



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Bocconi University
Semester & Year of Exchange	S1 2025
Otago degree(s)	BComSc
Major(s)	Management and pharmacology

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
Business plan	English	MANT3XX
Business strategy	English	MANT338
Sustainable operations management	English	MANT 337 or 334
International business and management	English	MANT332

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

4 Bocconi Papers = 3 Otago papers

Any comments about these papers?

Business strategy was a good course. The course was set out that each week you do a miniature case study in class, which is formatted the exact same as the pressure test and final exam, so you end up getting loads of practice and don't need to study much. Also, because half of the classes are doing practice cases, there isn't much course content and not much outside of class work (compared to other courses).

Business plan is very group heavy, I wouldn't recommend doing it because I got stuck in a group that wasn't that active in participating in the assignment meaning I ended up pulling a lot of the workload for it. If you need to do it, it is fine the content isn't overly complex (although a simple financial forecasting section, but it isn't hard in fairness) but lots of group work which can be a pain.

Sustainable operations management and international business were both fine. Both have a reasonable amount of content, international business requires readings before every class. I found

them interesting, but they were 20-30 pages before each lecture. Sustainable operations management sounds exactly what it is, how can you make the supply chain more environmentally friendly, had two assignments but I found they were marked quite easy.

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

Compared to management papers at Otago, I found the workload to be similar. You have the option to be an attending or non-attending student. If you are an attending student, you must go to all the lectures in person and record your attendance (lectures are not recorded, if you miss one you need to get notes from friends). If you are a non-attending student, it means your attendance is below 75% or you don't go to any lectures (you can decide at the start of the semester). Non attending students have 100% of their grade comes from the final exam that is based off a textbook (not the lectures). The attending exams are easier, so if you can do your courses as an attending, I'd recommend it, I did all mine as attending. Sometimes classes can be 3 hours long, but there aren't any tutorials for the courses I took. The timetable can also change throughout the semester which sometimes results in clashes.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in private accommodation that I sorted out on my own. It was a shared apartment on Viale Beatrice D'este (super close to campus) that I have my own room in. The rent was 745 euros a month and the apartment was nice enough for what I needed. I got lucky that my flatmates were all international/exchange students at Bocconi as well, so we had a lot of fun. My rent was significantly less than everyone else I knew in a similar location to me (across the road from campus), and I think it was because I sorted my accommodation out really early. Most of my friends paid around 1000+ euros a month. I found my accommodation through Spotahomes which worked out well because they provided security, my landlord was DoveVivo (professional landlord in Italy). I still picked to rent my apartment through the Spotahomes website because it was listed for less than it was on the DoveVivo website (still to this day not sure why) so I managed to get cheaper rent. DoveVivo has a 200 euro check in and check out fee if you go through them.

There is university accommodation at aparto. The spots are super limited (about 100 or so spots and 800 exchange students in the semester I went applying) and some universities have certain arrangements with Bocconi to give their students spots. If you can secure a spot in aparto I'd do that, it is the better option for sure. But getting a spot is like getting concert tickets, you sit in a waiting room and get allocated a spot in the queue and either get lucky or don't. Sometimes you do have to share a room in aparto.

Money matters

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

My accommodation was 745 euros a month (plus a 200 euro check in and 200 euro check out fee).

My flights were \$1300 NZD on Singapore Airlines; this was a one-way ticket as I am doing a second exchange in Scotland.

Insurance was around \$1200 NZD, I went with InsuranceSafe NZ, the one Otago recommends. I am doing two exchanges, so this covered both as well as 3.5 months of travel in the middle. I also paid extra to get Morocco, Egypt, and Tunisia covered.

Eating out in Italy can be expensive, they'll give you free bread but charge a table fee (normally around 2-5 euros) per person for sitting at a table and charge for water. I'd never been to Europe before this exchange so found it surprising. For my own food, I probably spent around 30-50 euros a week on food, not entirely sure in all honesty, it varied so much because of travelling. Going to the supermarket was slightly less than in NZ but there is less variety (Esselunga is the only big supermarket near campus). Conads is cheaper than Carrefour out of the smaller supermarkets.

The visa was around \$90 NZD or so to apply, plus whatever the cost to ship it was, and printing out all the documents. The permesso you need to get when you land in Italy costs around 100 euros or so I believe.

My phone plan in Italy was 10 euros a month with TIM, and it had 120GB of data a month with no roaming charges within the EU and unlimited calls and texts.

Milan is an expensive city, be prepared to budget more than you'd expect. I think I aimed to save around \$20,000 NZD for my semester in Milan, but I don't think I spent that much, maybe around \$10-15k NZD total, but I am quite the budget traveller.

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

I used Wise for everything; they convert currencies with low fees compared to NZ banks. For example, to convert 2000 NZD to euros I only was charged a fee of \$2, ANZ charged me \$2 to buy a 20-euro meal (after adjusting for the exchange rate), so it is cost efficient to use Wise. Revolut is very similar and does pretty much the same thing I believe.

Visas & Insurance

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

Yes, I applied for a visa through the Italian Embassy in New Zealand. Although around the same time I applied the Italian ministry for foreign affairs changed the visa application process requirements. I was in frequent contact with the Embassy and managed to slip in my application before they changed the process, so I am not sure what the new process is like/how different it is.

Once you are in Italy you need to obtain a permit of residence (permesso). All the horrors you've heard about it are true, it is awful. I believe there is a guide on the YesMilano website on how to fill out the form as an exchange student. Filling out the form is low key like cracking morse code, it is all in Italian, it's like 20-30 pages long and the whole thing costs 100 euros. You need to print all the documents you needed for your visa for the application. The permesso form can be picked up from a post office when you first arrive to Italy. You need to buy this stamp specific from a tobacco store, it's super bizarre. Make sure to go in the morning to the post office to drop off your application, they only take a certain number a day and when all the exchange students are there it becomes a race who can get their permesso application in first. You'll be allocated an appointment at a police station in around 2-3 months' time to take your fingerprints (you'll most likely have to stand around for a few hours at the appointment and will have to have physical copies of the same documents you sent in with the application) and then in a few weeks you'll have to back again to the police station to pick up the permesso card.

Most exchange students don't manage to get the card – I had to because my passport with my visa got water damaged and rather than try obtaining a new visa in the new passport the permesso seemed easier.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

No

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

The university holds some activities for exchange students. ESN is a student network that holds most of the events. GO TO EVERY EVENT in the first week or two, even if you are tired, or think it's a little cringe, it's the best way to make friends. I did the tours the university offered, and they were good to make friends on as well as the speed friendship dating, it's a bit cringe but does the job. The ESN events are good and happen throughout the semester. There were three trips ESN held, one to Verona, to Turin, and a ski trip. I went on all three and had a blast and met lots of people. On the ESN group chats they will post the entire semester of events that are happening around Milan that students will be at; these are a good way to make friends with Italian student as well.

The university also has lots of clubs as well. They have a travel club that organises trips away with Bocconi students.

I did the language crash course at the start of the semester which is where I made most of my closest friends, if you want to get to know the basics of Italian it is worth doing. Helped me to understand a bit more to get around easier.

What was the university/ city like?

The Bocconi campus is more modern than Otago. The images you google of Bocconi with the new buildings are for MBA students, undergrad classes take place in the older campus across the road. I still thought the 'old' campus was flash, they have lots of art everywhere and looks a bit like a museum. There isn't lots of study spots on campus like there is in Otago, you can make do with it but during exams there is a line outside the library when it opens to get a seat.

Milan is a classy and fashionable city. Compared to the rest of Italy it is a bit less chaotic, but the night light is the best in Milan. The night clubs are very cool. The city is flat and easy to get around with public transport if you can't walk (in comparison to NZ at least). The Milan metropolitan area is around 1 million people, so slightly less in size than Auckland. If you like fashion and shopping, pack lightly, there are lots of vintage stores and popups around the place. I did need to buy a new suitcase for all my new clothes and shoes.

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

- Back door 43 is a small private bar in Navigli
- The last Sunday of the month has a massive vintage market in Navigli
- Arami silos for fashion lovers
- Brera district and Navigli for shopping
- Design week has more things to do and see around Milan than fashion week
- The last supper painting books out months in advance if you want to see it
- Clubs: Gatto, Terrazza, The Flat (art installation), Magazine, Lubar, SunEleven rooftop, JustMe (saw Jason Derulo here)
- For Lombardy food (recommendations from Milanese): Osteria Brunello, Osteria Conchetta, El Brellin, Risoelatte

Any tips for future students?

- Use YesMilano for guides when doing admin
- Sort accommodation out early – I applied for my apartment before halls applications
- First Sunday of the month museums tend to be free around Italy
- Try to harass the embassy for a tax code, they told me they were too overwhelmed to issue one and I couldn't be bothered sorting it out in Milan
- You can book through the Bocconi student doctors to see specialists
- At first the cheap RyanAir flight may look like a good deal, but taxis are incredibly expensive, and public transport doesn't run after a certain hour if it's an early flight. You will spend close to 20 euros on public transport to Malpensa or Bergamo, sometimes it is worth paying a little extra to fly out of Linate.
- WeTaxi and FreeNow for taxis, Uber tends to be grossly overpriced in comparison (taxis are hard to get sometimes)

Overall Experience

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

Doing an exchange was 100% the best thing I've ever done. I'd never been to Europe before, never done a long-haul flight, never been in a non-English speaking country even. Before I left, I was slightly nervous about going to Italy and not speaking Italian, but it is so worth it to dive into the deep end and take the risk. Italy as a travel destination itself is unmatched, and Italian culture is really one to embrace. There is a special place in my heart for Italy, and I will always remember this exchange as one of the coolest things I've done to date. You will meet people from a variety of cultures and see so much more of the world. I was fortunate enough to meet some people that invited me to fashion week afterparties, one's celebrities were at. I fell in love with Italy and made the priority to travel it well, I've seen so much of the country as well as a few others here and there (France, England, the Netherlands, Hungary, Austria, Egypt).

