

## Exchange Report University of Westminster, London

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Period of study: 5th Semester 15th September 2018 - 12th January 2019



## **Introduction**

Being a Dane studying Architectural Technology and Construction Management on the international line, I wanted to have some more international experience, which is why I choose to study abroad for a semester.

I decided study abroad on my 4<sup>th</sup> semester, as I felt I had gained enough experience for the previous semesters to be on my own and I felt, I wouldn't miss out much back at KEA as I would have at the other semesters.

I choose to study in London, England at the University of Westminster.

## **Why University of Westminster, London?**

I have always been in love with London and believe it is an amazing city. So, when I decided to go abroad, London was one of my first priorities. I wanted to go to a place where English was the native language, as I wanted to improve my English skills, furthermore I wanted to study at a school where it was a bit similar to KEA, so that I knew I would learn a lot from an academic point of view. After considering traveling to Toronto, Melbourne or Nottingham, I ended up with London as I knew the place fulfilled a lot of my requirements and as I was the only KEA student, who was going to London.

## **Classes at University of Westminster**

At University of Westminster, the classes are not divided in semesters as we do but in academic years, which means when you start in September, you will have some tests in January but the final exams will be when the academic year is over in May/June.

The subjects at Westminster was very similar to the ones at KEA, the only big difference was that Architectural Technology and Construction Management are to separate courses (modules), so I ended up having subjects from both courses in order to fit with the KEA standard.

In order to get the 60 ETCS points, I ended up having six different subjects, which where:

*Fabric and Performance*

*Structural Principles*

*Design Project 1*

*Design Project 2*

*Digital Practice*

*Project Procurement, Management and Law*

Fabric and Performance is a bit similar to *Structure* at KEA. The module is about learning how a building works and its performance. The focus for this semester was about multi-storey buildings and wide-span buildings and their services, including structural form and construction materials.

Structural Principles is also very similar to *Structure* at KEA and the module did some work and lectures with Fabric and Performance module during the semester. This module is about structures in buildings and how the different materials e.g. concrete works. In this module, we had something called Lab Tests, where we had to build small connections and test them at a pressure machine, in order to analyse how they performed. As stated above, Structural Principles and Fabric and Performance were very similar and collaborated through the whole semester.

Design Project 1 and 2 is very similar to the design classes at KEA. Here you have a project, where you have to make a site analysis, design a building, make all the drawings, make renderings etc. Design 1 was very architectural focused and design 2 was more focussed on the technical drawings. However, you are working on the same project in both classes. These modules also had some amazing guest lectures including some Foster + Partners.

Digital Practice was a module about how to integrate BIM in companies. Here you learned about the processes of doing it, the cost and how BIM affects the construction industry.

Project Procurement, Management and Law is very similar to Process and Planning and Law at KEA. At this module we focused on procurement strategies, tendering processes and the RIBA Plan of work stages.

## **About University of Westminster in general**

There was a bit of a mix-up with me arriving as some of the teachers hadn't received any information about me arriving and thus, most of the exams was a bit tricky cause they were planned a bit last minute. However, they all treated me very nicely and was very helpful if I had any concerns and questions.

The best classes, I attended was definitely the Design Project and Structural Principles. The teachers were amazing at teaching and explaining and I felt these were the modules, where I learned most new things.

It is not possible to choose your own modules at Westminster but I would not get disappointed by that. The modules are really good and not too different from KEA but still the teaching methods will be quite different from KEA, which is really fun and refreshing. Also, I only had classes on Monday and Tuesday, which meant you had the whole week to do school work and explore London.

## **About living in London**

Accommodation:

I choose to stay at the student accommodation, despite it being a bit expensive. However, the school and accommodation are located in the Marylebone area, only a 10-minute walk from Oxford Street, which means you are living in central London and thus, won't spend too much time and money on public transportation. Furthermore, it only took 3 minutes to walk from your room into the classes.

I would really recommend the student accommodation, if you are traveling alone. 90 % of the students living in the accommodation was also exchange students and because everybody is alone in a new country, it is so nice to get some new people to know, right away.

Living in a student accommodation is also very nice as you often will cook together, hang out, go out together and learn about cultures from all around the world. You will very quickly become very close to the people, you are living with and you will have so many fun experiences together. The accommodation was a small room with a desk and a single bed, nevertheless you had your own bathroom, so you didn't need to share your toilet or bath with anyone else.

### Money:

Living in London can be expensive, however most of the prices at the supermarkets, restaurants and bars are a bit lower than Copenhagen, so for me it wasn't too bad. Furthermore, most places offer student discounts and often you can get about 25-40 % of food and clothes. Just sign up at pages like Unidays and Studentbeams.

For me, the public transportation was very expensive, so in order to save money on that part, I choose to walk a lot around instead, which is also amazing as you are in Central London and there are so many things to watch.

However, the most expensive part of London is the accommodation, whether you rent a room somewhere or rent a room at the student accommodation. I paid around 32.000 DKK for living in the accommodation from September to January.

### Life in general:

Samuel Johnson once said "When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life", which is so true. London is such an amazing and diverse city. The possibilities are endless and you will never be bored. There are always places to explore, food stands to eat at, museums to explore and stores to shop in.

The bar / nightlife is amazing and so much fun. Whether, you like pubs or nightclubs, there is definitely a place for you.

Eating out in London is also a whole experience. There are so many nice small places where they serve national dishes from around the world. I would really recommend going to Spitalfields near Liverpool Street Station, where there is the most amazing street food from all around the world – It is also quite cheap as you can get a whole meal from around 6 pounds.

Also, if you haven't travelled to London during the Christmas, I must say it is the most magical place on Earth and it is so beautiful. So, if you decided to study in London at a Fall/Winter semester, you are in for a treat.





## **Going on Exchange**

I would truly recommend everybody to go on exchange. It is so difficult to explain people, who never have been on exchange, how it feels like. But it is such an amazing and memorable experience. I have grown so much both personally and academically. It will be hard sometimes but you will also have the time of your life and bring back so many memories, you probably will cherish for the rest of your life.

If you have any questions regarding London or going on exchange, feel free to send me a message to [mich130d@stud.kea.dk](mailto:mich130d@stud.kea.dk)