

Host University: ESADE (Barcelona, Spain)

Semester 2 2018

Bachelor of Commerce (Major Accounting); Bachelor of Laws

ACADEMICS/COURSE LOAD

COURSE TITLE	OTAGO EQUIVALENT/OTAGO CREDIT VALUE
Intensive Spanish (2 ECTS)	100 Level
Spanish History and Current Affairs (5 ECTS)	100 Level
Spanish Art and Culture (5 ECTS)	200 Level
Never Too Many Movies (5 ECTS)	200 Level
Anthropology: Lessons from History, Art and Economics (4 ECTS)	100 Level Art
Re-Imagining Capitalism (4 ECTS)	200 Level
Business Writing (2 ECTS)	Extra Credit

Comments on Papers:

- Intensive Spanish is mandatory for all students on exchange. It is a 2-week course at the beginning of the semester. You are split into groups of about 12 students depending on your level of Spanish (basic, intermediate, advanced). I thoroughly enjoyed this course being a beginner in Spanish, and this is where you meet a lot of people and make many of your friends!
- Spanish History, Art/Culture and movies are three courses that I cannot recommend highly enough. They are taught by a lecturer named Alex who is incredibly passionate about Spanish politics, history and culture (potentially the best lecturer I have ever had)!! He designs the courses especially for exchange students, and you will come away knowing about everything there is to know about Spain!
- The lectures at ESADE are all 3 hours long. Although this seems crazy compared to 50 minutes at Otago, they actually go really fast and you get a big break in the middle of each! Also, each paper is only once per week!
- Overall, I found the courses a lot easier than the ones at Otago. However, this may be because I could take 100/200-level equivalent spare papers. From what I gathered some business papers do require a lot of work, and also a lot of group work. Make sure to log on and view the papers ESADE is offering for the semester you are attending, as there are good course outlines.

ACCOMMODATION

- ESADE is situated outside of Barcelona, in a town called Sant Cugat. This means if you are living in Barcelona city centre, you will have to commute about 30 minutes one way on the metro every day. HOWEVER, I highly recommend you do choose to find an apartment in the city rather than stay in the halls of residence ESADE provides in Sant Cugat. Sant Cugat is a very quiet neighborhood and you do not spend any time there except to go to university. The commute to ESADE is fine and you get used to it!
- Accommodation is potentially the hardest element of attending ESADE because unlike other universities which provide options of halls of residence/flats which are very social, at ESADE you are left to your own devices to find suitable housing. I recommend you contact other Otago students who are heading to Otago and try to form a flatting group, or post on the ESADE page. Generally people find apartments on Uniplaces, Spotahome, Housing Anywhere websites (pay a monthly rental fee + service fee).
- Recommendations for neighborhoods to live: Gracia, Gothic Quarter, El Born, Sant Gervasi, Eixample. These are all lively and SAFE neighborhoods situated in inner Barcelona.

MONEY

Before Leaving NZ:

- Visa: \$100 (approximate)
- Insurance: \$500 (approximate)
- Flight to Europe: \$900

Living in Barcelona:

- Accommodation:
 - Rent: 500 euros per month
 - Utilities: 60 euros per month
- Transport: 145 euros per 3 months (purchase a transport card called **t-jove 2 zones** – this allows you to access all public transport such as buses, trains, trams unlimited times in a 3 month period. I recommend you buy this as soon as you get to Barcelona as it will save you SO much money and will make transport incredibly cheap).
- SIM Card: 20 euros per month – 10GB data, calling, texts (Orange Network)
- Food: Supermarkets in Spain are incredibly cheap, definitely the cheapest I saw when travelling around Europe and a lot cheaper than NZ!
 - Eating out is approx. the same as NZ prices. For example, a smashed avocado + eggs is approx. 10 euros (\$18NZD) and a flat white is 2 euro (\$3.50).
- Museums/Attractions:
 - Sagrada Familia: 28 euros
 - Museums: Generally, between 10 and 20 euros
 - Bike Hire: 5-10 euro per day

Visa and Insurance:

- Make sure you have full medical and travel insurance before you leave. This is easy to obtain online through various insurance companies which can give you a quote.
- Visa: To study in Spain you must apply for a visa through the Spanish consulate. I recommend doing this as soon as you can, as it takes up to a month for the visa to be processed. They also require a lot of information/documents so be sure to email the consulate for applications forms, so you can gather this.

Extra-Curricular/Social Activities through ESADE:

- Compared to other exchange experiences at universities in Europe, ESADE did provide much of an exchange program that encouraged mixing/mingling with other exchange students. Rather, we were left to our own devices to make friends either in class, group projects or through people you knew.
- However, the 2 week intensive Spanish program at the start of the semester allows you to make close friends and these were the people I become close with through the semester.

What was the university/city like?

- Barcelona is an absolutely AMAZING city. Although it has become quite touristic over the years, living in the city itself you didn't really notice the overcrowding especially because you will find yourself spending a lot of time out of the tourist hotspots. Considering this, its not wonder that Barcelona draws so much tourism – the ambience and atmosphere it oozes makes Barcelona such a fun, vibrant and livable city. There are ENDLESS things to keep you busy (the beach, museums, Gaudi architecture, football, cafes/bars/nightclubs, hiking, local cuisine) , and the Mediterranean climate meant I was still living in t-shirt and shorts during their winter!!
- After arriving at ESADE, you will soon discover it is a prestigious university and a lot of the students take their studies there very seriously. It is a bit of a shock coming from Otago where there is a more relaxed vibe throughout campus. However, in saying this, you are amongst some of the top business students across Europe, and the lecturers/courses are incredibly passionate and informative.

Recommendations:

- Activities:
 - Gaudi Architecture (Sagrada Familia, Park Guell, Casa Mila, Casa Batllo);
 - Gothic Quarter; El Raval, El Born (neighbourhoods with endless trendy eateries, bars and shopping);
 - Bogatell Beach (less crowded); La Barceloneta;
 - Montserrat day trip;
 - Sitges beach day trip;
- Eating:
 - Barcelona is inundated with tapas restaurants, bars, markets and trendy cafes – a couple of places not to miss:
 - Le Mercat Boqueria (biggest indoor food market in Europe);
 - Bar Tomas (best patatas bravas in Barcelona);
 - Federal Café or Little Fern Cafe (Australian café and NZ café) - best flat whites for when you're craving a bit of home)
 - Sensi Bistro (best tapas);
 - Carrer de Blai (a street filled with pintxos restaurants which are famous in Spain – only 1 or 2 euro each)!
- Socialising/Bars/Clubs:
 - D9 Bar: a bar designed particularly for exchange students – every Wednesday night is student night followed by free entry in Razzmatazz (one of the most famous clubs in Barcelona)
 - Other Bars: Opium Nightclub; Espit Chupitos; George Payne; Limehouse
- Travelling:
 - Day trips and weekend trips by train or bus:
 - Costa Brava (Cadaques; Tossa de Mar; Figueres);
 - Girona;
 - Zaragoza;
 - Mallorca and Ibiza!!!
 - Madrid;
 - Valencia
 - Longer trips in Spain (by bus, train and plane all very affordable if you look for deals):
 - South Spain: Sevilla, Grenada, Cordoba;
 - North Spain (Basque Country): San Sebastian, Bilbao
 - Would also recommend hiring a car for a week with some friends and heading into the South of France – a very affordable way to see the sights and get off the beaten track!

Overall, the opportunity to complete my studies on exchange is something I will be grateful for for the rest of my life. Although at times it can be stressful and challenging, the amount of knowledge and life experience you gain from living in a foreign city with 1.2 million other people from different cultures and walks of life is an experience you will never forget. I certainly believe it sets you up with opportunities to step outside your comfort zone and push yourself to having the most unique and wonderful experiences, whilst completing your studies.

