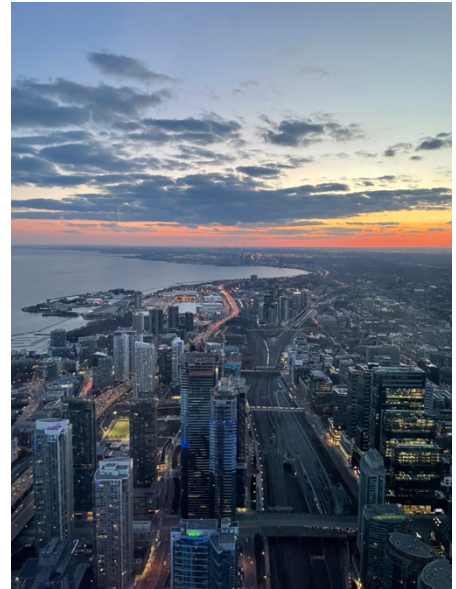


# Exchange report

- Name: Frederikke Kullmann Andersen
- Program at KEA: Top-up bachelor in Design and Business - Creative Branding
- Email address: [Frederikke-marie@live.dk](mailto:Frederikke-marie@live.dk)
- Host institution: Toronto Metropolitan University
- Period: January 10<sup>th</sup> – April 27<sup>th</sup> 2024
- Contact person at host institution: Swathi Chembathi, International coordinator



# List of contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Academic Experience .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Classes.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Settling in at TMU .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>The most and least rewarding study experience and classes.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<b>Practical Experience .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>The application process.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Settling down in and finding a room in Toronto .....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Expenses.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Budget.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Income.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<b>Cultural/Personal Experience .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>My personal and cultural experience .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Advice and Recommendations .....</i>	<i>9</i>

# Introduction

I had an amazing experience during my exchange at Toronto Metropolitan University in Canada. For a long time, I've wanted to live in another country, and studying abroad presented a great opportunity to do so while improving my language and professional skills, and adding an international aspect to my studies. Before deciding to go to Toronto, I heard many positive things about studying abroad in Canada. When I discovered that it was possible to go there, I quickly made the decision. Even though it is more expensive than studying abroad in Europe, I haven't regretted it for a single moment.

## Academic Experience

### Classes

#### Design and Layout (GMC130)

In this class, we learned how to use Adobe Illustrator from the ground up, and we were also briefly introduced to InDesign. Even though I was already familiar with the programs, this course was incredibly rewarding and challenging for me, as it was taught at a more advanced level. The workload in the course was quite heavy, with two major projects and several minor assignments throughout the semester, all of which helped us to master the techniques. I would highly recommend this course to anyone interested in pursuing a career in visual communication.

#### Popular Culture (SOC202)

This was a sociology class based on popular culture. In this class, we examined a large variety of cultural phenomena e.g. films, advertising, celebrities, TV shows, music, fashion social media, and activism, in terms of what it said about the culture. It was a very interesting course, even though it was not directly related to my studies at KEA. However, I think most branding- and marketing students will find this course interesting since it gives a meta-perspective to consumption in general.

The way it was taught was quite confusing. The class was discussion-based, which was engaging, but it also made it hard to know what was relevant and should be picked up from the discussions.

### Visual Communication – A critical approach (CMN601)

This course was about how we perceive and make meaning in the world. With a philosophical approach, it critically examined the ways visual images persuade us to act, think, and feel in unique ways.

I absolutely loved this course. However, I do not think it is for everyone. It surprised me what it was actually about and how philosophical it was, but that was what I liked about it. Before taking the class, I thought it taught me how to communicate visually, but instead, it taught me how to understand the world from a visual perspective. The course covers the role of branding and social media in our culture, and therefore I think it is relevant for students working within this field. There are a lot of readings for this class, which is good to keep in mind if you wish to take it.

### Design Management (CRI 520)

This class covered the business of design, focusing on how design methods are utilized in leadership. It aligns with many of the concepts taught at KEA-design e.g. design thinking, facilitation, lean startup, and business model canvas, and therefore I was already familiar with much of the content of this course. This course provided a more critical and theoretical approach. The professor was very good and he made a big effort to make the course engaging, so even though I was already familiar with many of the subjects, it was still an interesting course.

### **Settling in at TMU**

TMU was very helpful in the process of settling in, and the school generally provided very good service during my whole stay. This was especially nice before leaving for Canada, where they helped prepare for the stay by holding online introduction meetings. The school was generally easy to reach out to, and my international coordinator, Swathi was very helpful with every question.

## **The most and least rewarding study experience and classes**

The courses at TMU are generally more theoretical than practical, which contrasts with how we learn at KEA. I enjoyed the approach a lot since I sometimes miss the critical aspect and the discussion about the use of different methods at KEA. I think the more theoretical approach creates a great combination with the practical skills we learn at KEA.

For me, the class visual communication was the most rewarding. It gave me many new and interesting perspectives both on my studies at KEA and on life in general. My Design and Layout class was very rewarding as well. It taught me a lot of new skills in Illustrator and InDesign, which will be very useful for my further studies.

The Design Management class held the least value for me, primarily because much of the course content overlapped with what I had already learned at KEA. Additionally, at TMU, classes were scheduled throughout the entire day, with one of my sessions extending from 3 to 6 pm, and some classes even ended at 9 pm. As a morning person, adapting to such late class times proved challenging.

I would advise other KEA students to choose Design and Layout. It is taught in a great way, and unless you are a skilled graphic designer, you will find this course highly rewarding.

Even though I enjoyed Design Management a lot, I don't know if I would recommend it to other top-up KEA students since you will probably know most of the content already, but I think it is a great class to take if you consider going to Canada for your 3. Semester.

# Practical Experience

## **The application process**

The application process was somewhat complicated, with multiple steps involved. However, my exchange coordinator, Hanne, provided great assistance. Both TMU and KEA have been very helpful to me in the process, and you can always ask for help. It is important to be very aware of your KEA mail to ensure you don't miss any deadlines.

KEA assisted me with the application process and provided information about the school, which helped me know what to expect before my stay. Additionally, KEA guided me through the process of applying for the Erasmus grant and the grant from the Knud Højgaards Fond.

From TMU, I received extensive information about both the academic and cultural aspects of the exchange, along with guidance on preparing for my stay in Canada. They conducted online introduction meetings, that allowed me to connect with fellow exchange students before my departure.

## **Settling down in and finding a room in Toronto**

During my stay rented a room near Kensington, only 1.5 km from school, from a girl who was going on an exchange in Europe. I lived there with two Canadian girls, who were super sweet and interested in getting to know me. Especially in the beginning, we did many things together and they helped me settle in well, and they made me feel at home in Canada from the beginning.

TMU does not provide accommodation for students, so you must find it yourself, which can be quite challenging and



expensive in Toronto. However, many other exchange students have reached out to TMU and received assistance in finding accommodation.

I was fortunate with my accommodation. The school distributed a list of TMU students subletting their rooms while on exchange, and I secured mine by contacting people on that list. Fortunately, it turned out to be a good place. The price for my room was fair, I paid around 5000 DKK pr. month, which is actually cheap for Toronto.

The housing market in Toronto is rife with scams, and I encountered some of them before finding my room. The best advice I can offer is to trust your gut feeling.

## **Expenses**

My main expenses were:

- Rent
- Groceries
- Flight tickets
- Experiences
- Public transport
- Insurance: Health (UHIP), travel and tenant insurance.

## Budget

The picture displays my initial budget. Ultimately, I ended up spending less on my phone plan, study materials, and bank fees, but considerably more on food and experiences. Groceries tend to be slightly pricier in Canada, and many social activities incur expenses. Additionally, I opted to visit other parts of the country, which proved costly but undeniably worthwhile.

Udgifter	DKK for hele perioden
Flybilletter	8.843,00
Transport til og fra lufthavn	450,00
Mobilabonnement	1.285,00
Bankgebyrer	1.750,00
Visum	35,00
Bolig i Danmark	18.000,00
Bolig i udlandet	26.137,00
Bøger	1.500,00
Uforudsete udgifter	3.000,00
Udgifter til mad	6.000,00
Lokal transport	3.126,00
Personlig pleje	1.500,00
Sygeforsikring	1.292,86
Sportsaktiviteter	500,00
Forsikringer i Danmark	1.244,00
Rejseforsikring	2.298,00
Lejerforsikring	500,00
Rejser og oplevelser/Kulturelle formål	6.000,00
<b>Udgifter i alt</b>	<b>83.460,86</b>

## Income

My income came from savings and the following grants, that I was fortunate to receive. I applied for a few more, that I didn't end up getting.

- SU
- Erasmus Grant
- Grant from Knud Højgaards fond
- Grant from Nordea Fonden



# Cultural/Personal Experience

## **My personal and cultural experience**

My stay in Toronto has been amazing, actually much better than I had hoped for. I have made great friends from all over the world, had sweet roommates, and experienced many wonderful moments both in Toronto and amidst Canada's beautiful nature. Toronto is a multicultural city, and I found Canadians to be generally very open-minded, helpful, and much chattier than I'm used to.

The highlight of my stay has been the friends I've made, but also visiting Banff National Park in Alberta during the winter break was incredible, something I highly recommend if you have the opportunity to go there.

I didn't face any big cultural difficulties, however, my biggest challenge during my stay was dealing with FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out). There were so many new things to take in while being on exchange, and I often found myself feeling quite overstimulated. Balancing social activities and time for rest was difficult because I wanted to make the most of the limited time. Especially towards the end of the semester, the workload intensified, requiring me to spend a lot of time on school projects, all while knowing that my time with my new friends was about to end. I think it is important to remember that it is also okay to say no sometimes.

## **Advice and Recommendations**

Before the semester starts, TMU will have a short orientation where you meet all the other exchange students. It is the only social activity for exchange students during the semester, so make sure to talk with a lot of people and get their contact information.

During your stay in Toronto, make sure to visit Kensington Market, where you'll find a lot of small vintage shops and delicious food from all over the world, St. Lawrence Market, which offers a variety of locally produced food, and Toronto Islands, where you can enjoy the beaches and see the skyline of Toronto. If you get the chance, I highly recommend traveling experiencing Canada's beautiful nature.

