



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Esade Law School
Semester & Year of Exchange	Spring Semester 2025 (Feb to May)
Otago degree(s)	LLB and BA
Major(s)	BA – Politics

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
The Rise of Populism	English	
Public Policies Evaluation	English	
International Development	English	
Geopolitics: Current Affairs and Trends	English	
History of Political Institutions	English	

Total Otago credits gained: 54 points 72 points 108 points _____

Any comments about these papers?

Public Policies Evaluation and History of Political Institutions was taught by Daniel Nicholls who is an amazing lecturer and very kind to exchange students! I highly recommend any papers he takes.

How did the academic experience/ workload/ style of teaching differ from Otago?

There was a lot more internal work than I was used to like essays, presentations, and an in-class debate. Also, you get graded on your participation in every class, so you have to ask/answer questions. The classes were also longer than lectures at Otago, ranging from 2 to 2.5 hours.

Importantly, your attendance is taken in every class and you have to go to 80% of your classes to pass the paper, so when you're picking papers try to choose ones with classes on the same day, and not Monday or Friday, so that you are able to go on weekend trips. Because Esade is quite far from

the city, the commute takes about an hour. This meant that for my 8am classes I had to leave the house before 7am, so you should also try to pick classes that don't start so early if that's not for you.

Accommodation

What accommodation did you stay in? What were the pros and cons of your accommodation?

I found a room in an apartment on HousingAnywhere. I was lucky that all of my flatmates were also international students who were very friendly, but I know that other people were not so fortunate with their flatmates.

My apartment was in L'Eixample which is a very central area. I didn't know anyone that lived in Sant Cugat where the Esade campus is as that is quite far away from the city itself.

Money matters

Please detail your basic costs, e.g. accommodation, flights, visa, food, insurance

Accommodation - €575 a month, bills included

Sanitas Health Insurance - €300

StudentSafe Insurance - \$800

Visa - \$158.50

What means did you use to access your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, Cash passport, foreign bank account, etc.)

I used a Wise card which was very helpful and occasionally took out cash when travelling to places that still used mostly cash.

Visas & Insurance

Did you have to apply for a visa? What was the process?

I was told by the Spanish Embassy that my StudentSafe insurance policy was not enough for the visa, and that I needed to purchase full health insurance from a Spanish provider, so I got the student policy from Sanitas. I'm not sure if everyone else had the same experience with the Embassy and their visa process but it definitely a nice-to-have.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes, which I covered with StudentSafe.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

What organised activities were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?

I didn't find that there were many extra-curricular activities offered because it was the second semester for the local students so there wasn't a Re-O Club's Day that we have here. However, you can attend events through ESN or Erasmus which exchange students at other universities in Barcelona.

What was the university/ city like?

Esade is quite different from Otago. The campus is a lot smaller, and I found that students dress a bit more formally. Though most students speak English, a lot of the cafeteria staff do not so it is helpful to know a little bit of Spanish. This is very much the case for the rest of Barcelona too – a lot of people will speak English but there are also a lot of people who don't (either can't or won't) so it is helpful to know a little bit to get around.

Barcelona is a very safe city. I've caught flights at all hours of the day and never felt unsafe when walking to and from my apartment to a bus stop as there are always people around. It's important to keep an eye on your belongings – do not hold your phone in your hand, put it in your back pocket, or on the table at a restaurant or café. Make sure you have your hand on your belongings at all times on the metro, especially if it is busy. My everyday bag had a zip closure which is a good way to make sure your belongings are safe.

Any recommendations for things to do, places to visit, places to eat etc.?

You really can't go wrong as there are so many different things to do and to eat and drink. Make sure to plan your travels and activities around the weather – I found that some of the hikes I had planned weren't so appealing anymore when it was 30°C. Some activities are free on Sunday, others are free on the first Sunday of every month, and others are free on the first Sunday of some months.

A lot of the nightclubs are paid entry too so make sure you are either willing to drop €20 or scout out some free entry spots.

Any tips for future students?

Make the most of your exchange and say yes to everything!

Overall Experience

Please write one paragraph (or more) about your exchange experience. Please include some photos!

I loved my time in Barcelona and wish that I could have spent longer there on my exchange. I also did quite a lot of travel around Europe, and even to Morocco, which made the experience all the better!



