

[Italy] – [Universita Degli Studi Di Firenze]

Agenda¹

I.	Your overall feeling after your semester abroad.....	2
II.	Before the travel.....	2
A.	Preparation.....	2
1.	Visa.....	2
2.	The flight.....	2
3.	My luggage	2
4.	Bank account.....	3
5.	Insurance	3
B.	Housing	3
1.	Where to live	3
2.	Find a flat or a room	3
3.	Cost.....	4
III.	When I arrive at the university.....	4
A.	Inscription at the university	4
B.	Information on the university	4
1.	Class.....	4
2.	Organization of the Class.....	5
3.	Exam	5
IV.	When I life there	6
A.	Safety.....	6
B.	Phone and Internet.....	6
C.	Events	7
D.	Sports.....	7
E.	Eating.....	7
F.	Go to the university : bus, car, bike	7
G.	Travels.....	7
V.	After your semester abroad.....	8
A.	What are you planning do to?.....	8

¹ To update the agenda just click right on your moose

B. Did you apply for master?8

I. Your overall feeling after your semester abroad

Florence is a city where you truly discover who you are. It is an incredible place where you meet people from all around the world, as the city is largely shaped by its student population, so you will never feel bored. The blend of modern and historic architecture is unique and greatly enhances the overall experience.

If I could go back in time, I would choose this university again without hesitation. The Italian education system is particularly supportive: you can select your own courses, take exams when you feel ready, and even retake them if needed, which reduces the pressure of failure. Student well-being and mental health are clearly valued, making it a very positive academic environment.

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II. Before the travel

A. Preparation

1. Visa

As I am a French citizen, I did not need a visa. However, if you reside more than 90 days in the country which is the case for Erasmus students, it is required to get the Italian Codice Fiscale. Indeed, students will mostly need it for their health card, rental contract,...

2. The flight

To reach Florence, I chose to travel by car with my family, so I did not need to take a flight for my arrival. However, for my return journey, I flew from Florence Airport to Nice (France) with Air Corsica. I booked my ticket through the eDreams platform.

From Nice, it is easy to continue to Montpellier either by train or by bus, both of which offer convenient connections.

3. My luggage

If you are applying for the spring semester in Florence, make sure to bring both winter and summer clothes. Winter temperatures are quite similar to those in France, but from April onwards, it becomes much warmer, with temperatures sometimes reaching up to 40°C. Do not forget to pack a swimsuit and lightweight, adaptable clothing.

It is also important to check whether your accommodation provides duvets. If not, remember to bring one for the colder months.

Finally, Florence is a city best explored on foot, alongside the use of the tramway, so bringing comfortable shoes is essential.

4. Bank account

I did not need to change my bank account during my stay. There were no specific financial requirements to meet, and my French bank account worked perfectly in Italy. I only had to activate the international payment option on my banking app to use my card abroad without any issues.

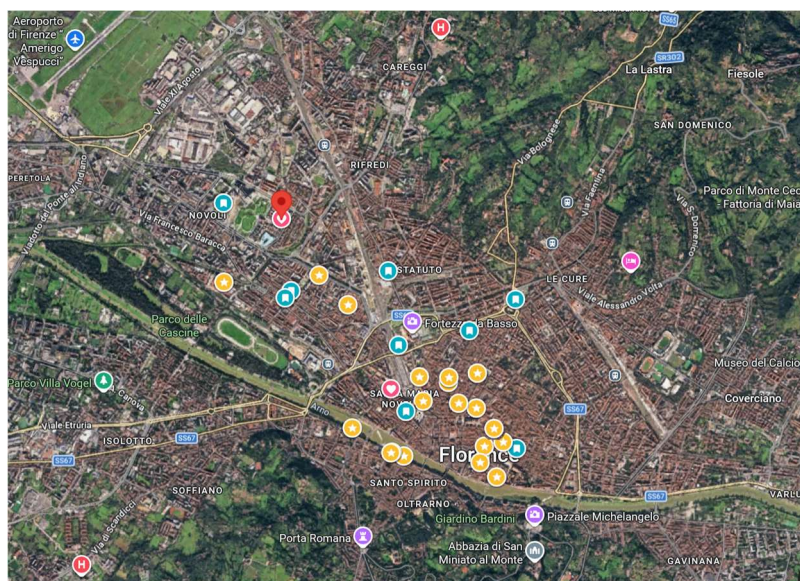
However, if you desire to do so, you can open a bank account in Italy, using your Codice Fiscale.

5. Insurance

In term of insurance, I was covered by the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), which allowed me to access healthcare services during my stay in Italy. In addition, I registered on the Ariane platform ("Le Fil D'Ariane"), a service provided by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to receive updates and ensure my safety while abroad.

B. Housing

1. Where to live



As you can see, the red dot represents the university campus. It is easily accessible by bus, tramway, or even on foot, so transportation is not a concern.

However, I would recommend living on the same side of the Arno (the northern side shown here). While neighborhoods on the other side, such as Isolotto or Santo Spirito, are beautiful and not very far, you may end up walking a lot, both during the day and at night.

In my opinion, the best areas to live in are Novoli, Rifredi, or the city center. Indeed, in Novoli (university neighborhood), you can find a lot of student residences and flats (single or shared) at cheap prices.

2. Find a flat or a room

In Florence, student rents typically start at around €450 per month. However, it is essential to start your search early in the year to secure accommodation at this price, as these options are limited and in high demand.

For standard apartments, rents are generally around €600 per month or more. To find accommodation, I recommend using platforms such as Idealista, while remaining cautious of potential scams, or Housing Anywhere, which is more secure and where I personally found my flat.

3. Cost

For your accommodation, you should plan a minimum budget of around €500 per month for a room. In most cases, you should also expect to add approximately €100 per month for utilities and other charges (electricity, water, internet).

For a private flat, prices are generally higher, often starting from €600–€700 per month depending on the location and type of accommodation. As mentioned earlier, prices can vary significantly depending on how early you secure your housing and the neighborhood you choose.

Overall, it is important to anticipate a total monthly housing budget of at least €600, and often more for greater comfort or central locations.

III. When I arrive at the university

A. Inscription at the university

The registration process at the university was overall smooth and well organized. Both the International Relations Office in Montpellier and the one in Florence provided all the necessary information at the right time to guide us through each step. For example, tools such as the Moodle platform (MOMA RI) were very helpful in centralizing important documents and instructions. They were also responsive and available to answer any questions throughout the process.

Before arrival, I had to complete several administrative steps, including submitting the required documents and confirming my course selection. Once in Florence, I attended orientation sessions that helped me better understand the university system, finalize my learning agreement, and get familiar with the campus.

During the first weeks of classes, it is still possible to modify your course selection (usually until around March 15). However, this requires updating your “contrat d’étude” and your learning agreement if you decide to change classes.

B. Information on the university

1. Class

As a third-year student in the BA (Hons) in International Management, I had to choose five classes to obtain 30 ECTS. I selected four Bachelor-level courses and one Master-level course:

- **Cognitive Economics:** This class lies at the intersection of economics and psychology, offering valuable insight into how people make decisions - an approach we do not explore at MoMa. The professor is engaging and humorous, making the lectures particularly enjoyable. I highly recommend this course.
- **Organization Design for Well-Being:** This course is quite similar to what we study in our Bachelor regarding organizational design and structure. However, I chose to keep it because the professor is excellent and brings new perspectives that complement what we have already learned at MoMa. She is very attentive to students and regularly adapts her teaching methods based on feedback, which is rare and extremely valuable.
- **Policies and Social Innovation for Sustainable Local Development and Tourism:** This course focuses on how local and regional stakeholders operate within their territories, the challenges they face, and how to address them (for example, through Voluntary Local Reviews). It was a unique format compared to what I was used to, and I learned a lot about the Florentine and Tuscan context. It is particularly useful if you are interested in developing sustainable projects in the future.
- **Intellectual Property Law:** I chose this course because I am interested in working in the music industry and wanted to better understand intellectual property issues such as copyright. The course includes many seminars with international speakers, making it interactive and practical. I would recommend it, especially for students interested in creative industries.
- **Economics of Innovation (Master level):** This was the most challenging but also the most rewarding course. We started with fundamental concepts and progressively explored more complex aspects of innovation. The assessment included an essay and an oral presentation, which allowed us to develop our own analysis. I strongly recommend this course if you are ready to invest time and effort.

Most classes are not mandatory to attend, but participation is strongly encouraged, as it often provides advantages for exams and a better overall understanding of the material.

2. Organization of the Class

Classes were generally well organized, with each session lasting 1 hour and 30 minutes. Most courses took place twice a week, resulting in a total of 3 hours per week per subject. In addition, the workload was reasonable and varied depending on the course, including readings, group work, presentations, or written assignments. Overall, it remained manageable alongside other classes.

Professors were approachable, supportive, and attentive to students. Many encouraged interaction and participation during lectures. They were also available to answer questions and provide guidance when needed.

3. Exam

Exams in Italy are quite flexible compared to other systems. As mentioned earlier, you can take each exam up to five times, which allows you to improve your grade and encourages continuous progress rather than penalizing failure.

- **Cognitive Economics** : The exam consisted of a 1-hour written test, including 10 multiple-choice questions and 10 open-ended questions based on the course content.
- **Organization Design for Well-Being** : The assessment was a 100% final exam, lasting 45 minutes, with around 15–20 multiple-choice questions and 3 open-ended questions.
- **Policies and Social Innovation for Sustainable Local Development and Tourism**: The exam format depends on whether you are an attending student or not. Attending students can take two midterm exams, which replace the final written exam. If you pass at least one midterm, you can complete the course with an oral presentation on a topic of your choice related to the course. For non-attending students, the evaluation consists of an oral exam based on case studies and course materials provided by the professor.
- **Intellectual Property Law** : A similar distinction applies between attending and non-attending students. The final exam generally includes multiple-choice and open-ended questions. However, attending students may replace the open-ended questions with a video assignment, offering a more practical and flexible evaluation method.
- **Economics of Innovation (Master level)** : The assessment consisted of a written essay and an oral presentation. This format required strong analytical skills and personal reflection, as well as the ability to apply theoretical concepts to practical or empirical cases.

IV. When I live there

A. Safety

Florence is generally a very safe city, and I personally felt safer there than in Montpellier. The city is lively at all times, with many students and people out both during the day and at night, which creates a reassuring atmosphere.

That being said, like in any city, it is important to remain cautious. I would recommend avoiding areas such as Parco delle Cascine at night, as it can feel less secure. However, overall, Florence remains a safe environment if you follow basic precautions.

B. Phone and Internet

I had Wi-Fi in my apartment, which allowed me to stay connected on a daily basis. In addition, I had a mobile plan with a large data allowance, so I could easily use internet and make calls without any issues.

Additionally, Florence also offers public Wi-Fi across all of the city, which is very convenient, especially when you are outside. Overall, staying connected was easy and reliable throughout my stay.

C. Events

In Florence, student organizations play a key role in organizing events.

ESN (Erasmus Student Network) is very active and present in most student cities, including Florence. They have an Instagram account where they share all upcoming events. By purchasing a low-cost membership, you can join their WhatsApp groups and access a wide range of activities such as salsa classes, volleyball, badminton, and many social events and parties. They also offer subgroups based on specific interests, making it easy to meet people with similar hobbies.

Other Erasmus organizations are also worth exploring, such as IC Firenze, which offers discounts in bars and clubs, and organizes trips across Italy (for example, to Sicily), and EG Firenze, which follows a similar model with many events and gatherings.

Most of these organizations use WhatsApp groups, which makes communication very easy and allows you to quickly connect with other students and build friendships.

D. Sports

In Florence, you can practice almost any sport you like. The easiest way to get involved is through Erasmus student organizations, which regularly organize sports activities including volleyball, football, badminton, hiking, dance,...

These activities are usually accessible to everyone, regardless of level, and are a great way to stay active while meeting new people. Information about sessions and events is generally shared through WhatsApp groups or social media, making it very easy to join.

E. Eating

The university canteen in Florence is more expensive than in France, so I would generally recommend doing your own grocery shopping and cooking at home. This is usually cheaper and gives you more flexibility in terms of what you eat.

It is also a good idea to look for places that offer student discounts, especially around the campus and in student areas. Many cafés, pizzerias, and small restaurants have special deals for students, which can help you save money while still enjoying Italian food.

F. Go to the university : bus, car, bike

Getting to the university is very easy. The campus is well connected by tram, bus, bike paths, and pedestrian routes, so you can choose the option that suits you best.

Personally, I often used the tram and walked, as both were fast and convenient. If you prefer cycling, the city is also adapted to bikes, which makes daily commuting simple and efficient.

G. Travels

I highly recommend travelling during your stay, as Florence is extremely well connected. The main train station (Santa Maria Novella) is located right in the city center, giving you easy access to many Italian cities such as Rome, Milan, Venice, Bologna, or Pisa.

The airport is also directly accessible by tram, which makes it very simple to catch flights to other countries for weekend trips or longer holidays. Whether by train or by plane, travelling from Florence is convenient, affordable, and a great way to discover Italy and Europe.

V. After your semester abroad

A. What are you planning do to?

Next year, I plan to continue my studies in management and international strategy. My goal is to deepen the skills I developed during my exchange in Florence, especially in innovation, sustainability, and organizational management. I would also like to remain involved in international projects and student or local initiatives.

B. Did you apply for master?

Yes, I applied for a Master's program in management. I have been accepted into the Master MPID at MoMa, which is perfectly aligned with my background in international management and my Erasmus experience. This program will allow me to further specialize and prepare for a career in fields such as project management, cultural management, or international development.