

EXPERIENCE REPORT FALL SEMESTER

ESADE BUSINESS SCHOOL, BARCELONA

by Manon Champagne



Basic Information

Hi, my name is Manon Champagne and I am a third year student in Business Administration at HSG. I went on exchange during the fall semester at ESADE in Barcelona. The fall semester for exchange students is quite short, I started on the 14th of September and finished the first week of December.

Host university

One important thing to keep in mind is that the ESADE Business School's campus for business students is located on the outskirts of Barcelona itself in **Sant Cugat**, which, if you want to live in Barcelona itself (which I highly recommend), takes around 35-45 minutes to get to (including the train ride and the walking distance). I therefore strongly advise you to organize your credits in a way that you only have to attend university during two or three days of the week, as getting there is quite time consuming.

Moreover, I also wanted to mention the fact that most courses that you take are with exchange students only, so if you want to meet and work with locals, I can recommend taking courses in Spanish if you have a sufficient level.

Academics

Regarding academics, please remember that in the fall semester, **you cannot take any core subjects** that will be credited to HSG. I therefore only took 18 credits at ESADE which were only Electives or Contextual Studies courses. If you want to finish your bachelor in 6 semesters, however, I recommend also taking credits at HSG at the same time, since those exams are in January, which leaves you enough time to do both.

Regarding the **bidding process**, it is quite similar to the one of HSG. All you have to do is rank courses according to your preferences and on top of that assign points to them. You should not have a problem with the bidding as they are very helpful and flexible. Especially if you did not get the courses that you wanted, this can still be changed after the bidding round has closed.

A last important point I would like to mention is the importance of **group work** at ESADE. Most courses include a group project and finding a motivated and hardworking group among exchange students can be tricky as their grades are not accredited, they only need to get a “passing grade”, which is a 5 out of 10. I did not have too many problems, however, as most of my team members in my chosen courses were full time students at ESADE and care about their grades.

My courses

Marketing y Sociedad (4 Credits)

Elective (Wahlbereich) with Marta Gabarro Sust

The aim of this course is to create a sustainability campaign for a company that is assigned to you and that you will present to in a final presentation. The teacher is extremely motivated and helpful throughout the project. This course is taught in both English and Spanish (the teacher alternates) and allowed me to work only with full-time ESADE students. It definitely was a lot of work, but I learned a lot from this course thanks to its’ real-world application. Moreover, if you show commitment and put in the work, you will get a good grade.

→ Overall, I **highly recommend** this one as I believe it to be one of the most enriching courses that I have taken throughout my studies.

Operational Financial Management (4 Credits)

Elective (Wahlbereich) with Rafael Tena Queralt

This course was also extremely helpful for any future business endeavor as this topic is important in all fields of business and is important to be aware of. However, I found that throughout the semester, the course was slightly confusing at times and not always clear. Overall, I still feel like I have learned a lot after studying for the final exam and that this course will serve me in the future. This course is also with mostly full-time ESADE students and I had no problem with team effort regarding my team members.

→ I can recommend this course if you are interested in the topic, but it was personally **not my favorite**.

Art and Culture in Spain and Catalonia: 2000 years of Beauty (5 Credits)

Contextual studies (Fokusbereiche) with Alex Fernandez de Castro

In the reports of the previous years, all students recommended this course and I understand why. This class gives you a great overview of Spanish and Catalan Art and Culture and the teacher is extremely inspiring and dedicated. Especially as a student living in Barcelona, it gave me a greater depth into understanding the city and the region I was living in, as well as the architecture and art that surrounded me.

→ Overall, I can **highly recommend** this course, I learned so much and it really inspired me and opened a door to understanding Catalan art.

Never Too Many Movies: Spanish and Catalan Society through Cinema (5 Credits)

Contextual studies (Fokusbereiche) with Alex Fernandez de Castro

This course is once again held by the same teacher as in the previous course and I also highly appreciated it. This course also gave me a certain depth into understanding Spanish, Catalan and South American society through Cinema. I really appreciated how all movies were put in a political and historical context, which was extremely enriching.

→ I can also **strongly recommend** this course and the teacher is so interesting, you will not be bored.

Practical information

- As mentioned in all previous reports, buying a T-Jove for 3 months (for 80€) is the way to go for transportation in Barcelona.
- Since the exchange is less than three months, there is no need to create a NIE, all you need is your passport/ID.
- Opening a bank account is not necessary either.
- I recommend living in Eixample or in the Gothic area of Barcelona (anywhere near Plaça Catalunya is great) as mostly everything is within walking distance.
- Living in Spain is not like living in Switzerland, theft does exist and walking alone at night is not recommended. I did not have any bad experiences, but I am aware that they are common.

Overall evaluation

I can highly recommend an exchange semester at ESADE.

The quality of the courses and teachers is noteworthy, and the courses really focus on practical aspects that are not always offered at the University of St. Gallen.

Moreover, life in Barcelona is extremely enjoyable and you will always find something to do. I can highly recommend weekend getaways to the Costa Brava in the North and the Costa Dorada in the South, where you will discover many beautiful coastal towns.

However, I went during a special time, which was during the **covid-19 pandemic**. I therefore believe that my experience is quite different to my peers who have gone the years before me. All aspects of social life were quite altered and made it that the exchange semester could not be fully enjoyed to the fullest, especially in terms of social life. Obviously, clubs and bars were not the place to be during this time, but I nevertheless really enjoyed my time and found other activities to participate in.

One great advantage of this time was that **tourism was at its lowest**, meaning that it was a great time to visit the massive amount of museums and touristic sites. I can recommend the following: all of the Gaudi sites (Sagrada Familia, Park Güell, Casa Mila...), the Picasso Museum, the Dali Museum in Figueres, the Mies van der Rohe foundation, the Palau de la Música, among many more.

