



## My Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Host University</b>                 | ESADE Business School        |
| <b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b> | Sem 2, 2025                  |
| <b>Otago degree(s)</b>                 | Arts and Commerce            |
| <b>Major(s)</b>                        | Communications and Marketing |

### Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

| Course title                      | Language of instruction | Otago equivalent |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Intensive Spanish                 | English                 | ANY_1XX          |
| Marketing from Strategy to Action | English                 | MART301          |
| Marketing and Society             | English                 | BSNS111          |
| Innovation in Marketing           | English                 | MART306          |
| Digital Advertising               | English                 | MART308          |
| All about B2B Marketing           | English                 | BSNS111          |
|                                   |                         |                  |
|                                   |                         |                  |
|                                   |                         |                  |

Total Otago credits gained:  54 points  72 points  108 points  \_\_\_\_\_

Any comments about these papers?

I really enjoyed Marketing and Society, and Innovation in Marketing.

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

The ESADE teaching style differs quite a lot from Otago. I only had one class for each paper a week, where each class was 2 and a half hours long, with mandatory attendance (you need at least 80% attendance or you will fail the paper). I found that my classes sort of operated as a lecture in the first half and tutorial in the second half. I found the work a bit easier than Otago, and in all of my classes I didn't have any tests or exams, it was mainly all group work and presentations.

## Accommodation

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

I stayed in a long-term Airbnb with 3 other kiwis (2 I knew from Otago, and 1 we found from him posting on Facebook in a Barcelona accommodation page). I highly recommend doing this, as Airbnb is a trusted site, and doesn't have all the agency fees and hidden costs a lot of the accommodation agencies had. Our Airbnb was newly renovated, in a nice area, and was relatively easy to find and sort out pre move in admin.

All of my friends I met over there found accommodation through the agencies e.g. Spotahome, Housing Anywhere, etc, and I think with these it's very much luck of the draw. The way these agencies work is you pay for a room in an apartment, and then there's a shared kitchen, bathrooms, laundry etc, but typically there isn't a common/living room. These apartments typically have other students/young professionals living in them, so there's definitely a chance you will make friends with your roommates, but don't go in with the expectation that your roommates will become your closest friends during your time there. It's also just good to keep in mind that some landlords can be quite slack and very bad on comms, but again, it is very luck of the draw and I had some friends who had a great time with their home shares, and others who didn't.

In terms of areas, aim to stay in either Eixample or Gracia. These are much more local neighbourhoods and much less touristy. I stayed in Eixample and felt very safe, and it wasn't too noisy or overcrowded. El Born is also a really cool area to stay in, but is a bit more touristy.

## Money matters

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

I flew to Athens and did a month of travel before my exchange started to make the most of the European summer. My flight to Athens was about \$1300 and then I had a few flights in between for my travels before flying to Barcelona to start uni. You definitely have to keep extra costs in mind if you are planning on doing travel before/during/after your exchange.

The Spanish Visa is \$163. Our Airbnb cost about \$1200 each a month. I got travel insurance for 6 months which cost about \$500, and then you also require Spanish health insurance for your visa, and mine was around \$400 (my provider was ASSSA).

In general, Europe is quite expensive, especially when it comes to food and everyday costs, and the NZ dollar doesn't stretch very far against the euro. While supermarket prices were pretty cheap, eating out can be noticeably more expensive. Just something to keep in mind because you will of course want to go out for dinners and drinks with friends, but if you're on a budget just try to limit these.

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

You'll definitely want to get a Wise card. It was the easiest and cheapest way to access money while travelling. The exchange rates were much better than using a normal NZ debit or credit card, and it worked everywhere in Europe.

## Visas & Insurance

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

Yes, you need a visa for Spain. You can't apply for it until you have received your acceptance letter from ESADE, so try to have all of your other documents ready to go, and then as soon as you get your acceptance letter, send all your documents to the embassy. For your visa you will need an application fee (this can be done through bank transfer), health insurance from a Spanish provider, your passport, a passport photo on photographic paper (I just went to warehouse stationery and got a photo taken and printed), accommodation details, evidence of funds (a bank statement), your ESADE acceptance letter, and a completed visa application form. My visa took about 5 weeks to process, but I have known others to take shorter/longer so it's just important to get your application in as soon as you receive your acceptance letter. Also just bear in mind that all documents must be printed out and sent to the embassy via post.

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

No, but the visa did.

## Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There are a few orientation events in the first week but nothing that was heavily advertised to us. I can't really think of any others.

*What was the university/ city like?*

The campus is really nice, it's very modern with great facilities. Something to keep in mind is that the campus is about an hour away from Barcelona city. You have to catch an S1 or S2 train to get there, so finding accommodation close to train stations might be something you consider, but at the same time, Barcelona is such a well-connected city so a train station will probably be a max 20 min walk away from you, or you can get a metro/bus to a station as well.

The city itself is amazing. There is so much to do and see, and it has amazing restaurants, cafes, wine bars, rooftop bars, shops, nightlife, etc. There is also so much history and culture, from the architecture and museums to the neighbourhoods and local way of life, which makes Barcelona such an exciting and memorable place to be.

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

Exploring neighbourhoods like Gracia, El Born, and the Gothic Quarter.

For shopping: Passeig de Gracia and Plaça Catalunya has all the main shops. If you're into vintage shopping Humana Vintage is a chain second hand store all over Barcelona and this is probably where most of my money went!

Sight-seeing: Sagrada Família, Park Güell, and all the other Gaudí hot spots.

Punt del Mulhberg is an incredible look out spot that looks over the whole city – go at sunset!!

Bars: Salts Bar is a really cool bar that also looks over the city. I also loved La Maison (cocktail bar), Terrassa 360 (rooftop bar), and Ovella Negra (this is where we went basically every time for pres before going to a club).

Food: Bo de B have the best sandwiches for 6 euro, Honest Greens (basically healthy fast food), Bar La Principal and Bar del Pla (my fave tapas places), Fast Eddie's (best burger in BCN!)

Trips I highly recommend: Morocco, Ibiza for Calvin Harris and Fisher, and Munich for Oktoberfest (if you're there second sem).

Explore the coast: Costa Brava, Tossa de Mar, Sitges (all about a 1-2 hour train ride from Barcelona)

Hikes: Mount Tibidabo, Montserrat, Congost de Mont-rebei

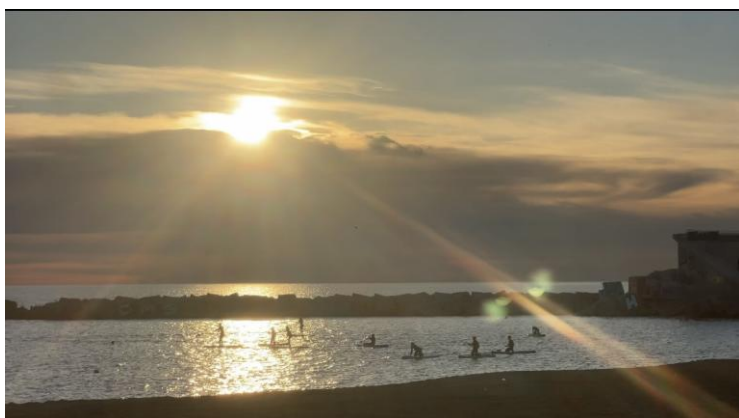
*Any tips for future students?*

Make the absolute most of your time. It will go by so fast, so make sure you have a good mix of exploring Barcelona as well as taking weekend trips away to make the most of your time in Europe. Be open-minded, say yes to everything, step outside your comfort zone, and enjoy every opportunity.

## Overall Experience

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

My exchange was truly the best experience of my life. If you are on the fence of doing an exchange or not, don't think about it and just do it! You honestly will not regret it, you will make so many new friends from all over the world, and as cliché as it sounds, you genuinely create the best memories you will never forget. Barcelona was the perfect place for an exchange because it's such a social, student-focused city, with endless things to do and explore. There's always something going on, and it never feels boring. I genuinely wish I could do it all again.



Sunrise paddle boarding at  
Barceloneta Beach



Terrassa 360 rooftop bar



View from Pont de Mulberg



View from Salts Bar



Congost de Mont-rebei (about a 3 hour drive inland from Barcelona – we hired a car – so worth it!)



Oktoberfest



The Moroccan Sahara Desert



Calvin Harris in Ibiza