

BELGIQUE– ghent university

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.....	3
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.....	4
3.	List of courses and recommendation	5
4.	Exam	6
IV.	When I live there.....	6
A.	Safety.....	6
B.	Phone and Internet	6
C.	Events	6
D.	Sports.....	7
E.	Eating	7
F.	Go to the university : bus, car, bike.....	7
G.	Travels.....	7
H.	Any other information you would have liked to know about.....	7
V.	After your semester abroad	8
A.	What are you planning do to?	8
B.	In which master was you accepted.....	8

¹ To update the agenda just click right on your mouse



I. Your overall feeling after your semester abroad

My semester at Ghent University was a really valuable experience, both academically and personally. I wanted to spend my semester abroad somewhere that felt different, not just a new university, but a real change of atmosphere, and Ghent turned out to be a great choice. The city is beautiful, very student-friendly, and has this unique mix of history and modernity that makes it really special. It's peaceful but full of life at the same time.

Academically, Ghent University is well-ranked, and I could really see why the courses were well-structured, the professors were knowledgeable and approachable, and some classes were challenging but in a good way. On a personal level, I met people from different backgrounds and built valuable friendships and connections that made the experience even more meaningful.

Honestly, it was one of the best experiences I've had. If I had to choose again, I'd definitely pick Ghent; no regrets at all.

GRADE : 4/5

II. Before the travel

A. Preparation

1. Visa

I am not a European citizen, so I needed a specific permit to stay in Belgium since my semester abroad was longer than three months. Because I already had a valid French **titre de séjour**, I applied for **Annex 33**, online after arriving in Ghent.

Annex 33 is a special residence permit that allows non-European students with a valid residence permit from another recognized country to stay temporarily in Belgium for their studies without needing a full visa. This permit officially covered my entire stay during the semester.

During the university's welcome day, they provided detailed information about the application process and other necessary administrative procedures to complete.

2. The flight

For my trip, I took the Ouigo train from Montpellier Sud de France to Brussels Midi. It was a pretty long ride; around 5 hours, but since I had a lot of luggage, the train actually worked out better than flying. Train tickets are a bit more expensive than a budget flight, but the luggage options were much better and already included in the price. I was allowed to bring two large suitcases and a small bag. That meant I didn't have to stress about strict luggage limits or extra fees like you do on planes. Once I got to Brussels Midi, I took a train right from the station to Ghent for 7 euros, and it was a 25-minute ride.

3. My luggage



It gets very cold in Ghent during the winter, so make sure to bring warm clothes like a good winter coat, scarves, gloves. However, this year, sunny days started as early as April, so it's also a good idea to pack some summer clothes and lighter jackets for the spring months.

4. Bank account

I kept my French bank account, and it worked perfectly. I was able to withdraw money and pay by card without any extra fees, which made things much easier. I didn't need to open a Belgian bank account since my French one met all my needs.

5. Insurance

For insurance, I had my European Health Insurance Card (CEAM), which covered basic medical needs in Belgium. I also had additional coverage from AXA in France, specifically for studying and doing internships abroad, but to be honest, it wasn't really necessary since the CEAM already provided the essential coverage.

During the university open day, there was a stand for HELAN insurance. They offered a free service where you filled out a form with your CEAM details. It basically links your European card to a Belgian insurance system, which makes it much easier to get reimbursements and access healthcare without long delays.

B. Housing

1. Where to live

I used to live near Overpoort Street, which is a good and lively area. It's known for its student atmosphere, with lots of bars, cafés, and places to eat. It's not very far from the city center, and it's also close to the Tweekerken campus where most of my classes took place. I recommend staying in that area, in the city center, or in a student residence, as all are convenient and vibrant. For other parts of the city, I don't really know much.

2. Find a flat or a room

I found my accommodation through the Ghent University website. After applying for the exchange program on the university's platform (OASIS), you can initiate an accommodation request directly through their system. I recommend staying in a student residence because it's a great way to meet other students and fully experience the erasmus life. Otherwise, you can look for places on the private market using websites like Erasmus Play or through Facebook groups.

3. Cost

The cost in university residences depends on the type of room you choose. A simple student room with a shared bathroom and kitchen can be around €400 and a bit more. The room I had was €543 because it was a single room with a private bathroom and a shared kitchen. You can also choose a whole studio in the student residence, which usually costs around €600.



III. When I arrive at the university

A. Inscription at the university

The registration process at the university is very straightforward and well-organized. The administration provides clear instructions and sends multiple informative emails to guide you through each step. During the first week, the university organizes several welcome meetings and orientation sessions. These meetings also cover important topics such as changes in the learning agreements, deadlines... The Housing Office holds a session as well to help with accommodation questions. Overall, the administrative requirements are minimal, so you won't have to worry about complicated paperwork or lengthy procedures.

B. Information on the university

1. Class

Ghent University is a highly ranked institution with a strong academic reputation. I wouldn't say the classes are hard, but they are definitely challenging. The grading system here is different from MOMA's. For MCQ exams, a standard setting method is used to determine the pass mark, which usually means you need to score at least 60% of the total points; for example, 25 out of 40 or 20 out of 30 to pass (get a 10 out of 20). The questions tend to be very specific, so a solid understanding of the material is essential.

Exams often combine multiple-choice and open-ended questions. I recommend staying up to date with the coursework and not falling behind, especially in classes that require continuous practice or build on previous knowledge. Also, if you're not planning on dedicating enough time, try not to choose very difficult classes, as they can be quite demanding.

2. Organization of the Class

In my case, most of my classes were lectures, I didn't have any tutorials (TD). All my classes were recorded, so if you can't attend, you can always find a recorded version on the university's online platform. However, it depends on the professors; some don't record their classes, but they inform you about this at the beginning of the semester. Guest lectures are also very common and often just as important as the professor's lectures, as they are usually included in the exam content.

Sometimes classes can be online or on-site depending on the schedule, but you will always be informed in advance. Ghent University has multiple campuses, and your classes can take place on any of them, it's never fixed and depends on your weekly planning. The volume of work is manageable, we don't have many homework assignments, except sometimes group projects, but some classes require reading external materials.

Professors are very approachable and attentive, always willing to listen and help students. There is a discussion platform for each course where we can exchange ideas and ask questions, either to classmates or professors. Midterm exams are not common here; most of the time, grades are based on final evaluations, sometimes combined with group work, but not for all courses.



3. List of courses and recommendation

I had 7 classes during my exchange semester, which were as follows:

Organization Theory: This course focuses on the study of organizations, their structures and the behavior of individuals within them. Some classes were held online, others took place on campus and most of the classes were recorded, so if you missed a session, you could catch up easily. It was quite easy and understandable; I would definitely recommend it. The exam consisted of multiple-choice questions using standard setting, combined with an open-ended question.

Business Skills: This course offers an in-depth study of leadership and its different types. It explores various leadership styles and how they apply in business settings. The final exam is a multiple-choice test covering the textbook, lectures, and also content from guest lecture. Additionally, there is a self-assessment paper that must be submitted, which counts towards the final grade. I would recommend this course.

Economic Globalization: This course explores the concept of globalization and its impact on the world economy. It examines how international trade, capital flows, and global institutions shape economic development and interdependence between countries. The course also discusses challenges such as inequality and environmental concerns linked to globalization. It is interesting to study because it offers an up-to-date perspective on current global economic issues. The exam consists entirely of open-ended questions.

Public Management: This course is about managing public and non-profit organizations, but it also made me rethink what “public” really means. It looks at how to manage relationships between citizens, politicians, and public servants, which is quite interesting. We talked a lot about decision-making, public policies, and how to improve public services and create Public value. The exam was only open-ended questions based on the lectures and guest lectures as well.

Cross-Cultural Marketing: This course looks at the cultural differences between countries and how they affect marketing strategies. It helps you understand how companies can adapt their approaches to different cultures to be more effective internationally. The course included a lot of real-life examples and case studies, which made it really interesting. The exam was a mix of open questions and multiple-choice questions covering both lectures and guest lectures.

Research Methods: This course provides a solid foundation in how to design and conduct academic research. It covers key concepts such as research design, data collection techniques, and data analysis. Practical workshops are included to help students learn how to conduct research, collect and code data, and apply different methodologies in practice. The assessment is divided into two parts: permanent evaluation, which involves a group project based on a small-scale research study where students collect and code data; and a final evaluation that consists of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. I would definitely recommend this course especially for students planning to write a thesis or engage in future research.

Corporate Finance: This course develops an understanding of the core financial dimensions of a company, including financial statements, valuation methods, capital structure, and financial decision-making. It requires some prior knowledge in finance and accounting, and it



is important to stay up to date throughout the semester, as the content builds progressively. The course alternates between lecture weeks and practical sessions, allowing students to apply concepts through exercises and case studies.

The final grade is based on two components: permanent evaluation (20%), which involves a group project focused on the financial valuation of a company, and final evaluation (80%), which consists of a multiple-choice section and an integrated exercise. The exam is based on lectures, in-class exercises, and guest lectures.

I would recommend this course to students who are interested in developing strong analytical skills and understanding investment decisions. However, I would recommend it less if you are not ready to stay consistently engaged or keep up with the material throughout the semester, because it can quickly become difficult if you fall behind.

4. Exam

Most exams last between 2 hours 30 minutes and 3 hours. The format varies depending on the course: some exams are composed entirely of multiple-choice questions (MCQs), others include only open questions, while many combine both. There is no negative marking for MCQs, which is an advantage. However, standard setting is systematically applied. This means that to pass an MCQ-based exam, students usually need to score more than 50% of the correct answers, regardless of the number of questions. Open questions typically require detailed and well-structured answers, often based on both lectures and guest lectures. The overall grading system is based on a scale from 0 to 20, with 10 being the minimum to pass.

IV. When I live there

A. Safety

In general, Ghent is a safe city for students and residents. You can walk around comfortably during the day and at night in most areas. However, like in any city, it's important to stay alert. I personally had my phone stolen in a shopping street in the city center of Ghent, so I would recommend being cautious, especially in busy areas or on public transport. Pickpocketing can happen even if it's less common in Ghent compared to cities like Brussels, it's still a risk, particularly in crowded or touristy zones.

B. Phone and Internet

I kept my French SIM card while in Belgium, so I had mobile data available when I was outside. In the student residence, there is Wi-Fi provided, which generally works well. Occasionally, the Wi-Fi can be a bit slow or temporarily unavailable, but these issues are rare and usually resolved quickly.

C. Events

To stay informed about events, there are several useful channels. The ESN (Erasmus Student Network) has an active Instagram page where they regularly post about parties, trips, and social gatherings. You can also join WhatsApp or Telegram groups with other exchange students, where events and meetups are frequently organized. Additionally, Ghent University sends emails about various academic and cultural events.



D. Sports

I did not practice any sports during my stay, so I don't have much personal experience. However, I know that many exchange students regularly go to the gym. There are two or three gyms located near the student residence, making it convenient for those interested in fitness. Additionally, Ghent University offers sports facilities and clubs that students can join.

E. Eating

Ghent University has several university restaurants located across different campuses. They offer affordable meals for students, and you can check the menus and opening hours online, as they may vary depending on the location. Alternatively, you can do your own grocery shopping and cook, which is what students often do.

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

Most of my classes took place at the Twekerken campus, which was only about a 5-minute walk from the student residence, so it was very convenient. However, some classes were held on other campuses across the city. In those cases, I either took the bus or used a bike.

Ghent is a very bike-friendly city, with plenty of bike lanes and dedicated parking spots, so cycling is a great and popular option among students. You can subscribe to a bike rental service if you want.

For public transport, it's also possible to get a subscription card for buses and trams through De Lijn, which gives you unlimited travel within certain zones and is very practical for getting to class or exploring the city.

G. Travels

With the ESN card, you can get 10% off FlixBus tickets, which is a great option for budget-friendly travel across Europe. I definitely recommend visiting other Belgian cities, there's a lot to explore! Within Belgium, you can buy a 10-journey train ticket (called a "Rail Pass") which is very convenient and economical for traveling between cities like Bruges, Antwerp, Leuven, or Brussels.

You can also travel to neighboring countries such as the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, or Germany. Buses are generally cheaper than trains for international trips, but both are accessible and well-connected from Ghent.

Another option is flying with Ryanair, which often offers low-cost flights. Ryanair flights usually depart from Charleroi Airport, not Brussels Airport (Zaventem), so plan your transfers accordingly.

H. Any other information you would have liked to know about

One thing I would have liked to know beforehand is that Flemish people can come across as a bit reserved or distant at first, especially compared to what we're used to in more outgoing cultures. However, once you spend time with them, you realize that they are genuinely kind. They value personal space and tend to be more discreet, but they're always willing to help if you ask, and many are very open-minded and welcoming, especially towards international students.

Also, Shops, cafés, and supermarkets in Belgium often close earlier than in France, usually around 6 or 7 PM. So, you need to plan when to do your shopping or go out accordingly.



V. After your semester abroad

A. What are you planning do to?

I am planning to pursue a master's degree next year.

B. Did you apply for master?

Yes, I have been accepted into a Master's program in Finance.

