



## **Exchange report**

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## Information host university

### Information

Bocconi University is located in the southern part of Milan 20 minutes walking from Duomo. The University has about 13,000 students and hosts 1,500 exchange students from all over the world every semester. The International Student Desk is very helpful when it comes to any kind of question related to courses or representational activities. During the first two weeks, they have a broad offer for exchange students including guided city tours and speed exchanges. Bocconi University has a very active Exchange Student Network. The group organizes evening events and travels throughout the whole semester. Bocconi University has a library where spots are always short. Be sure to either be there early or reserve a room. There is a fitness centre in one of the dorms next to university. I never tried it myself but according to other students it is small and therefore most of the time overcrowded.

### Academics

Course registration takes place around two weeks before lectures start. The login details and a brief explanation on how to register for courses will be sent to you by email a couple of days before registration is open.

In Italy, you can choose between attending and non-attending student for each course. Usually, non-attending students sit only the final exam whereas for attending students the final grade is composed of partial exams, group works or other assignments. I chose the attending option for all courses. For some of the attending courses, an attendance code is given during each lecture and students have to confirm their presence by typing the code on the Bocconi App. Usually, you need to attend at least 75% of the classes.

Students can choose between courses in English or Italian. I didn't attend any courses in Italian since my knowledge of Italian was too low. I would say the overall command of English is a lot lower than in Switzerland. Be prepared and get used to strong Italian accents.

### Management of Fashion Companies, 6 ECTS, credited at HSG for Electives

Erica Corbinelli is a real pro in her field and her lectures were interesting. She organized a couple of guest lectures like Suitsupply or Swarovski. Attending students are required to do a group work which counts for 70% of the final grade and sit a final exam with both multiple choice and open questions which makes up the other 30%. The group work consists of two parts: research on a brand, presented on slides without actually presenting them and a 4-minute video comparing two brands. The project was great fun, low workload and fair grading. If you are interested in fashion and you want to do a fun group project, I strongly recommend this course.

### Microeconomics, 8 ECTS, credited at HSG for Mikro II and Electives

Very intense course with three sessions per week and optional LaTeX and Python programming lessons. The professors put great effort in preparing their course and were motivated to teach. They were available for questions anytime and really wanted everybody to understand the course content. Since attending students were required to do weekly graded homework on my PearsonEconLab, one needed to buy the Microeconomics book for approximately 80 EUR. Additionally, we were assigned to groups of 4-5 students and had to solve five group assignments typed on LaTeX. Depending on how you split up work and how precise you decide to solve the problems, this part can be a lot of work. Attending students

can sit the first partial during the midterm break and if satisfied with the grade the second one at the end of the semester. Those who did not achieve well in the first partial, can sit a 5-hour final exam at the end. The exams are similar to the trial exams given to students during the semester. The grading of the written exams is fair. If you plan to travel a lot or will have lots of friends over, this might be the wrong course for you.

Corporate Finance, 6 ECTS, credited at HSG for Finance

This was best course I attended at Bocconi University. The professor was outstanding and explained very well. Attending students had to complete online assignments every week, which counted for 10%, two group assignments, which counted for 20% and the final exam, which made up the other 70%. The difficulty of the group assignments was ok and grading was fair. Students need to be well prepared for the final exam, since time is very short.

Organization Theory, 6 ECTS, credit at HSG for Organisieren und Führen

I did not like this course at all. Lectures were boring and most of the students were doing anything else but listening. I chose the attending option, including a group project during which we had to find out more about personal management and organizational structure within a certain company. It is useful to know somebody from the HR department of an Italian company, since the professor wants to have interviews and first-hand insights. The findings were presented in front of class and a written report was to be handed in. My group was composed of half exchange half regular students. It was difficult to rely on Italian students and we had lots of issues. But of course, this always depends on whom you work with. The final exam was more difficult than expected including some tricky questions one cannot answer only studying the provided slides. In my opinion, grading was unfair. I do not recommend this course.

### **Practical information**

I got contacted by the university in May and received all necessary information regarding course enrolment, etc. during the months of July and August. Course selection is simple and has to be done towards the end of August.

Especially in the area close to Bocconi University flats can be expensive. Start searching early and be aware of scams. I made the huge mistake to actively look for accommodation only when I arrived and it was a struggle since so many other students were still searching too. If you haven't found anything by the time you arrive in Milan, check out the bakeca at the university. That's where I found my room.

My monthly budget was 500 € for accommodation, ca. 400 € for travels, ca. 350 € for food and drinks, ca. 200 € for leisure and 60 € for transports and mobile. Food and drinks are a lot cheaper than in Switzerland. Aperitivos are a nice occasion to combine food and drinks, but do not expect high quality food. In case you need a taxi, download the app Heetch. It is basically the same as Uber, but three times less expensive. One negative aspect: it only works from 8pm to 6am.

Milan is an amazing city with around 1.3 million inhabitants. You have countless opportunities and there is always something going on. There are of course areas I would not

go to by myself or during the night, but I felt safe most of the time. However, I did not like going by underground in the evening. That's why I was a huge fan of Heetch.

Do not miss out all the beautiful cities around Milan like Genova, Torino, Bologna or Como on a sunny day. Rome is a 3 hours train ride from Milan, so if you have never been to Rome you know what to do on one of the weekends. I also went on two long weekend trips to Sicily and Sardinia. Since it was already off-season, flights, cars and hotels were super cheap. I did a hiking trip in Cinque Terre. The region is beautiful but the villages are overcrowded with tourists.

I liked the language crash course a lot because it was an efficient way to learn the basics of the Italian language and you get to know so many people. However, I don't recommend the follow-up course since the groups were bigger, lessons were in the evening and we didn't progress a lot.

We mostly checked out Facebook for events and went to some pretty cool rooftop parties. Sometimes entry is restricted so make sure to be on a list. And of course, a visit to the Scala is a must when in Milan. Check out their website for Scala Aperta Tickets – 50% off.

In my opinion, getting in touch with local students was rather difficult since most of my courses were for exchange students only. But this depends on the classes you choose.

Overall, I had a very positive experience and would go on exchange again. I liked the relaxed and easy way of living and could fully adapt to the Italian lifestyle. People are nice, the food is amazing and Italy has so many beautiful regions to discover. As far as academics is concerned, I admit that I had expected more. The finance class was definitely worth it and fashion was also interesting, but I was not convinced by the rest. However, it is always nice to have a top university on your CV.

Feel free to contact me if you have questions. Otherwise, enjoy your exchange!