

REPORT AL RIENTRO DELL'ESPERIENZA DI SCAMBIO - A.A.  
2014/2015

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## Testo

I am an international student from Indonesia and I was doing the Erasmus Exchange program for summer semester in Universität derKunste Berlin, Germany from April to August 2015. I decided to do an Erasmus Exchange in my second year of the master's program to have more experience and broaden my knowledge. This report will describe the process that I've been experienced during the exchange.

### PREPARATION

As a non-European student study in Italy, I had to make an Erasmus Exchange Student Visa at the German Embassy. It was quite complicated because we need to open a bank account first in one of German Banks to deposit some amount of money and it would take several weeks to activate the account. It is needed because the grant couldn't fulfill the financial requirement of the visa regulation.

Even though it was a long process, all the procedures were clear to follow. International Exchange Office in the home university already prepared the documents which are required to register in Universität der Kunste Berlin. They also made a briefing before the beginning of the program in home university. Unfortunately, it was done in Italian language and my limited ability in the language caused me some misunderstanding. But, the International Exchange Office helped me and answered to my questions. I was glad the home and host university were responsive and the communication between them were going well.

### ACCOMODATION

The accommodation was very well managed by the host university. We were given enough information in finding private accommodation or choosing dormitory. I got in touch with the person in charge and apply for the dormitory. The dormitory is organized by Studentenwerk, a student service organization in Germany and it was easier and faster than finding private accommodation. I received the confirmation of the dormitory in two weeks.

Besides, I prefer to stay in the dormitory because I found the cost of dormitory is cheaper than the private accommodation. The location of the dormitory also very close to the station and I can go the university for just five minutes' walk. The dormitory has a single room for each student, living

room, shared kitchens, and shared bathrooms. We had to buy the other necessities such as bed sheet, curtain, and pillow by ourselves or pay to the dormitory office for the kit.

The disadvantage of the dormitory was no internet including in the dormitory area so students usually apply to an internet provider or ask the other students to share the connections. The dormitory where I was living was occupied with other international students and there were some events and gatherings organized by the dormitory office for us.

## ACADEMICS

I couldn't find enough information about the course inside the host university website. Their International Office explained to us in a welcome session that there will be a presentation from the teachers of the course at the beginning of the semester. It was confusing because each course limits their number of students in the class. We registered the courses right after the presentation and in the meanwhile, we had to search and ask the professors if they still have spaces.

I felt disappointed when I found out that I will follow courses from Bachelor program. Their Master program just opened a year ago and had no class in summer semester because it was a thesis period. I already came and couldn't leave so I still followed the courses. I chose a porcelain tableware project for cafeteria and its workshop in porcelain manufacture.

There are some workshops inside the university building, such as porcelain, jewelry, wood, and metal works. We can use all the facilities after we were given an introduction by the tutors even we were not following the course related to a particular workshop. They were really helpful and competent in their field.

I was in a class with five other students. Apparently, the teaching is in German language and the professor was not comfortable in speaking English. It didn't become a big problem because it was a small class and the output was individual project. One of the other students sometimes translated the discussion or the professor's assistant explained the task again at the end of the class. I felt welcome.

A week workshop in porcelain company gave the students a lot of experiences and insights. The workshop was done in Kahla, a town in the Saale-Holzland district, Thuringia, Germany. We got to see the process of production of the porcelain from the first step. Then, we did some experiments by our own to understand the characters of the material and we could take the objects that we made there afterwards. Living with other students from the class for a week also became a great thing to get closer and know each other. We had a presentation in the middle and in the end of the semester. In each presentation, we did it together with students from other projects and then prepare for exhibition week for every course in Universität der Kunst Berlin.

## DAILY LIFE

Berlin is the capital city of Germany, but the living cost is quite cheap compared to other big cities such as Amsterdam or Milan. It has a good transportation system, hence making the mobility very easy. There are also no difficulties to find a supermarket for grocery shopping or any other shops for your needs in Berlin.

Berlin is full of historical site and museum, which are mostly about World War II. Students can gain more knowledge about history. The appearance of the city is mixed with old and modern building and still concerned about energy saving and eco-friendly technology by using solar panel for an example. Furthermore, people usually do outdoor activities during the summer such as a picnic in the park, swim on the lake, or watch a movie in an open air cinema. People said that the German people are cold but I didn't experience such things. They were nice and most of them could speak English. They will help you if you look like lost and show the right way. Overall, I enjoyed living in Berlin.

## CONCLUSION

In general, I was glad doing an Erasmus Exchange program in Universität der Kunst Berlin. It was a good experience to know people from another culture, to face new challenges, and to gain knowledge. I had fun doing the project in product design, though it was different with the course I'm doing in Politecnico di Milano. I spent most of the time in the porcelain workshop because of trial and error, but I didn't mind at all. I think the facilities of the workshops at host university are great. Small number of people in class make the learning process more effective.

The opportunity to learn in different environment couldn't be missed and I could get it by joining Erasmus Exchange Program.

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Autorizzo al trattamento dei miei dati personali ai sensi del Decreto Legislativo n. 196/03 da parte del Politecnico di Milano.

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