

2013-2014

University Attended: Bocconi University, Milan, Italy

FEEDBACK 1

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?

There was a two week program of events similar to fresher's week. This involved nights out and at the weekend a trip to Lake Como. It was a good way to meet people but at times was really badly organised. But through taking the Italian crash course and living in halls it was easy to meet people.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support

The style of teaching consists solely of lectures, there are no seminars although in general lecture groups tend to be smaller than Manchester, dependent on the subject. Lecturers encourage participation and in some classes a small number of marks are awarded for participation. All resources are on e-learning which is very similar to Blackboard, so equally easy. Assessment varies upon subject, normally subjects have a course work element that tends to be marked favourably. All subjects are out of 30, and a pass is 60%. This is higher than Manchester but most students attain over 80%, so it is no more difficult to pass than subjects in Manchester. Exams tend to be less organised, occasionally exams clash and there is no way to do both exams so you either must pick subjects at the start of the year wisely or be prepared to take exams at different sessions, normally each subject has three exam periods about two weeks apart from each other. Bocconi is unique in the fact it has oral exams where you sit and talk to your lecturer for around 15 minutes and that is your whole exam.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

MBS were helpful, although trying to get Erasmus funding and language course funding took a while and required a lot of chasing. Also the Erasmus bursary was delayed so we did not receive the second instalment until after we had finished our year. *MBS Comment: (Please note Erasmus funding is organised by the central International Programmes office and not MBS).*

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

The meetings were informative although we had very little chance to contact students who had been to Bocconi before as most had attended in the first semester. The meeting where we were meant to meet students from previous exchanges failed as no one turned up so all the little queries we had we weren't really able to discuss. *MBS Comment: (Should this happen, students do have access to the names of students who had been on exchange and can, therefore, email the students directly).*

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students

International Student Desk (ISD) at Bocconi has been very helpful in answering any questions and sending documents to Manchester. They also organised a welcome cocktail evening at the start of each semester.

INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER

Please include any information relating to the purchase of compulsory health insurance ie costs etc. or whether this was waived by having the University of Manchester Insurance Policy

Being in Europe I just got a European Health Insurance card and it has all been fine.

INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS

This should be information on any extra fees that the University charged but should not include accommodation, books, transport, visa etc.

Main cost was the language course, I chose to do the crash course and also the follow up course. These courses were around €150 each and also needed a €20 booking fee. I did manage to get €250 back from Erasmus funding which was great but this was not advertised and I only found it out by being told by a friend. *(MBS Comment: There is information on this in the Study and Work Abroad Handbook).*

ACCOMMODATION

As much information as possible on what accommodation is recommended or not recommended.

I chose to stay in halls of residence first semester and found an apartment second semester. For the first semester I stayed in Arcobaleno, an old hotel which has been turned into halls for International students, about 300 people live there. It cost €625 per month which included a cleaner for your room and all bills. The room is set on a corridor like Owens Park but nicer, with a door off where there are two bedrooms, a bathroom and a small kitchen area. This means that you only share a bathroom and the room itself is big with AC and a balcony. The kitchen area is small, but there are big kitchens on every other floor. These are one of the best areas in Arcobaleno, every one cooks here and drinks before nights out and it is generally a really sociable area. (A side note the kitchens don't have ovens and the hobs are induction, this means normal pans don't work, loads of people had to buy two sets). There is a receptionist that is there 24 hours and as a rule you are not allowed guests to stay in your room, however if you get to know the receptionists they will turn a blind eye for an occasional weekend if friends do come to stay. Generally the greatest complaint about Arcobaleno is the location of it. It is located around a 20 minute tram ride from Uni and 30-45 minutes from central Milan. This isn't any longer than the bus from Withington/Fallowfield to Uni and Town but the area where the halls are is relatively basic, there is a supermarket and restaurant but not much else. This can be a problem on nights out getting back, or if you decide to go out for a quick drink it's a bit of an effort. I personally think its worth staying here for at least a semester, although the location is a bit inconvenient and having people to stay is tricky, it is a fantastic place to meet people and you have a halls like experience with people from all over the world. Everyone wants to travel so you can always find someone to go with anywhere in Europe at the weekend.

For the second semester I rented an apartment with somebody I met in first semester. There weren't that many people who stayed for the whole year so it might not be easy to find someone, I was quite lucky. I managed to rent an apartment that a friend had rented the previous semester. This was great as it was easy to secure, in a great area near all the bars and restaurants and really big for Milan. I know that Bocconi offers help finding accommodation and I also would recommend checking AirBnB and messaging people about a longer stay. My apartment was in the Navigli area which is where the canals are and I would recommend this area or an area near Porta Romana both are near to Bocconi and have a lot going on in the evening. It was slightly cheaper, €575 per month, which is good value in Milan, rooms don't tend to be much cheaper unless you share a room or are further away from the centre. I have really enjoyed living in an apartment, the location has been great, it's a nice apartment and it let me experience more of an 'Italian Life' than you are sort of missing in Arcobaleno. It is more difficult to meet people as you have to put in more effort but that isn't a problem if you are sociable.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups

Transport in Milan largely is pretty good. There is an extensive tram, bus and metro network and a monthly unlimited travel card costs €22. There are quite a lot of strikes which gets frustrating, especially if you live at Arcobaleno and need to travel to Uni. Main airports are Bergamo (€5 to Milan Centre and about an hour away) and also Malpensa (€10 to Milan centre and about half an hour on the Malpensa Express), Ryanair and Easyjet fly everywhere in Europe from here so travel is super easy.

First semester in Arcobaleno all the American/Canadian/Australian students wanted to travel every weekend so it was great to be able to join these trips, I visited Vienna, Krakow, Paris, Riga and Budapest (my favourite city in Europe). Also Milan is a really good base in Italy and you can travel to Rome, Florence, Venice, Cinque Terra and so many other places, really easily on trains. The travelling side of exchange was a major part of it for me, Bocconi has a two week mid term exam break in October and a four week break over Easter for mid terms/Easter, if you pick your subjects wisely you don't have midterms, so you have all this time of to travel. Also you can choose to take all your exams before Christmas in the first semester which means you have the whole of January off and a bit of February too, I flew out and met some friends who were also on exchange and we travelled around South East Asia!

The Italian way of socialising is quite different to England. A very popular thing to do is go for Apperitivo, where you buy a cocktail for around €10 and then have access to a buffet which is great. The main area for this is the Navigli and in summer and autumn people all sit outside eating and drinking. In terms of student places there are not that many, there is one bar which does a student night every Thursday as well as a place named La Fontanella a pub that sells beer in huge glass containers with up to 30 pints in each, this is really sociable and always busy. Another favourite place of mine is called La Vineria, a wine bar where everyone sits outside drinking wine which cost €8 a bottle. You can also drink in the streets in Milan so there are many squares where people gather and drink and chat. Most nightclubs do offer a student night, the most popular being Old Fashioned every Wednesday. These tend to be quite smart, playing European chart music, I didn't particularly enjoy this scene, but did manage to find a couple of clubs playing better music, named Tunnel Club and Dude Club (bad name but good club). These are located under the arches of train lines and are quite similar to a smaller version of the old Warehouse, and played good techno and house music, as well as Hip Hop artists playing occasionally. Entry to almost everywhere is at least €10-€15 but you do get a free drink and these are normally cocktails which are really, really strong.

Integrating with the local students tends to be down to you to make the effort. In the first semester living with exchange students this didn't happen as much, however, second semester it was better, most speak English and they also want to practice their English with you too. The international student network did also offer a way to meet other European students and also some locals through events and trips too.

Overall, Milan is a fantastic city which has everything to offer, sometimes you have to search for the places to go or events that are happening, but that only makes it more rewarding when you find somewhere good. It allows an amazing base to explore Europe with great people and to get a great idea of Italian life.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

A truly incredible experience full of travel, socialising, pasta, wine and gelato.

FEEDBACK 2

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

This involved all the information that exchange student needs to know about Bocconi, about the services that it offers. It was pretty useful and lasted around 1-1.30 hour.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

The classes are pretty small in Bocconi so it is very easy to ask the professor if you have any questions. They also have office hours if you need more questions to ask.

Bocconi offers a lot of courses, however they offer more courses in the Fall semester rather than the Spring semester, some courses are offered only for a semester but some are offered in both semester so you should compare both semester and plan your academic schedule

Depends on which course you are doing, you might be assessed in different ways. There might be midterms or presentation and finally finals at the end of the semester

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

MBS International team was very helpful and they are happy to answer any question you may have

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

The meetings gave all the information you might need, from how to apply for your year abroad to what you need to prepare before you leave for your year abroad

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

The international student desk at Bocconi is very useful. Whatever question you have, whether it is about transportation, permit of stay, courses at Bocconi, they are more than happy to help.

INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER

Before departure, we received our insurance without having to pay anything.

INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS

Bocconi did not charge me any extra fees. However, I needed to apply for permit of stay once I was in Milano and this will cost you in total around 160 euros (for overseas students only). Bocconi will provide some sessions, in which they will instruct you on how to fill in the forms so you can go and get the permit. The whole process will take around 1-1.5 months.

If you have to use public transport then you can apply for the card which you can use on all the public transport in Milano and this will cost 22 euros/months

ACCOMMODATION

If you want to stay in hall at Bocconi, most likely you will end up in Arcobaleno Residence. It is pretty far from city centre and school but very easy to access public transport. It takes about 30-40 minutes to school depends on the traffic. It would be cheaper to share an apartment with friends, which is closer to town as well as to school

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Public transportation in Milano is fairly good but pretty crowded during peak time as you would expect. I travelled a lot during my year abroad with my friends. Milano is pretty central in Europe so it is very cheap and easy to travel to different countries. The Erasmus team at Bocconi organized a lot of events, weekend trips in which you can meet new friends and be social.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD:

Beside gaining new skills, it was an amazing experience with fantastic people who I shared lifetime memories with.

FEEDBACK 3

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?

The induction programme involves a welcome meeting, a welcome cocktail, as well as walking tours of Milan. It is really useful to attend because it is a great opportunity to meet other exchange students as well as members of the staff and ask them any questions.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support

The campus of Bocconi is not very big and buildings where the lectures are held are not far from each other. Normally, exchange students have lectures either in the buildings called Velodromo and Sarfatti 25. There are no seminars at Bocconi, only lectures. The professors upload on the online platform the lecture slides for all courses and it is really convenient to study from them. There is a compulsory attendance for only some of the courses. For example, for some courses if the students attend less than 75% of the classes, they are considered non-attending students. Sometimes the exam is different for attending and non-attending students. As Manchester Business School does not allow us to take courses at Bocconi as non-attending student, I recommend that the students check if attendance is taken because as I already said it depends on the subject. For some subjects, there are midterm exams, for others – only general exams at the end of the semester. For the exchange students, there are special exam sessions in December and April. Students have to enrol for the exams on the online platform in order to sit them.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

I found the MBS International Team very helpful as they were always ready to respond if I had any queries regarding my exchange.

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

I found the meeting extremely useful I had most of my questions answered during the meeting.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students

I found the Bocconi International Student Office very helpful as they were always ready to respond if I had any queries regarding my exchange.

INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER

Please include any information relating to the purchase of compulsory health insurance ie costs etc. or whether this was waived by having the University of Manchester Insurance Policy

I did not have to purchase an additional health insurance cover.

INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS

This should be information on any extra fees that the University charged but should not include accommodation, books, transport, visa etc.

The University charges for printing. Students can put money on their student cards and print with them. International students also can pay for a meal plan which costs 41euros and includes 10 meals.

ACCOMMODATION

As much information as possible on what accommodation is recommended or not recommended.

I personally lived at Arcobaleno Residence. It is a bit far from the campus and students normally have to take the tram for around 20 minutes in order to get to university. However, it is really comfortable and it is a great place to meet friends. The rooms are big and bright. There is a weekly cleaning service. The other university residences are located closer to the campus, but they are mainly for the full-time students at Bocconi.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups

There are all kinds of transport in Milan: trams, subway, buses and the transport system is very well organised. A single ticket costs 1.5 euros and a student monthly card costs 22 euros. It is really easy to travel around Italy by train. The Exchange Student Network team organises various trips and events throughout the year. There are special discounts for the exchange students. The integration with the Italian students at Bocconi is really easy as they study some subjects in English together with the international students.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

EAT (the best pizza in the world) , **PRAY** (for good marks), **LOVE** (the sun, the city, the people, the food, the fashion...) !!!

FEEDBACK 4

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?

It involved information concerning the campus, accommodation, transport, and other things that students need every day. Yes, it was helpful and it was a great way to meet new students in an organised environment.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support.

The courses didn't give a clear indication about the prerequisites needed for choosing some particular classes, which made it difficult to study and to understand the topic without the required level of knowledge.

Also, seminars are missing. They are a great way of engaging students into debates and conversations, but here there were only lectures. Even though the staff are of great quality, my opinion is that seminars would have made the overall experience more pleasant.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful.

Timely response, great support, very happy with their help.

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

Second year meetings were of great help, in order to prepare us, as there are many documents that need to be signed and sent on time, so those meetings made it clear for us what are the most important things to keep in mind.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students

Host office was also helpful, they responded on time and provided the information I asked for every single time.

ACCOMMODATION

As much information as possible on what accommodation is recommended or not recommended.

Accommodation is expensive in Milan, reaching 600 euro/month in some cases. It depends on what the student wants to do throughout the year. A shared room is more convenient, students will not feel lonely, but if relatives will want to visit them, accommodating them might impose some challenges.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups

There are not many student societies to engage students into different activities. There are some sports societies, but from my point of view there are not enough. It might be due to the fact that the size of the university is relatively small, compared to other universities.

Social life was a great experience, as I can say I met people from all over the world and I experienced both the heart of Italy and the international environment given by students coming from many different backgrounds. Local students, (those who speak English) are friendly and talkative, so I did not find any difficulty in interacting with them. Transport is expensive, but one can get anywhere in Europe from Milano, as it's more or less close to everything and there are many low cost companies operating from their main airports.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

Even though I'm a foreign student in the UK, it took me one more country to live in, to discover what 'different' means.

It's probably the year of my life, as many students say and I'm happy I chose Italy.