

**2013-2014**

**University Attended: ESADE Barcelona**

## **FEEDBACK 1**

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### **INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME**

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

The official induction/orientation programme at ESADE lasts for around a week or so. There's an initial ice-breaking meeting involving lots of sangria and free food and also a free coach tour of Barcelona. There are other events hosted by the international committees within ESADE including a trip to Ibiza in early-mid September however I attended neither of these. In truth they aren't really that useful as everyone gets to know each other beforehand. There is an optional two-week language course before term starts and most students enrol in this. On the one hand it's a free two-week course in Spanish with various different levels of difficulty available depending on your ability (if you enrol you will take a test online over the summer), is basically impossible to fail, and it's a great way to learn or improve your Spanish and meet everyone. On the other hand it's 9am-2pm every day for 2 weeks, for only 2 ECTS. Located 20 miles out of Barcelona, travelling to and from ESADE is an arduous experience. It's at least one hour in total each way and if you're using T-10's (more on this later) as your method of paying then this will cost you €40 for the two weeks, excluding what you spend in the café during the day. Having not used any Spanish since A-level prior to moving out here I think the language course was very useful for me. However as the majority of ESADE students are only here for one semester, this programme (and language course) is repeated in January but I didn't attend any of this as I was travelling Morocco!

### **ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

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

ESADE is a very well respected business school and the standard of teaching is, on the whole, excellent. Lectures are very different to Manchester! Each lecture lasts for 3 hours! (You get a 15-20 minute break) and are made up of much smaller groups (no more than 50 people in one room at a time). Lecturers are usually very engaging and often split you off into smaller teams for group-work in class.

As this is an exchange programme and many students come from the outside of Europe there is no official exam period. The majority of modules are marked on weekly assignments and presentations, often with a strong emphasis on group-work, and no final exam. Attendance and participation also count at ESADE and there is a rule that you have to attend 80% of classes in order to pass a module, however whether teachers actually adhere to this much depends on the individual and their ability to take attendance! (Some employ an assistant to take attendance and make a note when you make a contribution in class!). In the unlikely case that there is an exam, it will always be on the last day of class. Marks are out of 10, with a 5 being a pass. In truth there is very little work to be done at ESADE and simply turning up will usually be enough to secure a pass. However classes are usually worth turning up to and I have found the level of teaching to be much better and more focussed than in Manchester!

Modules are chosen on the intranet over the summer and this is on a first come first served basis so you will need to be quick if you want to enrol in the more popular classes (Spanish History & Spanish Art etc.). In addition to weekly classes, there are also intensive courses that take place for one week either in September, January or June. You can also take classes that are in Spanish, which I did, and didn't find them too challenging – "La Economía de la UE" is just general knowledge about the EU and a good one to take if you've already studied it before. Manchester will allow you to take 25% of your credits in non-business modules and I strongly advise you to do this! Spanish History & Culture is an excellent class, and one of the classes consists of a walking tour round El Barrio Gótico and Born! Alex (the teacher) is a top guy and organises a big dinner for all his students at the end of term. He also takes the Spanish Art class however I was too slow to enrol thanks to a bug with the ESADE

Intranet..! Otherwise the ESADE intranet was fine (if a little confusing at first), with full access to lecture slides and acted as a useful contact system for professors and students. Other good courses to take are Brand Management and Implementing Strategy: Processes & Indicators (the intensive one) – no exam!

As travelling to and from ESADE is such a costly and time-consuming process it is a very good idea to try and group all your classes into 2-3 days. Enrol in as many intensive courses as possible to take the heat off your weekly schedule. I did one intensive course for one week in January and am due to do two more in June. In my first term I was in Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and in my second term only Tuesdays and Thursdays. Also pay attention to when your classes end – some finish late April while some don't finish until early June! Although the amount of Erasmus grant that you receive is dependent on when you finish, if you are really clever you can finish late April and then enrol in intensive courses in June and still receive the full amount, which is exactly what I did. I picked all my modules so I would be done by early May, leaving me the rest of May to travel Spain and then I will return to ESADE for one week in June. Sonar festival runs from around 11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> of June and is not to be missed so make sure you don't clash your classes with this!

### **MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM**

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

Always helpful and very good at making sure you keep on top of paperwork! Thanks Andy & Sue!

### **MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS**

*Any additional information that you feel could have been provided*

As helpful as they could have been although nothing can really fully prepare you for your year abroad... You just have to go out and do it!

### **HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE**

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

Initial paperwork went through smoothly enough although I found Elisenda Diaz to pretty useless to be honest! We are supposed to receive a 'TIC Card' that acts as a student ID and also as a way of paying for items in the café and for printing etc. When I hadn't received mine I asked her where it was and she said I hadn't uploaded a picture to the ESADE intranet – I had submitted it with all the required paperwork in May and could see the picture when I logged in... I kept asking her where it was and she said didn't know until I finally discovered it in December in my personal cubby-hole (something we were never even told existed)! I also lost my coat and suspected that I had left it at ESADE but had already flown home so was unable to look for it. A few days later I gave her a detailed description and asked her to check lost property, which she did and replied saying it wasn't there. When I returned to ESADE after the Xmas holidays, having bought a new coat, I decided to check lost property myself and imagine my surprise when I saw it sitting on top of the pile!

### **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*

You only need to get a European Health Card. Everything else should be covered on Manchester's and your parents' insurance although check if you are unsure.

### **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.*

ESADE is an Erasmus destination and you are entitled to apply for an Erasmus grant. You will need to top-up your TIC card in order to print and the café is relatively expensive. Expect to pay €1,60 for a 500ml bottle of coke and €2 for a mars bar! However 'bocadillos' can be bought for under €2 and a coffee costs just €1.. but it all adds up if

you're there all day from 9am-9pm like I was! So make your own sandwiches and take them in, they are much nicer and much cheaper.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

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

First and foremost: **DO NOT LIVE IN SANT CUGAT!!!!!!**

I cannot stress this highly enough. Literally no one lives here. Sant Cugat is a small affluent (and therefore expensive) Catalan town in the mountains and there is nothing to do there. The trains stop at night meaning there is no way to get to and from Barcelona... Everyone lives in Barcelona and sometimes meetings for group-work will even be held at someone's apartment if people can't be bothered to go to ESADE to meet. I've heard the halls of residence are also very expensive... **JUST DON'T DO IT!!**

So you will need to find a flat in Barcelona. First thing to do is join as many Facebook groups as possible (ESADE, Erasmus BCN, Students in Barcelona... Etc.), join absolutely everything you can as this is where the majority of adverts are posted and where you are likely to find your flatmates. In terms of finding flatmates there are two options and both have their pros and cons. On the one hand if you just look for a room for yourself then it is much easier to find somewhere. However you can never be sure that you will get on with your flatmates and I have heard so many horror stories! - I've seen it all!. Your other option is to find your flatmates on Facebook and look for an empty flat for yourselves, which is what I did. Empty flats are much harder to find, especially by September so I strongly recommend getting out there a bit earlier (coinciding with the language course) and having a look then. Stay in a hostel within walking distance of Placa Catalunya and check that they have somewhere you can store all your luggage! Good sites to use for flat-searching are Loquo and Easy-Piso. Rent ranges from €300 to €450 on average depending on location, you can find some great deals if you look hard enough! When you eventually find somewhere make sure you check it out properly and are thorough with the inventory list at the beginning. Spanish landlords are notorious for trying to screw you over so be careful! Be prepared to pay a large amount of cash up front, deposit (2 months rent), agency fee (1 months rent) and the first month's rent when signing the contract!

Everyone will advise you to live in the 'student area' of Eixample or Gracia but in my opinion there are much better places to live. Both neighbourhoods are actually quite far out from the centre of the city and you will have to use the Metro to get anywhere. Should you choose to live there you will want to choose somewhere relatively close to either the Provenca or Gracia FGC station as this is where you will catch the train from to go to ESADE. However I'm not really sure how many students actually live there and those who did, ended up moving further down south towards La Rambla anyway! This is a good place to use as a reference point as it is where everything happens. This has its disadvantages in the summer when it becomes completely overrun by tourists so the trick is to pick somewhere nearby that is a bit quieter. Another reference point is Placa Catalunya which is the main square of the city and you ideally want to be within 15 minutes walking distance of it as this is where you can also catch the FGC train to ESADE. Barrio Gotico and Born are both nearby trendy and historic neighbourhoods with lots of cool bars and places to eat. You have La Rambla, Parc Ciutadella, Placa Catalunya and the beach all within walking distance of these two neighbourhoods. Raval and Barceloneta are also options but they are quite shabby and expensive respectively. Sasha (the other girl from Manchester studying at ESADE) and I luckily found a 4 bedroom flat in Barrio Gotico in early September with an English girl and an Australian guy. We each paid €425 a month with bills working out at about €25 each per month. It was perfect location-wise, being close to bars, restaurants, the beach, the park, most of the clubs etc. and meant that everyone came to us! I'm planning on staying and working over the summer and am going to look for apartments near Parc Ciutadella and Arc de Triomf to get away from tourists as I no longer need to be as close to Placa Catalunya.

## **DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE**

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

Barcelona is first and foremost a city for young people. There is ALWAYS stuff going on, you only have to wander down to the beach or into Parc Ciutadella to see it absolutely heaving with people in their 20's. Spain and

Catalunya always seem to find an excuse to throw a party and it feels like every other day is a public holiday. The weather is absolutely beautiful and you'll be hard done by to ever have to wear a third layer, even in winter. Drink is stupidly cheap with cold cans of beer going for as little as €0,50 in the supermarkets and cold bottles from €1 in the bars. Being a port city, Barcelona has some of the best seafood in the world and you can eat like a king for €10 if you know where to go. In terms of going out, there's something for everyone. If you're the type to dress up and be poppin' bottles all night long to Rhianna and Pitbull then the beach clubs (Opium, Shoko, CDLC...) are for you. If you're more into your Thursday night Sankeys and Gold Teeth then places like Razzmatazz, Jamboree and "Nasty Mondays" at Apollo will be well suited to your tastes. I personally tend to avoid these places altogether, especially the beach clubs that get overrun by tourists, as I am very much into my house and techno music. There's nothing to rival WHP in Manchester but there are some pretty cool venues, and we found ourselves going to clubs like Nitsa (apply for the plastic card online as soon as you arrive and it will get you in for free, saving you €18 each time!) KER and Macarena very often. We've seen some big DJ's here, Maceo Plex, Kerri Chandler, Tale of Us, Seth Troxler and many more! One club that you absolutely HAVE to check out is Row14 in Viladecans outside of the city near the airport... It's a day festival that only happens once a month or so on a Sunday and costs upwards of €30 but it is totally worth it! One of the best clubs I have ever been to. One thing to remember is that nights start a lot later here. The club won't even OPEN until around 1am and will go on until 6am. Therefore you don't even need to get there until around 2 or 2:30am, which is completely the opposite to Manchester where you'd probably be thinking of leaving at that time!

Being out of Barcelona, travelling to ESADE is very expensive as it is Zone 2. You can purchase a student discounted 3 month unlimited pass for Zone 2 for €150 or so and this is called the "T-joven". This also covers the metro in Barcelona. However the ticket itself is made of paper and very flimsy and there is no way of recovering it should you lose it. The risk of losing it coupled with the fact that I was only in 2-3 days a week meant that it wasn't worth it to buy the pass. Instead I bought Zone 2 T-10's for €20 a pop and these allow for 5 return trips to ESADE.. so you're spending €4 every time you go into uni..!

Transport within in Barcelona is relatively cheap. A metro ride is €2 or €10 for 10 journeys (called a T-10). There are other options such as T-mes and T-50/30 however you won't need these if you buy the pass for ESADE and living as central as I do I very rarely use the metro. You will notice Barcelona has its own version of Boris Bikes called "Bicing" and its only €60 for the year. You will need to have an NIE (foreign identity number) to get this but this is something you should be sorting out as soon as you get to Barcelona as you won't able to be employed without it and it can also get you discounts travelling within Spain. Make sure you have originals and copies of passport, European health card, contract for your accommodation, ESADE acceptance letter and the ESADE learning agreement... then book an appointment on the Ayuntamiento website and fill out the form. Once you give them all of this they will give you a bill of €10 that you have to pay at a nearby bank and bring back... then you can get your NIE. It's a very complicated process so if you need any help just give me a shout.

Travelling is really easy from Barcelona and with the Erasmus Grant you pretty much have the world at your fingertips! I've been to Toulouse, Berlin, spent 9 days travelling Morocco and am currently travelling Andalucía with my parents. Look on Ryanair for cheap flights, I managed to fly back to Manchester for £30 return in October and I've seen flights to Portugal and Rome for as little as €30.

Initial integration with the Spanish isn't difficult as they love us English however it's a lot harder to make meaningful friendships with them. The Spanish at ESADE all commute from outside the city and keep themselves very much to themselves. Joining group activities such as tandems and playing sports does help though, as does Tinder!!!

When I was looking at my choices for my 3<sup>rd</sup> year abroad I was so tempted by going out to Asia or Australia but I am so glad I stuck with my childhood dream of living in Barcelona. It's a glorious city because people are genuinely happy to live there. It's super safe and everyone just seems to be able to enjoy life here without spending too much. As you can probably tell I do not want to leave and I would jump at the opportunity to move back here once I graduate. The fact that the uni is so far away is a downside but if you're clever you can pick your modules so you don't have to go in so often.

If you want to contact me about anything, drop me an email at [JezWright123@gmail.com](mailto:JezWright123@gmail.com) or add me on Facebook.

## **DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD**

Absolutely unreal experience, I still pinch myself and expect to wake up to find myself staring out onto a rainy Oxford Road from the Ali G building... the stuff of dreams

## **FEEDBACK 2**

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### **INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME**

They have provided all the students with pretty detailed information, also Elisenda (she is in charge of the exchange students) is very nice and always helpful.

### **ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

The intensity of the modules varied a lot. Some were very easy, if not too easy and some required much more work. From my experience the first semester was more difficult, however the work load is still very small. I picked modules I would not have chance to do in Manchester and some of them were great, it is a good chance to find out what you really find interesting. Most of the classes are more practical, not too much theory. Project Management class was the most theoretical (but most of the content was the typical stuff such as PORTER etc.). I did not have any classes in Spanish, but apparently those are a bit harder, as most of the English classes are for the exchange students. The attendance matters a lot. My advice is to definitely live in Barcelona (El Born, Gotic, or some parts of Raval – the best areas to live in) and try to pick classes in as little days as possible as it takes a while to get to uni and go back. The classes are 3 or 4 hours long, so the best is to have 2/3 classes a day 2/3 days a week. Some of the modules are in very small groups around 20 people, the biggest ones are around 50. The other ESADE exchange students are there only for one semester, so most of my friends were students from other universities that I met elsewhere. Also if you want to be travelling or have something all the teachers are very nice and flexible, they even let you take the final exams ahead, as well if you need additional credit you can do a 4 credit course contact the teacher and prepare additional work for the extra credit. There are also intensive courses, so you can do some of your credits in one or two weeks.

### **MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM**

I personally did not have any problem through the whole year, so I cannot really tell.

### **MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS**

I think everything was said and I did not need any further help. Pretty useful.

### **HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE**

I personally did not have any problem through the whole year, so I cannot really tell.

### **INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER**

I did not have to purchase any additional insurance, but I so far did not have to visit doctor or hospital for any reason.

### **INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS**

Did not have to pay for anything additional at uni, ESADE classes provide you with all the material and you do not have to buy any books.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

I would highly recommend not to ever consider staying in Sant Cugat. It is far away, quiet and it has a more family like environment. The year in Barcelona is very influenced by where you live, loads of my friends were moving

flats through the year getting closer to the centre. You can either find a room in a shared apartment, or find a few people and rent the whole flat. We have a whole flat in the Ghotic quarter next to Placa Sant Jaume and it is the best place to live. Close to the beach, clubs, metro, train to uni, and everything. If you can find a place in Born or Ghotic you will really get to feel the Barcelona vibes. It might be a bit more expensive than Exiample or Gracia, but you will rarely have to take a metro. You can also get the Bicing for a year. The prices vary, but if you want to be in a great location and a nice place it will be around 450 Euros a month. You can obviously find a small room from around 300, but you will end up spending a lot on metro and taxis. Look at websites such as Loqo and do it enough time in advance, the best is to fly mid-summer.

#### **DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE**

I would never want to change a thing about my year abroad in Barcelona, if you are social type it is the best place on Earth. There are plenty of places to go out, the beaches are amazing (if you like running or rollerblading then it is literally heaven). The food is amazing (I am vegetarian and there are plenty of great places). I was lucky to meet other exchange students and also some locals during the first few nights out, and now everyone is always up for doing things. If you will want to travel there are always people going, but also just to chill and discover Barcelona. Loads of fun vintage shops, bars and so on. If you love sun, art, music, fun and people then Barcelona has to be your number one!

#### **DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD**

**The most eventful year spent in the most gorgeous place! (And I even lived in California haha!)**