



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Bologna (Università di Bologna)
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2, 2024
Otago degree(s)	BSc, LLB(Hons)
Major(s)	Statistics

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
Introduction to Italian Culture	English	Arts unspecified
English Literature 3	English	Arts 300 level
Statistics for Economics	English	STAT 300 level
Computational Statistics	English	STAT 300 level

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

Any comments about these papers?

On my exchange, I took my final compulsory papers for my BSc, but also mixed in some electives like English Literature and Italian Culture in order to meet the 'full time' student points requirements. It was a good way to keep my studies diverse and engaging.

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

Overall, the workload during my exchange was much lighter than at Otago, with most of my courses only requiring an exam and no internal assessments. While my statistics papers were on par with those at Otago, my English Literature and Italian Culture papers had a very light workload, giving me plenty of free time to explore the city and travel.

Accommodation

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

Accommodation is one of the trickiest parts of doing an exchange in Bologna due to the shortage of affordable rentals. I rented an apartment on Via del Pratello through an online agency, which was pricey but was amazingly located and gave me the peace of mind of having a legit place to stay upon arrival.

While I know people who found cheaper options through Facebook groups etc, there were also plenty who ended up getting scammed. If you're considering this route, I'd recommend not transferring any money until you've seen the place in person. Alternatively, living outside the city walls in the suburbs can be a great more affordable option. Bologna is super bike-friendly as it is so flat, making commuting into the city easy.

Money matters

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

Flights – Around \$3,500 return

Accommodation – €900 a month (plus agency signing fee and deposit)

Visa - \$160ish (plus an additional permit that Italy requires upon arriving there, the Residency Permit/Permesso di Soggiorno which is an extra \$200ish)

Food – I spent around \$50 a week on groceries. Eating out in Bologna is super cheap and I did this often (around 15-20 euro for a sit-down dinner + wine, 2 euro beers, big pizza slices were 2.5 euro).

Insurance –\$800

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 that I would load money into in periodically. Cash is also still quite widely used in Bologna.

Visas & Insurance

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

The visa process for my exchange was quite a headache, mainly because the information about the requirements online was unclear. My application was rejected twice because of this, which made the whole process quite stressful and took much longer than expected.

If I could give one piece of advice, it would be to start sorting out your visa as soon as you're confirmed for your exchange and have received the necessary letters from both your home and host universities. Most people I've talked to also experienced difficulties and delays with the Italian embassy in New Zealand.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

The university didn't offer any organised activities for students, but the Erasmus programme had plenty of options if you wanted to join them. They organised activities like trips around Italy, bar crawls and tours. As a New Zealand student, you can also get an Erasmus card and take part in these activities.

I went on the Erasmus trip to Puglia, a beautiful region in southern Italy. The crowd was a bit younger and the vibe fairly hectic, but there was always the option to break away to explore and do your own thing if you preferred a more relaxed pace.

What was the university/ city like?

Bologna is a seriously cool, young and progressive city. It has beautiful architecture and the buildings are a patchwork of reds, yellows and oranges. While you can get this beautiful architecture in other parts of Italy, Bologna has an edgier vibe than Florence, Venice or Rome, and has hardly any tourists. Every street is covered in cool street art and graffiti. Bologna is also known as the food capital of Italy (which is saying something). The quality of food is absolutely *insane*.

Bologna is quite a politically engaged city, owing to its anti-fascist history. With a huge student population, there's always plenty of activism, peaceful protests, and debate going on. This was really cool to observe and be a part of.

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

I left off some of the obvious more touristy spots that you'll find on any online Bologna guide (although they're worth checking out too).

Restaurants:

- Zapap Pratello: Pizzeria and craft beer brewery on Via del Pratello. Best pizza in Bologna in my opinion and a cool atmosphere. Really good craft beer too and all super reasonably priced. Order the Farm pizza.
- Osteria dell'Orsa: Cheap and cheerful traditional Bolognese food. Bit of an institution but be prepared to wait a little outside for a table.
- Trattoria da Me: Tasty traditional Bolognese food
- Oltre: Higher end dining but seriously good for a special occasion. Less traditional and more experimental Italian.
- Temakhino Bologna: Really good Asian fusion food (hard to find in Bologna) but not a cheap spot by any means.
- Sfoglia Rina: Another pretty good pasta place. Also has less traditional pasta flavour options which is nice.

Must try dishes in Bologna: tagliatelle al ragu, crescentina with cold cuts and cheese (so good), mortadella, gramigna alla salsiccia, tigelle, gelato.

Lunch spots:

- I Panini di Miro: Miro is an absolute staple for students. Cheap and delicious sandwiches with so many filling combos to choose from.
- Fram Bistrot Bio Veg: Amazing and super cosy vegan cafe. Their food is delicious (coming from a non-vegan) and reasonably priced, their lunch combo always hits. It is a good place to

park up for the day and study (just order lunch there). They also do a great matcha which is hard to come by in Bologna.

- 'O Fiore Mio Pizze di Strada: Cheaaaap pizza by the slice
- Pasta fresca naldi: Cheap and delicious takeaway pasta on Pratello. You can buy pasta from here and then enjoy it in any of the nearby bars.
- Pappare Bologna: Decent spot for more NZ/Aus vibe brunch food but not super cheap.
- Corner Bar: Yum brunch food (their Lu sandwich is epic).

Pastries

- Allegra: BEST pastries in Bologna. Get there early (try before 10am) cause they sell out of some flavours. Order the torta di rose. Also really good coffee and decent matcha.
- Felicity Bistrot: Really good pastries (unsure about the coffee).

Gelato:

- Cremeria Santo Stefano: Best gelato in Bologna hands down.

Bars:

The nightlife and bar scene in Bologna is amazing all year round, but it really comes alive in the summer with amazing gigs and events on every single night, so make the most of the warmer months! Follow @bologna_parvenza on Instagram to keep on top of what is happening each week in Bolo.

- Via del Pratello: Vibrant and lively street full of really cool bars. Much more of a local scene than the student quarters. I was lucky enough to live on Pratello and this was my favourite place in the whole of Bologna!
- Cortile café: Love this place. The home of live music in Bologna. There is a live band playing here most nights and they do really fun tribute nights to great artists (follow them on Instagram because they post their schedule there).
- Labas: It is hard to explain Labas but it's on every Wednesday night and it is a must do experience at least once as a student in Bologna 😊
- Bar Birroteca Lupulus: Stupidly cheap drinks and cocktail jugs (5 euro for 1 litre jug of strong aperol or negroni). Not much ambience but a very economical place to swing by on a night out.
- Piazza Rossini: In the summer they open a bar out of a container in this little park and put on outdoor house/techno gigs here. Such a fun place to begin your night (music ends at like 11:30).
- Dumbo: Funky spot with a really cool outdoor area in summer.
- Porta Pratello: Social event space and bar that opens in summer with really cool events on most nights, from Paint and Sips to live gigs to yoga. Follow them on Instagram to see what's on.
- Disco vinello: These guys put on disco vinyl + wine events around bologna, I never made it to one but they seemed cool!

Other things to do:

- Market in Piazza Santo Stefano: Every second Sunday of the month there is a gorgeous antique market with vintage stalls selling vinyl, antiques, jewellery, furniture and books.
- Mercato Vintage della Montagnola: Massive market selling everything you can think of, including heaps of super nice and cheap vintage clothes (Fridays and Saturdays every week). You can dig through the big bins of clothes to find a steal or there is a more curated vintage section in the Parco della Montagnola.

- Via del Pratello: If you aren't into bars it is still worth going for a wander down this street to look at the amazing street art!
- Giardino A. Dubcek: Cute little hidden park for lunch and picnics.
- San Luca: Beautiful basilica up in the hills, lovely place to picnic and stay for sunset!
- Giardini Margherita: Beautiful big park. Really comes alive in the summer but is beautiful all year round.
- Vinyasa yoga bologna: Stunning yoga studio. The classes are in Italian which can be difficult, but you can always copy the movements and it really helps improve your Italian 😊

Any tips for future students?

All year round is great in Bologna, but really make the most of the summer months as I have never experienced a place quite as lively, fun and exciting as Bolo in the summer!

Overall Experience

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

I had the best time on exchange in Bologna. I am biased but think it must be one of the best cities in Europe to do an exchange because it is beautiful, relatively cheap (aside from the cost of accommodation) and is such a student oriented city, making it so easy to meet people. The university workload is chill so you will have plenty of time to take in all that this incredible city has to offer!!

