

## ITALY – University of Bologna

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<sup>1</sup> To update the agenda just click right on your moose

## I. Your overall feeling after your semester abroad

*[Help : How was your experience abroad? If you could go back I time, would you go to this university and why ?]*

The Erasmus experience is more than what I could have wished for. I met incredible people, I visited places I never thought I could go to, and Bologna was the perfect city for it. Certainly not as big or as imposing as Florence or Rome, but it has all the perks of a medium city like Montpellier – a student city, full of life, strategically located (so all flights/buses/trains from Bologna to Bari, Sicily, Napoli, Florence are cheaper in comparison to other cities), and the quality of teaching at Unibo (one of the oldest – if not the oldest – in the occidental world) is excellent.

The pedagogical team is highly qualified in their areas of expertise, approachable, understanding, and open to new perspectives.

**GRADE: 5**

*=> 0 (I do not recommend this semester abroad to my best friend) – 5 (I totally recommend this semester to my best friend)*

## II. Before the travel

### A. Preparation

#### 1. Visa

*[Help : Do I need a visa ? If yes, what is the process ?]*

If you are a French or an EU student, you do not need a visa. I am from a non-EU country, so I had to go and get a visa directly in Paris (because the consulate in Marseille does not issue visas).

If you are in a similar situation (non-EU student), regardless of where you go in Europe (and all the more if you go to Italy since they have their own administrative processes for international students) I would strongly recommend checking thoroughly if you need a visa. For example, when you are doing for check-in at Unibo they state that you have to apply for a residence permit – which I found strange because I already had one valid in France – but for that you need to have a visa. Without proof of you starting the process of asking for the residence permit, they will not allow you to take the exams, so my strong advice for international students – BE THOROUGH in your research.

#### 2. The flight

*[Help : what flight did you take (the company name, airport etc.) and when did you take your flight ticket]*

I took an Air France flight from Montpellier to Paris, then I had a stopover of around 2-3 hours and then from Paris to Marconi Airport, the one in Bologna. I traveled on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February since I started classes on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

### 3. My luggage

*[Help : what to not forget in the luggage (what was useful and what you would like to have taken)]*

I took a backpack, a 10kg luggage and a 23kg luggage, and I think it was enough (careful – even if you think you have taken everything and will not spend a single euro in clothes, you are lying to yourself, so I would recommend not to fill your luggage entirely if you do not want to come back by bus to avoid being charged extra for the weight of your suitcases).

Bologna is very rainy in February-March, so do not forget your umbrella and a good jacket. Also, it gets very warm in June, so do not forget to bring your summer clothes.

### 4. Bank account

*[Help : did you have to change bank? To respect some amount requirement on the bank account etc.]*

No, I used my French bank account, and I never had an issue with it. You just have to let your bank know in advance that you are going abroad.

### 5. Insurance

*[Help : What insurance did you subscribe to ?]*

I had the Carte Européenne d'Assurance (from Ameli) and as a requirement for my visa I had to also get insurance. I used Axa's international insurance service, for around 60 euros a month (which is almost the same as the mutuelle, so I just canceled mine for the time I was going to stay in Bologna).

## B. Housing

### 1. Where to live

*[Help : Do a google maps capture and circle the area you recommend to live in (and the one you do not recommend) ]*



Bologna is like any other city, there are parts where you should a little bit more careful than others. I personally never lived close to a dangerous zone in the city, however I had been told that it is better to stay away from the north of the city, Bolognina and surrounding areas.

Also, avoid peripheral zones like Pilastro, they are too far from the city, and it is not the nicest neighborhood.

## 2. Find a flat or a room

*[Help : How did you find your flat? Do you have any recommendation]*

I found my shared flat in one of the WhatsApp groups for students. Beware of scams – they are everywhere. If you do not have someone there to go and check if the flat exists, you could always try to do a video call before signing anything or committing anything. If the landlord does not seem to want to do a videocall, it is a red flag. They are very used to making video calls to international students as there are a lot.

## 3. Cost

*[Help : How much should I plan for a room or a flat?]*

Italy has a housing crisis, so the minimum you should expect for a double room (or a shared room which is common in Italy) is 350 euros with utilities (water, gas, electricity, Wi-Fi). I paid 405 euros per month and had to share with another girl in a 2-bedroom apartment, but I know people who paid 800 euros in a shared flat to have their own room.

My recommendation: do not be afraid to try new experiences, and this is one of those. At the beginning I did not want to share a room (for obvious reasons – I did not know the girl I was going to share it with) but we ended up being friends and I had a great time with her. You get used to someone else being in the room and when you are back home, you certainly have your own space back, but it feels a bit empty.

# III. When I arrive at the university

## A. Inscription at the university

*[Help : How was the process, what did you have to do?]*

Once you arrive in Bologna you must do the virtual check-in process. They will have sent all the information before you arrive on how you must do it, so read carefully the e-mails.

The administrative staff is very friendly so do not hesitate to send emails and ask questions.

## B. Information on the university

### 1. Class

*[Help : for each class tell us how the class was, what did you like and not like, would you recommend it for the next student?]*

According to my Learning Agreement, I had the following classes:

#### - **Organizational Behavior**

A very interesting class, it is a subject that is composed of psychology studies, as well as sociology, a little bit of anthropology, among other social studies. In Italy the semester is divided into 2 seminars, and in the first seminar we had the opportunity to have visits to actual factories of Hera (Italian company) and see how they operate, as well as we had the

chance to have an Airbnb executive to come all the way from San Francisco and give us a class on the subject, a Lamborghini executive too over a video call. The teacher is highly qualified and has a great network, which makes it even more interesting.

For the first seminar, you do have to read a very large manual so if you decide to take this class, do not hesitate to start the readings so for the exam you will not have to rush-read.

- **Financial Analysis**

The professor is very qualified; he has taught in business schools in Paris and the topics covered are very interesting for a first-year class. He revisits topics covered in previous finance courses, so it's a good way to refresh knowledge.

- **Business Strategy**

Truth being told, this class sums up all of the management theory we have seen so far over the 3-year period at MOMA. If you want to be more challenged in your classes, I advise you to take a different class. The teacher was adorable and explained everything passionately, and she will retire this year, so maybe the program of this course will change a bit for next year but still.

- **Computational Tools**

You might think this class is as easy as the excel class we have in L2 and you might feel tempted to take it and not attend during the semester, but trust me, as the semester continues, the difficulty increases and on Virtuale (our Moodle) the teacher does not upload explanations on what he did on the excel files. My strong advice – if you are going to specialize in finance, data analytics, or similar fields, take it, and attend the classes. If you put in the work, you will find it interesting and will have a good grade (an “Idoneo”, as they say, because in some classes it is not about the grade, but it is all about PASS or FAIL system).

## 2. **Organization of the Class**

*[Help : tell us the duration of the class, the volume of work, the behavior of teachers etc. ?]*

- **Organizational Behavior**

This one probably has the highest amount of work to do by yourself, as mentioned above. You will have the manual sent and you will have to do the readings to keep up with the class, but it is very enlightening if you also like social studies and why people operate the way they do.

- **Financial Analysis**

Most of the classes start half an hour late than scheduled (this is the Italian culture) and end before, so instead of having three hours, for this class you will probably have 2 hours, 1 hour and a half at best.

As for the workload of this class, there are some readings to do in case you want to deepen your understanding, but everything that will come up on the exam is on the PP. They will also send exercises so you can train yourself.

- **Business Strategy**

The teacher is very open to discussion and ideas. There are no readings to do so that alleviates the workload but still try to study some days in advance so you will not be lost in the exam.

The exam is composed of a theoretical part (20 multiple choice questions) and a practical part (case study). If you are familiar with theory, you should do good in the exam.

- **Computational Tools**

Probably the shortest one, the internal exam should be ending April, so you will have time for your other subjects. The teacher is very pragmatic and straightforward, just like any engineer.

You do have to work on your own after class to pass the exam, as it is all about exercising what you have seen in class. The exam per se is done in the computer laboratory, and the teacher will send a word document with the exercises to do on excel or PowerBI and you will have to put on the word document the results and send it back to him.

### 3. List of courses and recommendation

*[Help : list your different courses and let us know what do you think : level (easier, same or harder than the 1<sup>st</sup> semester course at MOMA, what you liked about the content, how is the class organization, who is the professor). Finally, for each class, tell us if you recommend the course.]*

- **Organizational Behavior** (Level: somewhat same or a little bit higher than MOMA for the level of content to study and the knowledge to retain).

I recommend it if you like social studies and its theory.

Teacher: Massimo Bergami.

- **Financial Analysis** (Level: Same as MOMA).

I strongly recommend solidifying your financial understanding.

Teacher: Lorenzo Dal Maso.

- **Business Strategy** (Level: Easier than MOMA).

I would have chosen a different one, but I had already taken the first midterm.

Teacher: Chiara Giulia De Leo.

- **Computational Tools** (Level: Harder than MOMA).

As mentioned above, do it if you want to deepen your knowledge of excel, PowerBI. But put in the work.

Teacher: Francesco Bergamaschi.

#### 4. Exam

*[Help : How was the exam? Format? Duration? Grade ]*

In Italy, they work with a different scale – instead of your grade being determined on a scale of 1 to 20, your grade is decided out of 30. And the minimum you need to pass is not 15, but 18. Anything under 18 is an automatic failure.

In most cases, you have a midterm to pass at the end of march/beginning of April (which counts for 50% of your total grade), and a second midterm you pass in June, July or even September. If for any reason you did not do good in one of the midterms, you will have to present the final (which is normally scheduled for June too) and you will have to study the entire content of the course (not just 1 seminar).

You have the option to ask the teacher not to consider the exam you just submitted if you feel you did badly. If you decide to do so, it will not be graded, and your overall score will not be affected. You will have to take the final exam (in case you asked the teacher not to take into consideration the midterm you just decided not to submit).

During the semester you also could decline the grade you get up to 2 times.

Therefore, there are several opportunities for you to pass the subject.

##### - **Organizational behavior.**

The exam is composed of multiple-choice questions. At the beginning of the semester, the teacher splits the group into 2 groups – the experimental path (with visits) and the cognitive path (traditional learning, mostly based on the manual mentioned previously).

In the exam, the difference is important because depending on the path you chose you will have different questions. Also, for the experimental path, your grade will also be composed of the 2 midterms/1 final and a group project.

##### - **Financial Analysis.**

It is also a multiple-choice question exam, but you have to do exercises and calculations and choose among the answers the one corresponding to the result you have. There are very few questions with pure theory.

##### - **Business Strategy.**

Both midterms are composed of 20 multiple-choice questions, and a case study at the end. There is also the opportunity to do a group project voluntarily, this will allow you to get up to 3 more points in your overall score.

##### - **Computational Tools.**

The internal/final exam is composed of practical questions in a word file, and up to 2 theoretical questions. You will have the choice of carrying out the exercises either in Excel or PowerBI, I personally chose to do it in Power Pivot (through Excel). You will have to screenshot the results you get in Excel/PowerBI and paste them in the word file and send it to the teacher.

Then again, with practice, you will be able to do it.

## IV. When I live there

### A. Safety

*[Help : Is it safe? Is there areas or times I should avoid]*

Avoid areas like Bolognina, San Donato, or Pilastro. Ultimately San Donato is not that bad and there are a lot of apartments rented for students, but upper parts of the city are to be avoided.

### B. Phone and Internet

*[Help : How to be able to call and have internet]*

I started my Erasmus semester using my number and data from my French mobile provider, however somewhere mid-May I got an SMS stating that according to the Italian communications law, the Italian telecommunications provider that allowed the signal for my French sim card would start charging me for data and phone calls. So I had gotten what they call a Tourist sim card, which cost around 30 euros in Windtre with data and calls for a month.

### C. Events

*[Help : How to know about the events?]*

I STRONGLY advise you to get the ESN Card and follow the ESN group in social media and WhatsApp groups. Do not hesitate to also sign up for the trips with them, as that is how you will truly get to know more people and make international friends. They also do workshops at the beginning of the semester and aperitivos, so my recommendation: do not say no!

### D. Sports

*[Help : What sport can I do ? and how?]*

Like everything, Bologna must have a disadvantage: the public transport. The tickets cost 2.5, and the service is horrible. The city is not that big and people normally either take a bike to move around the city or walk. I did the latter, so by walking everywhere – to go to the university, meet your friends, go to San Luca (which is a Sanctuary in the southwestern part of the city) you will start seeing results on your body.

I know people who signed up for the gym, however in Italy it is quite representative on the budget, as the cheapest gyms cost around 55 euros per month.

## E. Eating

*[Help : Any recommendation? Or good tips (e.g. an international house buffet)]*

Bologna is in the region of Emilia Romagna, and it is very known for several dishes: pasta al ragu (the traditional Bolognese!), you should try it in the restaurant Sfoggia Rina, although you need to make a reservation through their website because they are always full.

They also are very known for their Tortellini in Brodo, which is a type of filled pasta with pork in a chicken soup and cheese on top. You can do a workshop on how to do it organized by ESN at the beginning of the semester.

The BEST pizza in all of Bologna is the one you will find in Il Portico San Donato, close to the university district. The ingredients are amazing, and the quality is just top level. Also, if you make reservations through the Fork you can get 50% off on your whole tab!

Also the best tiramisu I have tried is not in Rome (where it is apparently from) but in the Coffee Patisserie Gamberini, where they sell actual bites of tiramisu.

Also the burrata costs only 1.9 at the supermarket, so do not hesitate to incorporate them in your diet!

I personally shopped in Eurospin (a supermarket) because it was close to where I lived. You will also find student friendly supermarkets like Lidl, Aldi. Those with a little bit more variety but more pricey are Carrefour, Conad and Coop.

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

*[Help : How did you get access to the bus, car or bike]*

By foot!

Although you can take the monthly subscription for 30 euros a month, but then again the public transport is very messy and often very late, so I would not rely on that to move around the city if you are in a rush. There are only buses, and they are building their tram system but that one will not be ready for long).

## G. Travels

*[Help : What do you recommend and what do you not recommend]*

If you want to travel in your own pace, having control of what you do and what you see, then I would recommend checking out sites like RyanAir, Skyscanner to book flights and obviously booking accommodation.

Personally, I did not want to stress over the details of reservations, therefore I tried to participate in every trip offered by the ESN network in Bologna.

I traveled quite a lot with them in Italy, and they even do ski trips and trips to Croatia if you are interested.

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

*[Help : What would I have liked to know if I could have gone back in time]*

Summing up the experience, always consider that you can have a really great experience depending on who you surround yourself with, how you decide to live it, and how open you are to it. There are a lot of things that can change in that period – and even if at first you do not like it, know that it gets better.

## V. After your semester abroad

A. What are you planning do to?

*[Help : What do you want to do next year]*

I will start my masters!

B. Did you apply for master?

*[Help : in which master where you accepted]*

I was accepted in CCA at MOMA.