

General Information		
Host Country	Spain	
Host School	Elisava	
Program start & end dates	February 12 - June 3	
Program of Study	3rd year English Course offerings	
Type of Study Abroad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exchange	<input type="checkbox"/> UMAP exchange <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
General Evaluation		
In a couple of sentences, summarize and explain your general evaluation of your experience.	The best decision I've made in my undergrad. I had a blast, had a very different learning experience than at Elisava, and got to explore lots of new places! I would highly recommend even if you're feeling uncertain (like me in the beginning), you won't regret it.	
Arrival		
How easy or challenging was it to obtain your travel documents (visa, permits, etc.)?	Obtaining my visa was really challenging, specifically because I am an out-of-province student. I had trouble getting them to process my visa at the Toronto office and ended up having to spend a lot of money to fly to the Montreal office to drop off my paper work in person.	
Describe your transportation arrangements to your host country. Would you alter any part of those arrangements?	Because of my visa trouble, I was not able to make the original flight that I had booked to Barcelona (for very cheap on Black Friday). Luckily, Air Canada was really kind and gave me a credit for my original flight that I used to pay for my ticket home however, I needed up buying my ticket to Spain 1 day before I left so it was quite expensive. Because of the Visa trouble I'm not sure if I could have done anything different to make my flights cheaper.	
How was your experience clearing customs and immigration upon arrival in your host country? Any surprises?	No supposes, the customs workers were very kind and simply stamped my passport without asking me anything. I did have backup copies of all my documentation in case it was needed but they did not even ask to see my visa.	
Describe how you traveled to your host facility. How long did it take and how much did it cost?	I travelled to my apartment on the Aerobus. It cost 6.90 euros one way and arrived at Placa Catalunya which was a 5 minute walk from my apartment.	

Orientation and Assistance	
How satisfied were you with the assistance available to at your host school? Were there people and resources available for you for support?	Yes, the exchange coordinator was helpful with any questions we had and generally the staff at the school were nice.
What help did you receive from the international staff or office?	The international office gave us a tour of the school as well as an afternoon info session on things about the school, courses, and the different faculties/programs, etc.
How was new student orientation at the host university? What did they do?	They gave us a tour of the school, an afternoon of lectures and meeting staff/attending presentations and ended with snacks and drinks for a social with all the exchange students together in the night.
Housing & Daily Life	
Describe your accommodation in your host country. Were you pleased with this choice or what would you have done differently?	In my host country I lived in a shared apartment with 8 other students and young professionals. I really liked the location of my apartment because it was only a 20 minute walk to school, close to the beach, main sites and areas of the city, all the metro lines and some train lines. However, living with 8 other people was sometimes very chaotic because we were sharing one kitchen with limited space so only 1-2 people could cook at one time and everyone had different schedules so it was hard to get a good sleep as a light sleeper.
When could you move into housing and how long were you allowed to stay?	I moved into my apartment as soon as I arrived in the first week of February and left the 27th of June. My lease was from February 1-June 30.
What kinds of services and facilities were nearby where you lived (shop, cafe gym, parks, pharmacy, stations...)	There was everything you could need near where I lived. It was very close to Placa Catalunya which has connection to all the metro lines, there were 3 grocery stores within 10 minutes, there were shops, El Corte Ingles which is a department store similar to The Bay where you could get literally anything you needed in a pinch, there were also loads of restaurants and cafes. Everything you could need for daily life was within walking distance
Describe what you did about meals and what other options were available. How satisfied were you with the food?	I got groceries about once a week as each person in my flat only had one small shelf in the cupboard and fridge and a tiny drawer in the freezer. I usually cooked lunch and dinner but sometimes I would go out with friends for lunch or dinner with friends or get takeout nearby if I had a really busy day.

<p>How close was your accommodation to where you studied?</p>	<p>I lived about a 15-20 minute walk away from Elisava.</p>
<p>Academics & Course Registration</p>	
<p>Describe the registration process at your host institution. What assistance was available to you? Were you satisfied?</p>	<p>I didn't have to do much in regards to registering for courses at Elisava. Everything was taken care of before arriving, besides on of my courses had different sections and we got to choose which topics/sections we wanted to take so they gave us a survey to fill out over Teams.</p>
<p>What advice would you offer to another exchange student about registration at your host institution?</p>	<p>Follow the advice from Xavier and KPU's study abroad officer, they have done this hundreds of time and can answer any questions or help you if you have any trouble!</p>
<p>What tips to you have for finding the courses and course syllabuses/outlines?</p>	<p>For Elisava I really had to dig around on their website but they emailed them to me promptly when I requested. For the course where we chose our sections, another exchange student found a document with all the topics and shared it with us but I'm unsure where they were able to find it.</p>
<p>Academics & Course Registration (cont'd)</p>	
<p>How satisfied were you with the amount of knowledge/skills you obtained from your host?</p>	<p>I'm happy with what I learned at Elisava. Although the style of teaching/learning is so different from Canada and the course I took were very different from what I would have taken at KPU, I enjoyed my time and learning new skills. The structure of the courses is also very different, you take only one or two courses at a time so my first course was only 2 weeks and then it was finished and we got our grades back which was really nice to know in 2 weeks, one course is already completed.</p>
<p>How did the style of teaching, and workload compare to Canada? Was it more independent or group learning?</p>	<p>There was SO much group work. In fact, every course and every project was entirely group work which was very different for me. In some instances it was great and very enjoyable, in others it was very hard to integrate with the local students and I felt very alienated because I am not a fluent Spanish speaker but learning to work together despite the language and cultural barriers was a stretching process and I am grateful to have had those experiences.</p>

<p>How many courses did you take during your time abroad? Are there particular courses would you recommend?</p>	<p>I took 3 courses that were equivalent to 5 courses at KPU. I really enjoyed Visual Experimentation. It was a course that had a very high focus on creativity and experimenting. It was a place to try new things, learn about different things and there was no. “wrong” answer which was very freeing for me. The course was 2 weeks long and you had to take a different section each week. The sections that I were in were ChatGPT and Grafood. CHatGPT was all about exploring the possibilities of ChatGPT. And GraFood was about food design, graphic design and typography all mixed together.</p>
<p>What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, internet access, specialized equipment and supplies available at your host facility?</p>	<p>The facilities were great at Elisava. For one of my courses I got to use the laser cutter, which is free for students. I also got to use the photography studio which provided a very nice camera, back drops lighting, etc. The library was full of lovely design books and resources such as Pantone swatches, etc.</p>
<p>Cost</p>	
<p>Books and Supplies/per term:</p>	<p>\$20-30 (cost for printing for classes)</p>
<p>Flight:</p>	<p>\$2200</p>
<p>Accommodation/per month:</p>	<p>\$1200</p>
<p>Meals/per month:</p>	<p>\$75</p>
<p>Local transportation/per month:</p>	<p>~ 15- 20 euros</p>
<p>Health insurance/per term:</p>	<p>\$0 - because of coverage under parents</p>
<p>Communication (internet, phone, etc.) – per term</p>	<p>~ \$75 (50 euros)</p>
<p>Travel documents (Passport, Study permit, visa, etc.)</p>	<p>\$170 for the Visa + \$800 for the flight to Montreal :(</p>
<p>Vaccinations:</p>	<p>\$0</p>
<p>Personal spending (entertainment and extra travel) – per term</p>	<p>1500</p>
<p>Were there unexpected costs you encounter? What items were less or more expensive than expected?</p>	<p>Only the unexpected cost of the flight for the visa and the new flight to Barcelona. The groceries were significantly less expensive than in Canada. Medicine and vitamins were extremely expensive so make sure to bring as much as you need from home.</p>
<p>Extra-Curricular & Social Activities</p>	

<p>What type of organized activities were available to you? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future students?</p>	<p>There were activity through the Erasmus Association, however I did not participate in them. The other exchange students also regularly organized outings like hikes, picnics, parties, etc. I occasionally attended and enjoyed getting to know the other exchange students at Elisava. Elisava organized monthly talks hosted at the Desseny Hub in Barcelona with some really talented well known designers (super cool!) And some fun workshops like in the print lab with lithography and fun things but the spots fill up super quickly! I participated in a lot of activities at the International Church of Barcelona (ICB) like a retreat weekend, games nights, family day, etc. I also joined Cristianos Universitarios (Q) where I met other local students and we had dinner with a local young family every Tuesday. Both experiences at ICB and Q were amazing and I would highly recommend.</p>
<p>Did you travel outside the host location? If so, where do you recommend?</p>	<p>While in Barcelona I traveled a lot around the Catalonia region. My favourite place is Sitges, it is about 45 minutes on train (you can get a 3 month pass for 10 euros for unlimited train ride). They have beautiful beaches, lots of cute shops, cheaper gelato, lots of beautiful building and it gives Greece vibes. I also went to Badalona which has nice beaches and is much quieter than Barceloneta. I hiked in Costa Brava which was lovely. In Spain I also visited Alicante, Malaga, Madrid, El Escorial (the most beautiful small town 1.5 hours outside of Madrid). I also travelled to Lisbon twice and Porto in Portugal - a beautiful country and has amazing food for very cheap. I ended my exchange with a trip to Italy where my best friend and I went to Venice, Verona, Cinque Terre, Florence and Rome. Venice and Florence were so so so worth it.</p>
<p>What opportunities were there to work or volunteer? Did you require special permits to do this?</p>	<p>There were lots of opportunities to volunteer at my church (ICB) however, there weren't any opportunities that I saw at the school.</p>
<p>Health and Safety</p>	
<p>Describe any health/safety concerns or issues you had during your experience.</p>	<p>None. I was always very aware of my belongings as Barcelona is known for pickpockets but I did not have any issues.</p>
<p>What helped you keep safe and healthy? Did you access any health care supports and if so how was the experience?</p>	<p>Safe: Being aware of my surrounding when out and about Healthy: Eating well, sleeping well and exercising I had no experiences with any healthcare supports.</p>
<p>What wellness supports did they offer at the University? Were there counselling or medical services?</p>	<p>I don't remember hearing of any wellness or medical supports at the university but I am not certain as I did not need access to any of these services.</p>

Personal and Cultural Connections	
Were there any cultural differences you had to adjust to? Were there language barrier issues?	Not having a clothes dryer / hanging clothes to dry Shops closed on Sundays Different times for lunch and supper/restaurants closing mid day Language Barrier
What part(s) of the country and culture did you most appreciate?	The weather The friendliness of people The celebrations like Sant Jordi, Flower festivals, Catalunya day etc. The cheap fresh food like cheeses, yogurt, bread, etc. The coffee
How was it traveling alone and making friends?	Because I am from out of province, this didn't feel any different than being at KPU for me. However, you meet a lot of cool likeminded people on exchange because they're also adventurous and often have a lot of similar personality/hobbies etc.
How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students?	The locals in Barcelona were all really lovely, kind and welcoming. For the most part, the university staff were very kind to exchanges students and always made sure to translate things to English or encourage local students to speak in English. However, some did not care at all and would speak only in Spanish. The students were 50/50 which they had warned us at orientation and told us to bring it to their attention if it was happening again but a lot of students didn't care about exchange students and didn't make an effort to make us feel welcome and only spoke in Spanish when the were able to speak well in English.
How accommodating are they to students with a disability? Were there any accommodations offered?	I'm not sure, I do not remember them mentioning anything about this.
How is the situation for students who are visible minorities in your host country?	The majority of people in Barcelona and at Elisava are white and there are a few asian people. However, the students/staff did not seem to discriminate because of race or ethnicity.
How welcoming are they to for those who identify as LGBTQIA+?	I'm unsure because this was not discussed a lot but I believe they are welcoming to LGBTQ+ community.
Overall	
What are 5-10 important things other students should know before going to your host country/region?	

1. Prepare everything you need for your visa as early as possible
2. There are no dryers in apartments so mentally prepare that you'll need to. Check the weather before doing laundry, and potentially wait multiple days for it to dry (sounds silly but was a big adjustment for me lol)
3. Be aware of pickpockets - research current schemes (while I was there I saw a lot of balloon/clown scams, also hear about people carrying jackets over their arm on the subway, pink goo, etc.)
4. Sometimes things are priced above instead of below on shells at grocery stores, can be confusing and lead you to buy something much more expensive than you anticipated.
5. The tap water isn't safe to drink in Barcelona, not even the locals drink it
6. The other exchange students are also looking for friends and are all super friendly! If someone else hasn't already made a WhatsApp group chat for exchange students message Xavier (if attending Elisava) to ask for students to send you WhatsApp contacts and make a group. SO helpful for meetups and planning group activities.
7. Prepare to eat the best food of your life

What was the most rewarding part of your study abroad experience?

Studying abroad is something that I've always dreamed of so this was truly like living my middle school dream. Simply hanging out at the beach after class with friends was one of my favourite parts of my exchange. I got to learn so much about other cultures and meet so many incredible people and I'm so grateful to now call them friends!

What was the greatest challenge you faced during your experience abroad?

In my final course, my group was a group of friends. Although I really enjoyed the content of this course as it was directly related to graphic design. I really struggled to fit in with my group because they already formed such a bond and they continually chose to speak in Spanish and Catalan making it really hard for me to understand what they were saying, what their ideas for our project were and how I could contribute. It was very frustrating and it made the course very dreadful for me as my groupmates would also talk negatively about me in Spanish thinking that I didn't understand.



<p>How has your perspective changed as a result of your study abroad experience?</p>	<p>I now have such a greater appreciation for immigrants, international students and exchange students to Canada. Although I had so much fun on my exchange it wasn't always easy. There are so many cultural differences and it can be challenging to adapt to new ways of living. I hope I can help other exchange students or immigrants integrate better into life in Canada because of my experiences in Spain.</p>
<p>What else do you want to add about your study abroad?</p>	<p>Studying abroad was the best decision I've made in my undergrad. I made so many new friends from so many different countries and I can't wait to have the opportunity to go back to Europe to visit them! It was also incredible to explore a few new countries!</p>

Below is a space to share any photos