

My Exchange Experience at Yeditepe University, Istanbul

In February 2024, I had the incredible opportunity to start my study in Istanbul at Yeditepe University. As a student enrolled in the Datamatiker program at KEA in Copenhagen, it was exciting to delve into the Computer Engineering faculty at an international university. The school is located on the asian side in Istanbul.



Istanbul, with its rich history and vibrant culture, quickly became a home away from home, and Yeditepe University offered an academic experience that was both challenging and immensely rewarding.

In this report, I will share my experiences, the courses I took, and why I believe the school Yeditepe University and the city Istanbul is an excellent destination for future exchange students.

Academic Experience

In Copenhagen I study as computer science/datamatiker student which isn't quite the same as the faculty I join in Yeditepe university.

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

Choosing classes at Yeditepe University initially proved to be quite complicated. Many of the courses I had originally planned to take were not offered that semester, which left me feeling overwhelmed. The decision of which classes to take was entirely up to us, and I wanted to choose courses relevant to my studies. However, many of the courses offered were either ones I had prior knowledge of or were completely different from what I was accustomed to at KEA.

Despite these challenge, our coordinator at Yeditepe was quite helpful and always ready to assist. He introduced us to a concept he humorously called "ice cream tasting," which allowed us to sample different courses. This involved attending initial sessions and speaking with some of the instructors before officially enrolling in the classes. This approach was incredibly beneficial, as it provided us with a clearer understanding of the course content and helped us make more

informed decisions about which classes to take and which to drop. This thoughtful strategy significantly eased the process and helped us settle in more comfortably.

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

One of the most rewarding aspects of studying at Yeditepe University was the opportunity to take courses outside of my main study line. This allowed me to explore and delve into new subjects while also meeting people from different fields of study. It broadened my academic horizon and provided a diverse learning experience that enriched my overall time at the university.

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

The least valuable experiences for me were related to the outdated methods used for exams and attendance policies. Many exams were conducted with paper and pencil, which felt quite nostalgic and reminiscent of elementary school, but not particularly engaging. Additionally, the strict attendance policy, where you could fail a course due to absences, limited my ability to explore the city and take trips. This rigid approach didn't offer the best opportunity to fully experience the cultural and social aspects of living in Istanbul.

What classes would you advise other KEA students attending Yeditepe University to choose or avoid?

Many of the courses you initially plan to take might not be available, so it's often necessary to adjust your schedule later on. Fortunately, we had the opportunity to attend some classes before enrolling, which provided valuable insights into what to choose. I highly recommend taking advantage of this.

I would recommend courses such as Software Engineering; the instructor was very helpful, and the course was engaging. We also had the chance to collaborate with Turkish students on a project, which was an enjoyable experience. Additionally, English II is a great course to consider. It offered a fantastic opportunity to make friends with local students, which was especially helpful since many people don't speak English fluently. Having Turkish friends who could translate and assist us made a significant difference.



Practical Experience

How was the application process?

The application process was quite lengthy, particularly due to the waiting times. We had to push our coordinators at Yeditepe a bit, but once we sent them an email, they were very helpful.

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

When we arrived, we faced a significant issue with our accommodation on the first night. I had chosen to stay in the dormitory, but it was fully booked upon our arrival, and we were placed in a motel offered by the school, which was not satisfactory. Communication with the school staff on the first night was very difficult as none of them spoke English. We had to wait until the next morning to speak with a manager, who also didn't speak English well. We then had to go to the school administration and, after a long morning of talking to various staff members, we finally got a place in a dormitory, though it wasn't the one we had originally chosen. Despite this, we were just happy to have a proper place to sleep.

To avoid this issue, I recommend moving into the dormitory as soon as possible.

Was it expensive?

I paid around 1100 euros, including a deposit, for the entire stay. It was really nice not having to worry about paying rent each month. I would definitely recommend the dormitory if you want to meet people easily. Even though I wasn't in the same building as the other Erasmus students, I still met many friendly Turkish students. You have to talk to them first but once you do, you will get amazing friends.

Was it difficult to find accommodation?

When it comes to accommodation, I would recommend two options: Yeditepe University dormitory or living close like really close to the university, or Kadikoy. Kadikoy is a central meeting point for events and is conveniently located between the school and the European side, making it the next best option if you can't get a dormitory spot.

What kind of expenses did you have in general?

Since my accommodation was covered before I arrived, I found the costs manageable. However, I recommend bringing extra money, especially if you love shopping and spending like you're on vacation. I suggest a savings of 25,000 DKK for additional expenses. This gives you freedom to travel around turkey and eat amazing food.



What kind of income did you have during your exchange?

I received SU, which is 5600 DKK and Erasmus funding, which amounted to 11,000 DKK in the beginning. This was sufficient, especially since my housing was prepaid.

Cultural/Personal Experience

What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?

The language barrier was really difficult in the beginning. However, after meeting Turkish friends through Erasmus or using Google Translate, it became less of an issue. It was a bit of a cultural surprise how little English some people knew. Even the teachers might switch to Turkish, but they usually explain that they are repeating the same information in Turkish, so it never affected my education.

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

Meeting other Erasmus students and forming a friendship group that I will meet again after our stay was the best experience. You really have to put yourself out there, especially in the beginning. Attend events, talk to people, and I promise you will have the time of your life. The Erasmus Student Network (ESN) in Turkey is exceptional. They organize plans, are very inviting, and take you to explore Turkish culture and food. You meet people from all over the continent. I highly recommend going on their trips—they are safe, fun, and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I joined them for trips to Cappadocia, Pamukkale, and Ephesus. I even went to Kaş and Antalya with some Erasmus friends during the Eid break. It was truly amazing, and I made long-lasting friendships. Turkey offers everything, from summer and beach destinations like Bodrum or Kaş, to big cities like Istanbul or Ankara, and even skiing in Bursa, which is only three hours away from Istanbul. Turkey has it all. INCLUDING ADORABLE CATS!



Especially if you are a Muslim student, Turkey is a very excellent destination. The availability of halal food is of course widespread, ensuring you can enjoy local cuisine without concern. The drinking culture is minimal, with students more likely to invite you for chai than beer on a Friday.



The presence of mosques is ubiquitous, and you can hear the adhan almost anywhere at any time, make it easier for you to pray at the same time enhances the cultural and spiritual experience. I was there in Ramadan, and it was an amazing experience to share it with other Erasmus student both Muslims and not.



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

Do it! Turkey offers an experience like no other. The food is some of the best in the world, the culture is rich and unique, and the people are incredibly hospitable and friendly. ESN Yeditepe makes socializing easier, and there's a community for every type of person. Despite the initial difficulties, I wouldn't change a thing about my experience. If I had the chance to do it again, I would. You really grow as a person, and you meet people you never thought you would connect with. Go out and experience as much as possible. While school work is important, enjoying the country of Turkey is equally (if not more) valuable.

