can you create awareness and attraction for your product in a store?” “What marketing structure will make your product stand out from your competitor?” “How is the shopping behavior changing and what can you do as a brand to tag along with the habits that are developing?”

Intercultural Management:

This was also an interesting course, well suited since my class at both ISCOM and KEA has a great mix of cultural since we are in international class. It is interesting to fully understand and increase your insights within the importance of cultural management, and how different we think, act and believe depending on where we come from and how our society has formed us.

French:

It was of course also well worth it to study French while being in Paris. I wish that I could say I had more knowledge from it before moving to Paris, but since I haven't been studying it before I was completely new to the language. I was placed in the beginner class and I had a lovely teacher and I wish that we had been able to choose to study it even more in-depth and for a longer period.



Academic Experience:

Firstly, the process of becoming an Erasmus student and applying for ISCOM Paris went smoothly through Mobility Online. I got good assistance while filling out everything mandatory and every question I had could easily be solved through contacting my international coordinator. However, after being admitted to ISCOM, the process for applying for the right courses etc. began. At this stage I bumped into some obstacles since we are used to only be studying approximately 3 modules per semester at KEA, I didn't understand that I were supposed to choose almost every single course that was stated on the course catalog received from my host university. However, I therefore recommend you to carefully go through the courses and fill out each one of them within Mobility Online, in order to do it correctly. I were instead in need of looking into this once again when arriving to my host school in Paris, since I hadn't filled it out completely. My international coordinator at KEA was though very helpful along the way, so with both her and ISCOM's assistant it wasn't any problems. As mentioned above, I were more or less in need of choosing every course offered for the semester, and the only choice I did myself was the elective one such as I also chose to study language.

Even though I had the most amazing months in Paris, I must be honest and say that the school was a challenge I wasn't quite prepared for. We studied around 15 courses at the same time, with a lot of different group works to keep up with so we were all in need of a good structure in order to complete everything before each deadline. Since we are lucky with our schedule at KEA, with early days off and a lot of own responsibilities for completing our work, ISCOM's structure and way of working was something else. Now I am not writing this to scare anyone off, but I do want to be honest with my review since I entered the school unaware of what was waiting for me as an Erasmus student. I knew it would probably be more intense than KEA, but I did not expect it to be as tough as it was. Therefore, you must be prepared for long days in school, hectic schedule and a lot of studies if you're interested in studying at ISCOM Paris.

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

As mentioned above, we studied many courses during the semester at ISCOM and the most rewarding are the ones stated above. All these courses gave me knowledge, insights and perspectives that I haven't received from my previous studies.

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

One of the less positive aspects with my studies at ISCOM was that many of the course's content were very alike from each other. It was several teachers who taught the same kind of things, even though it was different courses. An example of these courses that were very unstructured, defused and based on similar content were, Ideation & Critical thinking, Soft Skills, Market Research.

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

Since you must choose almost every course that ISCOM will provide with for the semester, you don't have that much choice yourself. However, I am very happy that I chose to study French since I think it is important to learn more about the mother tongue in the country you're in. In order to get a better understanding for the city, the cultural such as the people living in it.

Cultural/Personal Experience

What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?

I must say that the only cultural challenge for me was the language. There are many Parisian and French people who are not that knowledgeable in English, so the communication can of course be difficult sometimes due to this, but it wasn't a problem from my point of view.

How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

I didn't have that many wonderings or questions I needed to clarify. However, if any problems occurred or if I needed clarification in some way, the school and its administration was always helpful to clear things out.

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

I had the most amazing months in Paris, and I know it will be a hard to find a city which for me, now can compare itself to the city of lights. The most valuable experience has been to get to know so many amazing new people that I have shared my six months in Paris with. Both people from my class at ISCOM, but also people I have gotten to learn outside from school. I have gotten new friendships for life, and it is special to have Paris as a common core for it. Except this, the best experience has been to get to know Paris on a deep level and now being able to associate one of the most beautiful cities as a “second home”.

For me who is also very passionate about the world of fashion, it has been an amazing experience to have lived in a city where fashion has so much respect. It is seen as an extremely important part for the city and Paris is truly one of the greatest cities in the world when it comes to big designers and names within the industry. So for me who is also working within the field, it has been a dream to constantly feel inspired while being in the city, and this is something I will always be thankful for have experienced.

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

Be open for new adventurous, cultural meetings, obstacles and to have an amazing time abroad. It will be hectic and feel tough sometimes, but in between all hard work and studies you will be able to enjoy the wonderful city and everything it has to offer. I also took the advantageous of having so many beautiful places close by to Paris as well and did some travelling while we had spring break and longer weekends off. This I would truly recommend doing when flights and trains within the country are very convenient to use.



Practical Experience:

How was the application process?

Referring to the information within the section “academic work”, where it has been explained already. However, the process of filling everything out went smoothly, by just following everything needed within Mobility Online.

What did KEA help you with?

KEA was informing well about everything and all the deadlines from the beginning and they were then following up on it along with the process. My international coordinator was always just a phone call/ or email away, which made me feel secure with my application.

What help did you receive from your school abroad?

I could easily email ISCOM before entering the school as well. They were not always as fast on getting back to me, but during the semester I always received fast and helpful assistance.

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

I didn't have any difficulties when settling down, but I am sure I could get the help needed if that would have been the case.

Where did you live?

I find a cute studio in the 7th Arr, my absolute favourite area in Paris, close to St Germain, Seine, the Eiffel Tower, Tuilleries, Louvre & my favourite park Luxembourg Garden. The fact that I also had to enjoy the most exquisite view over the Eiffel tower from my own apartment, set the standard for my Paris experience as soon as I entered the studio for the first time. I could stare on the sparkling tower every single evening and still be amazed for every sight of it.

Since I enjoy walking everywhere I could easily get around in Paris by feet, since I lived so center. Even though I only had less than 10 min with Metro to ISCOM, I chose to walk to school every day which took less than 30 minutes. This has truly made me secure and comfortable in the city and I am happy to be able to get around easily without a map nowadays.

Was it difficult to find accommodation?

As soon as I received the happy news of being admitted to ISCOM Paris, the process of finding an apartment to live in began. I know that you can apply for a student accommodation through ISCOM and most likely through other sites as well. So, this is a potential option for everyone moving to Paris and I know for example that many other Erasmus students in my host school, had arranged with these kind of accommodation's. You will then have the same experience as living in a collegium in Copenhagen, where kitchen and other areas are being shared.

However, since I wanted to find my own place, I began researching both online, such as I reached out to friends and contacts in order to receive tips. I found several rental agencies with many options to choose between, some better than others. When looking for apartments through an agency you must have in mind that extra service fees and costs will be added on to the rent, and with the already high living costs in Paris it might be hard to find apartments for a reasonable price. I had most luck looking through Air BNB, where I finally found my little studio which I couldn't be happier for. Of course, you must be prepared for lower standards than how it usually is in Copenhagen, but that can also be seen as the charm with living in Paris.

Was it expensive?

It is of course expensive to live in a capital city like Paris, just as it is in Copenhagen. Perhaps that the accommodation is slightly more expensive than in Copenhagen, due to the lower standards, but otherwise I must say it is very similar to how it is in Copenhagen.

What kind of expenses did you have in general?

Since it isn't expenses with school, I "only" had common ones like accommodation, food, shopping, restaurant visits and also travels within the country.

Did you spend more or less money than you budgeted with?

I did spend more money than I budgeted with, but since I also worked remotely from Copenhagen, such as I was lucky to receive the Erasmus grant, I found it worth it to enjoy fully while being away. I am very happy that I took the chance to do this since I perhaps won't be able to live in Paris to same extent once more. I would truly recommend to everyone to apply for the Erasmus Grant however, since it was a security to have that extra income and to live with a more stable economy.

Conclusion

To what extent were your expectations met, both professionally and culturally? I didn't really have any special expectations before going to Paris, neither regarding the school or culturally wise. I must say that professionally, the school was both tougher and less structured than I predicted, which of course affected the experience a little. But since the city and all personal meetings were more than I could have dreamed for, my months in Paris have been some of the best ones in my life. Despite tough studies, I don't regret anything with doing my exchange semester with ISCOM Paris and now I can't wait to go back to the city to visit all my friends and to once again, take in all the beautiful views that only exist in *the city of lights*.



A photograph of a Parisian rooftop at sunset. The sky is a vibrant mix of orange, red, and purple. In the distance, the Eiffel Tower is silhouetted against the bright horizon. The foreground shows a decorative wrought-iron railing with intricate scrollwork. The buildings below have classic Parisian architecture with dormer windows and mansard roofs.

THANK YOU KEA & ISCOM PARIS FOR
THIS OPPORTUNITY.