

## Questionnaire: Study Abroad / Exchange

### 1. Where and when did you study abroad?

I studied abroad at ESDi (Higher School of Design) in Sabadell, Spain, during the fall semester of 2024 (3rd semester).

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

I was enrolled in the Multimediadesign program at KEA, focusing on Graphic Design during my studies at ESDi.

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

At ESDi, I took both first- and second-year courses:

#### 1st Year Courses:

- **Photography I:** This course introduced us to the fundamentals of photography, including technical aspects such as lighting, composition, and depth of field. Practical camera exercises supplemented the theoretical knowledge.
- **Representation Drawing:** This class focused on enhancing our drawing skills through diverse exercises. Weekly sketchbook assignments allowed us to practice regularly.

#### 2nd Year Courses:

- **Art Theory and History II:** A fascinating course that provided an in-depth look at art history.
- **Business I: Organization and Processes:** This course covered various business models and their applications, with a focus on understanding how businesses operate, especially for those interested in entrepreneurship.
- **Communication:** This class explored how objects communicate meaning and are perceived, focusing on their symbolic and conceptual links.
- **Comprehensive Projects:** This interdisciplinary course brought together students from different majors to work on redesigning parts of La Rambla for diverse purposes. It emphasized collaboration between graphic and interior designers.
- **Design Theory and History II:** Like the art history course, this provided valuable insights into design history and its influence.
- **Literature and Communication:** This class focused on analyzing articles to understand how they communicate concepts, with an emphasis on APA referencing.

- **Materials and Technology I:** This course was entirely conducted in Adobe InDesign, where we learned to create menus, booklets, and interactive content by following guided exercises.
- **Projects I:** A dedicated graphic design course that included three major projects, each demanding creativity, focus, and individual effort.

## Academic Experience

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

Unfortunately, I did not receive direct assistance from ESDi when selecting my classes. I was required to create my schedule independently, ensuring no class overlaps. However, the schedule was altered a week before the semester began, which necessitated last-minute adjustments to my course selections. While the process was largely self-managed, Daniella, the student coordinator, was very responsive and helpful when I reached out with specific questions.

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

I found Projects I to be the most rewarding as it aligned closely with my major and provided valuable challenges in graphic design. Additionally, the art and design history courses were enriching, offering relevant context and background knowledge about influential artists and designers.

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

Some classes felt less relevant to my field. For instance, Communication and Literature and Communication lacked direct connections to the design world. Materials and Technology I was also less valuable as it focused solely on replicating the instructor's work without encouraging creative exploration or alternative approaches.

### 4. What classes would you advise other KEA students going to the receiving school to choose or avoid?

For graphic design majors, I recommend taking Projects I, as it is the most directly related to the field, despite some teaching limitations. The art and design history courses are also worthwhile for gaining foundational knowledge.

## Practical Experience

### 1. How was the application process?

The application process was quite slow. I only received confirmation of my acceptance in mid-to-late August, with classes starting three weeks later.

#### a. What did KEA help you with?

KEA was very supportive, providing clear guidance and emphasizing the need for patience due to the slower administrative processes in Spain. They were quick to address any questions or concerns I had.

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

I did not receive assistance from ESDi during the application process.

**2. Did you experience any practical difficulties settling in at your destination?**

I did not face significant challenges settling in, as I was prepared for the slower pace of processes in Spain and am generally independent.

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

The school provided a list of student residences, but since they were in Sabadell, I opted to find accommodation independently in Barcelona. Beyond this, the school's involvement was minimal, which I found understandable.

**3. Where did you live?**

I lived in the Sant Antoni neighborhood in Barcelona, which offered a local and authentic atmosphere, away from the heavily touristy areas like El Born and the Gothic Quarter.

**a. Was it difficult to find accommodation?**

I found the process relatively smooth. Acting quickly and staying proactive helped me secure a place without much trouble.

**b. Was it expensive?**

My roommate and I paid €1,825 monthly (including utilities).

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

Major expenses included rent, food (often dining out due to affordability), experiences, trips, and some shopping.

**a. Did you spend more or less money than you budgeted for?**

I did not adhere to a strict budget but spent within my expectations thanks to prior savings.

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

I relied on SU and Erasmus funding, supplemented by savings made prior to the exchange.

**a. Did you receive SU and/or Erasmus?**

Yes, I received both SU and Erasmus.

**b. Did you apply for any grants, and did you receive any?**

No, I did not apply for additional grants.

## **Cultural/Personal Experience**

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

Language was a challenge, as I am not fluent in Spanish. However, living in Barcelona provided an excellent opportunity to improve my skills through immersion.

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

I particularly enjoyed the extended daily routines in Spain, where meals, socializing, and activities occur later in the day, creating a unique and vibrant lifestyle.

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

Patience is key. Administrative processes can be slow and sometimes confusing, especially concerning Erasmus students. It's essential to stay organized, meet all deadlines, and manage expectations regarding timely responses from the school. Socially, the international community at ESDi offers a great opportunity to connect with peers from diverse backgrounds. Being outgoing and proactive will enhance your experience significantly. However, based on my experience, I would recommend researching thoroughly before committing to the school, especially if you are a graphic design major, as some classes may not meet expectations.