



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	Universita Bocconi – Milan
Semester & Year of Exchange	S2, 2023
Otago degree(s)	BACOM (conjoined degree)
Major(s)	Marketing and Communications

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
Islam, Politics and the Middle East	English	¾ paper
Sociology	English	¾ paper
eMarketing & eCommerce	English	¾ paper
New Product Development and Open Innovation	English	¾ paper

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

Any comments about these papers?

Islam, Politics, and the Middle East was very interesting and good teacher. You can get pretty high marks on the classwork part of this class. I found it a little challenging because I had never done politics before but good class overall. Must study a lot for the final exam though.

Sociology was a very good class. I mean, a lot of it is common sense but this was one of the classes that you could sort of predict what was going to be in the exam the best, which trust me is useful because with every other class it was challenging.

eMarketing and eCommerce was a very low stress, points for just showing up class basically. TAKE IT ATTENDING! The final exam for non-attending is harder and the class work is so easy. You will not fail this class.

New Product Development and Open Innovation was fine. The classwork was fine. The final exam you must know every little detail from every slide because the literal two things I left out of the 50 pages of notes I studied were both in the exam and the way the point system works, I was scared of failing. Class is more technical and about processes, so just keep that in mind.

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

WAY LESS work throughout the semester. Like you genuinely feel like there is something wrong because the workload is so low. They will give you one assignment per class per semester. And the amount of work you have to do for those assignments is usually 1-1.5 pages. However, the final exams are way harder in the sense that:

1) you have to get 60% to pass final exams (and if you don't pass the final exam you fail)

2) they don't give you room to fail. Which basically means it's not like Otago where they'll be like 'answer 6 of 8 of these questions'. They'll give you 4 questions and if you don't know one, you're already at 75% and you need 60% to pass so you have to do well on the rest. And there is a lot of material you need to know. As I said, I memorised about 50 pages of notes for each class and sometimes what fell in the exam still was not what I had studied or knew how to answer properly.

In saying that, they grade way easier. But my biggest advice is take your classes as an attending student. Because the assignments are super easy and they give you good grades and this will help bring your grade up after exams. I know grades don't really matter as long as you pass but it's still nice to not only scrape along which the exams sort of set you up to do on their own.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in an apartment/flat I booked on SpotaHome that was literally right beside the Uni Campus. I had pretty bad luck because I absolutely hated the flatmates I got put with (except one). They were all students but they were all boys and 2 of them completely lacked social skills and were absolutely filthy. So maybe my advice would be to try source flatmates before going. In saying that, I think having prebooked so far in advance took a lot of stress off my back because I saw others really stressing to find somewhere. And I think my experience was largely bad luck. Ultimately the place was really expensive though. Although it said 850 euros online, I ended up paying 1000 euros a month (which is exorbitant I know) after extra imposed fees that they sneak into the fine print of the contract so be aware when booking a place. However, others also had a bad experience with arranging a place to live in Italy with scammers and apartments that were very different than the photos – so at least with SpotaHome there is the guarantee that this would not happen. My suggestion: try look for apartments with local rental services. There are ones actually part of the university such as Bocconi Immobili or if you put 'affitto Milano' into google it will come up with more results than an English search. Or go through the company directly rather than through SpotaHome, for eg: my company was called Neytos or another popular one was DoveVivo. This might be a bit cheaper but does take away some of the protection that going through spotahome offers. I feel like you can definitely find a bit cheaper (I needed a double bed because my boyfriend was staying with me).

Money matters

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

Accommodation: All up including contract registration fees and the extra month I had to pay because of my contract, I paid 6200€ which is about \$11,000NZD. 1275€ of that was a bond that I got back so in the end it was more like **\$8750NZD** but you do need the whole sum so FYI.

Flights: I travelled around Europe a bit before settling but I'd say maybe about **\$3300** return. Getting to London I paid \$1200 which is quite cheap but flying home near Christmas is very expensive. I flew on Christmas so paid \$1700 but most flights were above \$2000.

Visa: I fortunately am an Italian citizen so I did not need a visa. I did have to get an Italian tax code for my residence and that appointment was probably like \$150 or so.

Food: Food was a lot more expensive in Italy except for Italian things. Meat is a bit more expensive but I'd suggest going to bigger supermarkets and you can spend less in general. I probably spent like **\$400-\$500NZD** a month on food but I definitely was very conscious of the prices I paid and ate very cheap. Eating out is a lot more expensive than in NZ bc of the exchange rate. But Kebabs are very cheap and some little place near uni are affordable. The university has a cafeteria downstairs where you can get really decent and cheap lunches.

Insurance: About **\$650** for the StudentSafe insurance with the \$100 excess. Pay more for the one with no excess. I used my insurance 3 times and I probably would've used it double that if it were worth it to claim for things under \$100. My phone was stolen, I had to go to the dentist, I had cancelled flights, cancelled ferries and the works. The insurance is pretty nice and you 100% will use it at least once which makes the extra \$100 of premium for the one with no excess 100% worth it. Stuff goes wrong. Be easily able to get any small amount of money back... trust me.

As well as all this I got:

3 Month Eurail Pass: **\$1100** (worth it for sure if you are travelling on more than like 10 trains)

Going out: 15€ per club (comes with 2 drinks) Alcohol in supermarkets is cheaper but no RTDS in Italy so train yourself not to go overboard drinking straights or wine. Probs **\$200** spent overall but I went out a lot less than in NZ.

Dentist: **\$1000** (plan for little things like this because insurance does not cover all of it)

Phone stolen: **\$1000** (insurance only covered half since I had bought my previous phone for really cheap second hand but the same model new is double the price)/

I'd say total on travelling and having fun other places before getting to Italy or during the breaks I would have spent about **\$3000NZD**

So personally, I probably spent just under **\$20,000** on exchange which is A LOT but a lot of stuff ended up being more expensive than expected (plus that includes a lot of extra travel). I am fortunate enough to have student allowance come in weekly so that helped a lot. Milan is an expensive place so if you're wanting a budget friendly exchange I would consider my options.

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

I had a wise card on my phone. I just used that. Also bring your physical card so you can get cash out or if your phone is stolen :(In Milan you don't need cash and my wise worked for everything, but other places in Europe or even Italy require cash. Wise is great because it has lower fees and exchange rates than your local bank usually, and I used it to transfer money to my landlord in euros for rent because the credit card fees for paying are a lot when you're paying so much money. Plus other people have wise so you can transfer them money and etc. Get wise 100%. It's free.

Visas & Insurance

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

No, I am an Italian Citizen

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

No, they did not

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

If you're really into going to the gym, which fortunately I am not, be prepared to spend a lot of money. I don't remember but I believe the cost to use the Bocconi gym was somewhere between 100-160 euros a month. There are a few trips organised through these university group things that are a bit expensive but seem like fun. They do trips to Oktoberfest in Munich and Ski Trips. The skitrip is right during exam season though so I would not recommend because as stated before, exams are hard and end of November onwards you're best to spend mostly at school. People just tend to travel a lot during weekends and etc with the friends they make at school so budget for that. Honestly, there is nothing in particular I would overly recommend. There are heaps of different things available, just do the things that you think would apply to you/you would like. During fashion week (there's one in both semesters) definitely go and stand outside the shows for the main designers. I think the main one I wish I went to was Prada; Kylie Jenner, Scarlett Johanson and heaps of other celebrities all went to that one and people I knew got to see them walk in. I wish I had skipped class to make it to that one. The ones I went to were more lowkey so make sure you pick the big designers. Very few of the big designers actually share the location of their runway though.

What was the university/ city like?

The university is gorgeous and I thought most of my teachers were quite good. It's WAY smaller than Otago and the campus consists of only one block basically. Milan is cool. A lot more international than other places in Italy and a bit more of a big city vibe than the rustic vibe you usually see in Italy. However, Milan is very central so perfect for travelling. Lake Como is so close and you can get to Switzerland in about an hour by train too. Look on Skyscanner for cheap flights. I paid like \$20NZD for flights to Vienna during the break. Do budget for the fact that the Milan airports mostly are out of the way and you pay about 15€ to get there.

EVERYONE dresses really fancy even to go to uni. The style is very rich and preppy. If you have anything designer bring it. Bring a trench coat and a blazer and heels or boots and all your most formal clothes. I brought my comfy uni clothes mostly and I regretted it. Also, very few people wear colour. Fashion in Milan is not avant garde. Everyone dresses the same. No one wears hoodies. What was acceptable to wear was one of the things that shocked me the most. Some people will show up to class in a full blazer get up with heels, a designer purse and perfect hair.

Also, everyone speaks English really well. I took the Italian course at the beginning. It was good. I would not recommend the follow up course though. You get tired throughout the day and you do not want to spend your Tuesday and Thursday nights at Italian when you're tired and hungry. Just trust me. No one liked the follow up. But the main course before classes start are good. Nice to get into the groove of meeting people. They are quite intensive though.

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

Near Bocconi there is a good cheap pizza takeaway spot called Johnny Takeue. Good authentic Italian pizza for cheap. Navigli is a staple. Badaboom has really yummy takeaway drinks for a good price. I'd go to Bergamo and go up the hill. It's like a 40 minute train and it's cute. I'd also take the train to Lugano in Switzerland, it's beautiful but pack a lunch because you'll pay about \$50NZD for a burger in Switzerland. Honestly, travel around Italy as much as possible. You cannot go wrong. It is amazing. Christmas time is spectacular with the Christmas markets and Christmas tree. As for nightlife, I wouldn't say anywhere is amazing. I'd avoid Corso Como area because that is where my phone was stolen (in the club) but also if you have a purse that closes quite well, you shouldn't be too worried.

Any tips for future students?

Here's sort of a summary of things I have already mentioned and some other tips.

1. Get onto promoter lists to get into clubs for free and get free alcohol. This is usually just for girls (sorry boys), but you can get free dinner, get into clubs for free in some cool places. You'll end up finding someone at some point who can get you on a list. I was on about 3.
2. Save more money than you expect because sometimes stuff goes wrong and you need to be able to afford it when it does.
3. Get no excess insurance. Trust me.
4. Do not take the Italian follow up course.
5. Do not take too many classes. Although the workload tends to be quite small during the semester, you still want time to travel and relax. I found that 8ECTS courses had way higher of a workload and included some form of math. Even if it's not a math class. I was going to take a class on human behaviour that was 8ECTS and the entire first lesson was advanced math. Same goes for international relations. 8 ECTS is a red flag unless you already have a strong basis in the specific math they do. I like math but I did not know what was going on.
6. Go on your phone setting → Face ID and Passcode → swipe down and disable control centre and lockscreen widgets. This means if someone steals your phone they can't turn your data off so you can track it still (on newer phones even if they turn the phone off). Wish I had done this before.
7. Get Wise or Revolut is another good option people use for their finances.
8. Study Hard for Exams
9. Check the fine print for extra fees for your accommodation and everything really because Italy loves to scam you.
10. In Italy, if you eat in at a restaurant you usually have to pay 2 euros service fee. If you want a cheap dinner, get takeout – all restaurants do it basically.
11. If you want to pay for tram tickets or etc, go into stores called Tabaccherias and you can buy tickets there. In all honesty I road the tram very frequently and never paid but if you get caught there is a 40€ fine so keep an eye out for the control authority if you're doing that (especially in touristy areas).

Overall Experience

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

Bocconi is a very well known university in Europe and it is known to be a good school so in terms of reputation, it is worthwhile. Because of this they have a good connection with certain employers and the school's name will look very good on the CV. It is in no means a party university in the way Otago is. If your vibe is going out for sophisticated drinks at a bar, fine dining, fashion and big city life, it will be perfect for you. In honesty, no matter where you go on exchange, I'm sure the experience will be memorable and you will make friends. I made some great friends from places all over the world who I can now visit, I travelled to over 10 countries and I had some unique and lifechanging experiences. It is nice to get away from your normal and just be someplace else and experience new things. I cannot recommend going on an exchange enough. Milan is definitely one I would recommend to those with a bit more money because I spent an exorbitant amount and I felt like I was budgeting far more than anyone else there. Italy definitely holds a place in my heart because the people are kind, although a little crazy sometimes, and the Italian culture is definitely an amazing one.

Photos:



Bergamo (1h from Milan)



Bocconi Campus



Walk home from the club Milan



Sicily



Eiffel Tower



Lugano, Switzerland (1.5h away)



Bergamo



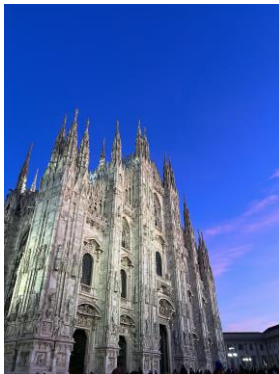
Milan Fashion Week



Leaning Tower of Pisa



Cinque Terre



Christmas Sunset in Milan



Dinner w/ friends