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One quarter abroad

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## **Introduction**

I studied abroad for the 3rd quarter of my second year at KEA. At KEA I normally study Sustainable Fashion (Designteknolog) and I was very lucky to get the opportunity to exchange during my Academy Profession Degree. I exchanged to The Netherlands and studied Fashion & Textiles Technologies at Saxion University. Within the Fashion & Textiles Technologies-program I chose the courses 2.3 English III, 2.3 Basic Textiles VII, 1.3 Basic Textiles III and Talent Development. The English course was mainly about improving your language skills with the purpose of becoming better at communicating within the industry later on. In 1.3 Basic Textiles I had lessons in both weaving and knitting and gained knowledge about the different technical processes that are used within both subjects. How to communicate your desired design to suppliers and recognize the difference between different kinds of weaves and knits. In 2.3 Basic Textiles I had lectures in both Mechanical and Chemical Finishes and a sub-course called Fashion Fabrics. In Mechanical Finishing I learned about different methods of finishing fabrics in a mechanical way and gained a lot of knowledge about machines that are used in the industry. In Chemical Finishing I learned about different chemical bindings, how to apply them to fabric and what qualities they add to the fabric. In the Talent Development Module I had to choose my own subject and work independently towards a final product to present in an oral exam. Here I focusing my project on hand-knitting and sustainable ways of reusing knitting samples.

### **Experiences at the host university**

The receiving school was very helpful whenever you asked questions, but I must admit that it was rather confusing to figure out what the different classes was about since the descriptions were very limited and there was no introduction to the courses before choosing. You had the possibility to attend all the classes in the first week and then settle after, but that was more a bit more confusing than giving.

I found the Basic Textiles courses the most giving since it was so different from our pensum in Denmark. It was also the most difficult courses of them all since I knew absolutely nothing and the classes that I attended have had these courses for 1-2 years already. But I learned a lot and got an insight in how you make fabrics from scratch and what different steps there can be in the process of making them.

The class that I found the least relevant must be the Talent Development since the whole school locked down in the beginning of my course and my project got a bit limited after that. I was suppose to use all the knitting machines at the school (which we definitely do not have at KEA) and make samples on them. So it ended up with me hand-knitting every sample which I did not learn that much of compared to what I could have learned by using the machines. But of course you could not have predicted this school lock-down, so it has nothing to do with the quality of teaching or the facilities available at the school.

I would advise students to take the Basic Textile courses for sure since these are the ones that I learned the most of. This is something you will never learn at KEA and that is why I think it is really relevant.

**Social and cultural experiences**

The most challenging part in the beginning was to speak and learn in a complete different language that you normally are used to. It is really a challenge to learn and have classes in English and in the beginning you understand a bit less than you do in your lessons in Danish since there are a lot of new words and technical terms that you maybe never heard in English before. The best cultural experience during studies abroad though was to get to meet so many new people and learn about so many new different cultures. You really get surprised about how different we are depending on where we are from but at the same time you also have a lot in common. Difficult to explain, I think you just have to experience it!

My advice to other KEA students wanting to go to the host school that I went to is: expect to get confused in the beginning! Maybe this is the thing for all students going on exchange, but I expected that my host school knew everything (kind of) and to be honest they seemed as confused as me. Of course you could always go to your coordinator who would help you and try to solve things, but other people and teachers at the school were just as confused as us exchange students. They are all really helpful and there is always one who wants to help you and help you find the answers to your question, but do not expect them to know the answers to your questions all the time. At least you learn to live in the unknown:)

**Practical experiences**

When I applied my danish coordinator helped to understand the application process and how to fill everything out. In this process I did not have that much contact with my host school.

Practical difficulties with settling down? I did not really have any difficulties with this, I rented a room from the university's student housing and they were really helpful. This was very basic room of course but it was 2 minutes from the school and at a reasonable price, plus you have a lot of good flatmates!

What kind of expenses did I have in general? I would say not that many besides rent and the same expenses that I have in Denmark. To be honest it is kind of cheap to buy groceries in The Netherlands or kind of the same as in Denmark with some stuff. And then because I am in a creative study I need to put some money aside to buy materials; pens, fabric, yarn, sketch book etc. sometimes. Luckily there is a great arts and craft store in the city!

### **Conclusion**

To be honest I did not have that many expectations to my study-abroad life before I came here and then you can only get surprised! I have been experiencing much more that I could have expected and met so many new friends even though I have only stayed abroad for about 3 months. I can only recommend KEA students to get out there and exchange at least one time in life! You won't regret it!