



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	ESADE Business School
Semester & Year of Exchange	Fall Semester, 2022
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Arts
Major(s)	Politics, Philosophy & Economics. Minors in Māori and Spanish

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
Art & Culture in Spain & Catalonia: 2000 years of beauty	English	All of my spanish papers combined made up 1x 200 , and 1x 300 level Spanish
Never Too Many Movies: Spanish & Catalan Society through Cinema	English	
Spain & Catalonia Today: Recent History, Current Affairs	English	
Spanish Intensive	English/Spanish	
Spanish	English/Spanish	
Re-Imagining Capitalism: Alternatives for the 21st Century	English	interest paper
Anthropology: In Search of Principles for a Life Philosophy: Lessons from Art, History & Economics	English	Interest paper

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

Any comments about these papers?

I really enjoyed all of Alex's papers (first 3 papers listed). He only teaches exchange students and he is very passionate about it which shows in his lectures. I learnt so much about Catalonia and Spain which I felt was very significant to my overall experience, I would definitely recommend taking at least one of his papers. Re-imagining capitalism was one of the best papers I have taken at Uni, would recommend if you're interested in/study economics or politics.

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

The work itself was easy compared to Otago, the assignments are not hard and there are hardly any of them. Also, a large portion of your grade is on participation, so basically you just have to turn up. The lectures are seminar style, so you sit for 3 hours (with a few breaks) and that's the only lecture you have for that class all week. Also, Barcelona has a public holiday every other day so you have a huge amount of random days off and it feels like you're never really at uni.

You must attend 8 out of 10 classes to pass, anything lower than 8 and you automatically fail.

Accommodation

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

Finding accommodation in Barcelona is kind of a nightmare if you don't get onto it early. I would highly recommend you start looking on Facebook or renting sites well in advance, either for a room or other students to find a room with. If you're going through Facebook beware of scams. The app Badi is also good for finding spare rooms, or you could go through an agency such as Erasmundus Barcelona which is specifically for international students. I only sorted a temporary accom for a couple weeks for when I first arrived and then intended to find a permanent place once I had arrived. This might have worked a few years ago but there's a housing crisis now, so would definitely recommend sorting something before you arrive. Luckily I met someone that had a spare room so I was able to move in there.

In terms of areas, my favourites were El Born, Gracia and Exiample (exchnage students basically only lived in these areas and I probably wouldn't go anywhere else). All great options and you can't really go wrong. I would not recommend El Raval as it is known to be dangerous at night, I also wouldn't recommend living in Sant Cugat where the University is, as it is much more fun to be in the city.

Money matters

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

Flights: \$1200 NZD each way

Visa: \$133.50 NZD

Accom: 600 euro/month, everything included.

Insurance: \$850NZD for travel insurance and then another \$300 NZD for health insurance which was necessary for my visa. I got this through the Spanish company, Santias. Because I travelled before and after my exchange, my travel insurance was a bit more expensive.

Food: Dinner time in Spain is very social and a big part of their culture, so you will quickly find yourself going out most nights. I'd say I roughly spent 80 euros on food per week (including supermarket shops) but you can definitely do it much cheaper than that. Also dinner usually starts around 9-10pm so be prepared for that!

Transport: The T-Jove Tmobiltat card costs 40 euros and gives you unlimited transport on buses and metros for 3 months. It was half price while I was there so it may have gone back up to 80 euros.

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

Travel Wise visa. Almost everyone I knew on exchange had it which made it so easy and quick to transfer people as well.

Visas & Insurance

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

Yes I needed a student visa. The process was very easy, you just fill out a form and send it away. Mine took about six weeks to come back.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

I had to submit proof of travel insurance in my application.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

Definitely sign up for the intensive spanish course that Esade hosts at the start of the semester. It's one week long and is where I met most of my closest friends. It's the best way to meet people and learn/improve your spanish. Also, the Erasmus programme in Barcelona is really good. They organise lots of day trips for cheap prices and it's a great way to meet people in the first few weeks. I would recommend signing up for some of these, especially the Costa Brava Beach hopping tour. They have an instagram page and an app which advertises all the events.

A Whatsapp group also gets made with all the exchange students, and lots of plans/nights out are organised in this. Try and get involved with these things as much as you can, as your classes will be full with other exchange students and you'll spend lots of time together so it's nice to be friends with them all.

What was the university/ city like?

I travelled quite a lot while I was overseas and Barcelona is definitely my favourite city. It is constantly bustling with activity, and I can't quite describe how lucky I felt to be living there!! It has the loveliest people, best food, best nightlife and so much history and culture. It's cheaper than most big cities in Europe and extremely popular with exchange students so it is easy to make lots of friends.

The university itself is private, so it's pretty modern and located in a nice suburb out of town (Sant Cugat campus). My commute was about a 30 min train + 15 min walk. I didn't mind this at all, as I only had to do it 2-3 times a week and you almost always see someone you know on the train, or alternatively it's also the perfect amount of time to do any readings or homework for your classes.

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

There is so much to do in the city and also loads of affordable daytrips. I went on lots of daytrips and recommend looking into Costa Brava/Tossa del Mar and Blanes, Castadefells beach, Montserrat Monestary, Tarragona and Altafulla, Sitges (especially during the film festival week), and Girona. Also there is a fast train to Madrid for 9 euros which is a good weekend trip.

All museums and galleries are free on the first Sunday of the month and after 5pm on Thursdays (you just have to book a time slot online). Also if you get a library card you can get 15% off most tourist attractions, like Sagrada Familia, Park Guell, Casa Batillo etc. Also definitely try and get to an FC barca game at Camp Nou.

- tapas: Bormuth, Bar Canete, El Xampanyet, La Pepita, Bodega La Puntual, Tapeo
- cafes: Lulu & Flynns, Nomad Coffee (down Pasaje Sert), Roasted Coffee, Lady Babka
- Best bars/pre-drinks: Le Cyrano (pour your own drinks), Ovella Negra is a huge Oktoberfest style drinking hall, D9 bar have 5 euro shot trays and beer pong competitions. 3345 in Raval was probably the best all round. George Payne Irish Bar for sports games.
- Clubbing is pretty big, would recommend La Terrazza in summer (as it is outdoors), Sala Apolo and Input High Fidelity Club. Also, there's a day festival every Sunday in summer called Brunch in the Park, would definitely recommend going to as many of those as you can as they were a highlight for me!
- Free things: Bunkers del Carmel for sunset (or sunrise), watching the skateboarders outside MACBA, Palo Alto markets on the first weekend of each month, weekly Flea markets (you can find locations on instagram), Ciutadella Park. SUPs sunrise paddleboard on Barceloneta Beach.

Some apps I would recommend:

- Residential Advisor & Dice for gig and festival tickets
- Studentfy for discounts and information for students. It gave me a good discount on Vivagym, they run the same classes as Lesmills and have heaps of locations across Barcelona.
- Meet up is what you use to book public courts (beach volleyball, paddle, basketball etc.)

Any tips for future students?

- Be cautious of pickpockets. Almost every person I met had at least one (if not two) phones stolen, as well as money, passports etc. This is the biggest downside to Barcelona and the police can't do much about it, so use common sense and never put your phone in your pocket or leave your things unattended.
- Also something that is pretty important to note is that Esade's semester is really short. Final exams for me were finished by 1st December. Most exchange students had signed apartments for the whole of Dec thinking uni went up until Christmas and were then stuck in rental contracts. Be cautious of that and maybe only sign an apartment until the end of November, then you are free to travel for December.

Overall Experience

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

I couldn't recommend Barcelona for an exchange enough. I met the best people from all over the world and loved both the city and the university. It is so vibrant and full of history and culture, you will never ever get bored. I also think that the erasmus programme is one of the biggest in the world so it is incredibly easy to meet people. While I also recommend travelling before and after your trip, I think looking back I wouldn't plan too many weekend trips while you are in Barcelona, as you are likely only living there once! When I went on trips during the semester I found I was gutted to be missing weekends in Barcelona, there really is just so much to do and I wish I could live it all over again, so make the most of it and have fun :) !!

