

**2012-2013**

**University Attended: ESADE Business School,**

## **FEEDBACK 1**

---

### **INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME**

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

The orientation was divided into two parts. Firstly there was a two-week course in Spanish Language. It was a useful experience when it comes to language and also getting to know other exchange students. However, it takes 2 credits of your record. Moreover, it starts a bit earlier than the semester in ESADE (27 of August in our case, when ESADE semester started around 3-4 weeks later. This is good opportunity to get to know Barcelona in advance, but may be a challenge when finding an accommodation so plan this in advance.

The second period of Orientation starts with the official beginning of the semester and involves us tours around the city, lectures on Spanish culture and different side events. This was all very interesting and entertaining.

### **ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

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

Teaching is quite different from University of Manchester. Classes are much smaller. Usually they are 15-20 people and a 60-people class is considered big. However, classes are much longer and lectures can last from 2 to 5 hours (with one or two breaks in between). Lecturers try to engage students in discussions all the time and are always ready to answer additional questions. Usually, most of the courses require weekly course-works as a group report/presentation as well. The work is usually based on solving practical cases and problems. There are often also a number of guest lecturers who provide insider perspective on the matter. Marks are usually distributed between an average of the week's assessment, a final exam/presentation/report and an attendance record. In most of the classes attendance is monitored and students cannot miss more than 2 classes per subject. Classes are quite interesting and I found it useful to take different classes than those in Manchester. I would also highly recommend one or more of the Spanish Culture Classes (History Class, Art Class, Cinema Class) as they made me appreciate and enjoy Barcelona so much more and the lecturer leading them is really passionate, engaging and a student favourite

However, the system of the university was quite messy last year. Courses kept changing times, credits and languages and this can prove to be quite tiresome. Also, there was little information on second semester courses, and this made it more difficult to plan and distribute credits accordingly. I would suggest picking up at least 30 credits for the first semester, as this will allow you to be more flexible the second and assure you have the necessary credits for the exchange. While some first semester courses can finish as late as 20th of December, all exams are over by then and you have a nice and long winter break afterwards.

### **MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM**

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

MBS have been very helpful when answering questions and always did it in a timely manner.

### **MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS**

Second year meeting were quite informative, especially when it comes to the Erasmus documentation and meeting students from your host institution.

## **HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE**

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

While the host institution international office tried to be helpful, they were often swamped with work (or an unresponsive online system) and it took quite a lot of time to obtain documents such as the learning agreement. I would suggest you talk personally with them and if a document seems 'stuck' be polite but insist on deadlines. This situation improved significantly during the second semester, but I would advise to prepare your documents early and expect some delay. Staff, usually know the exchange students by name and are always very nice and responsive.

## **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 use the health insurance by the University of Manchester, but as citizen of the European Union, I used my European Health card to access medical help and get treated.

## **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.

I did not have any additional costs for ESADE.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

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

Accommodation in Barcelona is cheaper than one in UK but it can be quite a hassle to organize. I would not recommend halls, as they are overly expensive and provide bad conditions for the money. I would also not recommend living in the campus in Sant Cugat, as it is a small city with mostly working and family groups. It provides little entertainment for students and as it needs a train to commute to and back from Barcelona, can be an obstacle if you want to go out and night.

If you live in Barcelona, choose the areas well, as the commute to ESADE takes around an hour and it would be quite tiresome to add more distance. The most popular areas are Gracia and Example. They usually have good flats with nice location for commuting and going out, with lots of Bars, Cafes, Clubs, cinemas and parks. I would recommend living with locals, as usually those offers require less deposits, help you practice the language and usually have good apartments. Some students lived in Gothic or Raval as well, but flats might be expensive or old there and the streets can be very small and crowded well.

Apartments are usually shared between 3, 4 or 5 rooms. Beware of the room distribution. It is a common practice in Barcelona to have small rooms which look into the block staircase or have no natural light, so make sure what type of room you are being offered.

If you are want to rent a whole flat with friends, keep in mind that even the flats offered on popular listing websites are usually also owned by agencies and you (the whole group) will most probably need to pay one month of agency fee, and two months for deposit. Me and my colleague arrived in the end of August, and that is a popular holiday period for Spain, so we had a big problem with reaching agencies. So I would recommend, either arrange accommodation before you come over to Barcelona, or rely on arranging it after 1 September, when most agencies and landlords return from holidays.

## **DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE**

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

As you will study outside of Barcelona's first zone, you will need a two zone ticket, which is more expensive. The cheapest option is to get a three-month youth card for 2 zones, which for use cost 150 euro for the whole period of three months. Be careful not to get it lost or stolen, as they do not reimburse you for the left over period or replace it, but you will need to buy a brand new one. With this card, you need to carry a copy of your ID, whose number is on the transport card, to prove you are under 26 and are the owner. The ticket is really easy to use and the transport in Barcelona is timely and convenient. Usually travelling to uni with all metro changes, walking and train take around an hour so keep that in mind and select accommodation accordingly. I also recommend the local bicycle renting system: Bycing. It is very cheap and useful. You will need a NIE for it though and as you will be staying here for a year, obtaining a NIE ( a ID number) will be useful in general but was quite a peril. Have an adequate letter from the uni, copy of personal documents and health insurances. It was quite confusing and stressful to me, as the university and the department could not agree on the needed university documents.

Social life is vibrant in Barcelona. There are a number of places to go out and people are usually friendly. It is always better to know a bit of Spanish, but there are a lot of international places as well. There are always interesting club nights to go to. However, the most advertised and popular bars among international students can be expensive and also most often visited by Exchange students, so if you want to meet more locals and integrate you can go to smaller bars, cafes and clubs. There are also numerous festivals going on, with concerts, gallery exhibitions, beach parties and so on, so look out for those events as well. The city is pretty safe and it has great transport, including night buses.( However, beware pickpockets!!!). There are lots of companies and websites that provide offers (clubbing, travel) for exchange students. It might be a bit harder to integrate with local students in ESADE, as we usually had classes with the other Exchange students and there were very few locals there. However, you can get a buddy or also meet local students on the ESADE-organized events. The ESADE international society also organized a number of trips around Catalunya and Spain for students and those are always a fun experience.

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

**My time in Barcelona was filled with sun, colour, laughter, art and love for the city and the people I met.**

## **FEEDBACK 2**

---

### **INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME**

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

The programme was very well organized. It involved an introduction from the university and library, a tour of the city and a Spanish course. It was useful, especially to get to know other exchange students.

### **ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

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

The classes are generally longer than in Manchester (2-5h long) and lectures & seminars are combined. There are between 8 – 70 students, but on average my classes had 20 – 30 students. 80% of attendance is required to pass the course. Assessments are comparable to Manchester, mainly exams, essays, presentations & participation in class. Many teachers were very involved, nice and approachable, but a few teachers did not really offer the support that was required.

### **MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM**

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

Perfect! I always received very fast replied, which was helpful, because ESADE can be rather slow (especially when you write emails. ESADE work faster if you go to their offices in person).

### **MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS**

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided.

I felt very well prepared for the exchange year.

### **HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE**

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

Be patient and try to go to the office in person, they take very long to answer emails (if they answer them at all).

### **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 was covered by my insurance from Germany (EU), so I cannot provide additional information here.

### **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.

N/A.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

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

I personally would advise Erasmus students to live in Barcelona and not Sant Cugat or any other village outside of Barcelona. The barrios Eixample, Gracia and Gotico (Ciutat Vella) are the best (and most popular), but Les Corts is also good. Make sure that the FCG (train to Sant Cugat) is not too far away. Stations that many students live near (or take the metro from) are Gracia, Provenç (Diagonal) or Plaza Catalunya. Many students live along the metro L5 (blue line, stations include: Diagonal (Provença), Entença, Hospital Clinic, Sagrada Família, Verdaguera etc.)

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

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

Transport: get a 3 Month 2 Zone T-Joven (is for under 25, cheaper than the regular 3 Month pass).

Social Life: Try to meet Spanish people at the university, check meetup.com for Spanish-English (or German-Spanish, Swedish-Spanish etc.) groups etc.. One group I personally got involved in was Sin Verguenza (Sinver), a LGBT-Student group (I was the only one from ESADE, all other students were Spanish ones from public universities) and it was very good to meet Spanish people and get out of the Erasmus-Bubble.

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

**Best decision of my academic career, because now I know I will definitely move to Barcelona in the long-run (best city I have ever lived in)!**