

## Bocconi University - Spring 2019

**Exchange Semester:** Spring (February 2019 – July 2019)

**Programme at the HSG:** MBF

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## Information Host University

Bocconi University is a private university in Milan and provides among others undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate education in economy, finance, and business administration. It is ranked as the best university of Italy in the mentioned fields, as well as one of the best in Europe. The University is located in the southern part of Milan with approximately 15'000 students from different countries. The city centre is reachable within 15 minutes by Tram. Other destinations, like the main train station Milano Centrale, or Navigli with its several bars and restaurants are also reachable within 15-20 minutes by tram or metro.

## Academics

The registration procedure begins 3-4 weeks before the start of lectures. The courses are assigned on a first-come-first-served basis. Nevertheless, I had no problem getting a place in all the courses I wanted. After the start of lectures, there is a one week add/drop period where you can modify your study plan again. After that you cannot change your study plan anymore. For each course you can choose whether you want to be an attending or a non-attending student. Non-attending students are only allowed to sit a final exam, whereas attending students can choose whether they want to take 2 partial exams or 1 final exam. Additionally, group works, or other assignments influence the grades of attending students. It is said that the grades of the attending students are usually higher than those of non-attending students.

The grading system is different from the one at HSG. Grades range from 1-30, whereby 18 is a passing grade. 29 and above will lead to a 6 at the HSG, which is reachable with a high amount of effort. Bocconi usually offers 3 dates to take exams. During an exam you are allowed to withdraw and retake the exam at another date. Once a passing grade is achieved, you have no right for an additional attempt.

## Courses

Bocconi offers a wide range of finance courses and the quality of the lectures are comparable with the HSG. Most of the courses are offered as 6 ECTS courses but the workload of such a course is comparable to a 4 ECTS MBF course. Hence, to complete

30 ECTS is certainly possible with enough discipline and effort. I attended 4 courses during my exchange semester, each carried 6 ECTS.

#### Private Equity and Venture Capital 6 ECTS – Core Electives

This course provides an introduction into Private Equity. I took this course as a non-attending student which was organized via an e-learning platform coursera.org. The videos in coursera provide a well summary of the mandatory learning materials covered by a single textbook written by the professor. The book is well written and interesting to read. The grading was very fair. Therefore, I would recommend this course to everybody who is interested in Private Equity and did not have any prior lectures in this field.

#### Financial Statement Analysis 6 ECTS – Core Electives

The objective of this course is the analysis of financial statement interpretation issues from the perspective of professional analysts. It is considered an advanced course. Therefore, basic knowledge in financial accounting and financial statement analysis are prerequisites. The exams for attending and non-attending students are the same. Since I did not like the teaching style of the professor, I stopped attending the lectures after the first week. The presentation slides provided by the professor are quite packed and sufficient to study by yourself to get a high grade in the exam. The slides are well written, practice-oriented and a lot of exercises are provided to put the learnt theory into practice. The grading was fair. I would recommend this course to everyone who is interested in a career which involves analysing financial statements of a company.

#### Business History 6 ECTS – Area of Concentration

This course investigates the evolution of business enterprises and focuses especially on the entrepreneurs. The learning materials consist of the presentation slides and a textbook written by the professor. The grading was very fair. I found the course interesting and recommend it to everyone who needs ECTS points in their contextual studies.

#### Investment Banking 6 ECTS – Core Electives

The lectures were without a doubt the most interesting ones compared to the other courses. This was mainly due to the 2 professors which were extremely enthusiastic in their teaching style. The teaching materials consist of the presentation slides provided by the lecturers. There is no general textbook which covers all the topics of the course. Therefore, attending the courses and taking notes is highly recommended.

## Practical Information

The Bocconi International Student Desk (ISD) contacts you 3-4 month before your semester starts. You are required to complete an online application, where you also can apply for a room in the Bocconi dorms. Rooms are assigned on a first-come-first-served basis. Hence, you should inform yourself about the different dorms prior to the beginning of the online application in order to finish it quickly.

There are generally two ways I would recommend travelling from Switzerland to Milan. Either by train or by bus (Flixbus). There are supersaver tickets to travel to Milan by train which are still more expensive than travelling with Flixbus, if you do not have a GA. I travelled three times from Switzerland to Milano and back with Flixbus and I did not have any bad experience. So, I can recommend it.

## Visa Procedure

As I have a passport of North Macedonia, I needed a Visa for my stay in Milan. I went to the Italian Embassy in Geneva (the only embassy in Switzerland which issues visas) and applied for a student visa. The visa was issued within a couple of hours. Within 10 days after your arrival in Milan you have to fill in a form for your student visa. There is a video provided by Bocconi which explains how to fill in the form. The form is provided by the ISD at Bocconi after you check in there in the first week of your exchange.

## Living Arrangements

I lived in a shared apartment with two other students. I found my flat over Facebook through a real estate company which exclusively handles international exchange students. Contact me if you want to get in touch with them. I can highly recommend them. There are also groups on Facebook where available rooms are posted there.

## Money

The living costs in Milan are in general lower than in Switzerland. The exception is the rent for a room which varies from 600 to 800 Euro. The monthly fee to use public transportation in Milan is only 22 Euro and train tickets are also very cheap when you book in advance. Food and groceries are reasonably priced.

## Social life

I highly recommend attending the Italian language course taking place one week before the actual lectures start. It is a great opportunity to meet fellow exchange students. There are also different events organised by ISD during this week.

Try as many restaurants as possible since the food is delicious and much cheaper than in Switzerland. Milan offers also a lot of Bars and Clubs. Navigli is a good place to have a drink. Clubs are spread over Milan and are comparable to clubs in Zurich.

### Overall Evaluation

I had a great time in Milan and would recommend it to everyone who wants to stay in Europe and combine a great social life with a high educational quality and a good reputation offered by Bocconi.