UNIVERSITÀ COMMERCIALE L.

BOCCONI, ITALY

Exchange Report
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Monthly Activities Log

February

I arrived at Milan on 25th of January. Bocconi offer Italian crash course for exchange student to learn some basic Italian for about two weeks. It is pretty useful in terms of learning the basic Italian like numbers and the pronunciation. The course is also good for social purpose. I made quite a lot of friends from the course and we ended up travel together to some places throughout the semester. I definitely recommend taking the course. At the start of the semester the Exchange Student Network will arrange various trips and activities. Bocconi also provide some orientation activities for students to register through the portal (yoU@B). If you want to make new friends and expand your network, this is basically the only chance. Because once the semester start, most of the exchange students will travel around making it quite difficult to know more new people in the middle of the semester. For traveling, I went to Lake Como with friends I met in the language course. I also been to Vinice for the mask carnival which is around mid-February. If you are more interested in Vinice but not the carnival, I’ll recommend you choose other time to go there. The accommodation is super expensive during the carnival period, and it is more crowded than Hong Kong. At the following week, I went to Amsterdam for four days and watched a tennis game in Rotterdam. At the end of the month, I went for a day trip in Turino which is one of the previous capital of Italy and it’s close to Milan. Overall, February is a busy month for me, since I need to apply for the tax code, the identity card thing, and deal with the accommodation stuff.
March

March is one of the most exciting months during exchange. Bocconi has a 19 days spring break starting from mid-March to early-April. My main focus on the month is to travel and travel. Two of my friends from UST visit me in Milan and we went to Bergamo for a day trip first. Bergamo is a pretty decent place to have a day trip since it’s beautiful with the view and it’s close to Milan. We flew to Norway to start our crazy 20 days trip. We first stayed in Oslo for 3 days and we take the Norway in the nutshell trip and we took train to Flam for one night. After that, we took boat and bus to Bergen and stay for the last night in Norway. We flew to Stockholm directly from Bergen after 5 days in Norway. We stayed in one of our UST friend’s dorm for four days and chilled in Stockholm and finished our 9 days Scandinavian trip. After this, we flew to Istanbul for 4 days and flew to Cappadocia for 3 days. Turkey is the highlight of the whole trip. In my opinion, the value is much higher compare the Northern Europe trip. The food is tasty and cheap. Both Istanbul and Cappadocia are gorgeous in different ways, and I can feel the history and culture of Turkey. I flew back to Milan on first of April. It’s time to go back to school and rest a bit.
April

April is the month where I realize I should start to go to school and study since the exam started from mid-May. However, I just can’t stop traveling. I think I had enough studying in UST and I shouldn’t waste my time on books during exchange, so I took the action. I went to Madrid, Spain for four days after three days coming back from Turkey. I lived in my friend’s house, so the trip is pretty cheap for me. At the following week, I flew to Berlin first and visit my friend in Halle and live in his house. I stayed for four days in Germany and spent around 150 euro in total include airfare thanks to my friend. Both trip are quite fulfilling, since I am able to catch up with my friends from the other side of the Globe. At the end of April, I decided to go for my last trip in Italy before start studying for finals. My UST friend who studied in Stockholm came visit me this time. We went to Siena, Manterigioni, San Gimignano, Florence, Pisa, and Cinque Terre for 5 days. The Toscana experience is wonderful. I got to know different side of Italy and had some awesome delicacy.
May

After the 5 days trip from Toscana region, I stay at home to study for finals for the whole month. I took 3 finance courses and 1 accounting course, which all of them are high level courses. I had four finals accounting for 100% of my grade starting from mid-May to the end of May. I basically start studying from zero. Since I seldom went to school, it’s quite tough for me to study all the material. This is THE MOST PAINFUL month during my exchange. It’s time to pay back the debt. Gladly, after some hard work studying each subject for few days, I was able to pass all of them. Right after finishing my exam, I went on my last trip in my exchange. I went to Prague for four days and decided to try something crazy during the stay, Skydiving! This exchange has been a wonderful journey for me. I traveled to 8 countries and 23 places, and experienced all the different cultures, food, and people. I am so thankful for having this opportunity.
**General Exchange Information**

**Visa Procedures**

I applied my visa in Taiwan, but it is advisable to do it in Hong Kong since we exchange from HKUST. I recommend you apply as early as possible since the process can be quite slow. Basically, I just followed the check list and fill in the form and bring all the original and copies of all the require document. It took me around a month to get my visa.

**Orientation Activities**

ESN and Bocconi will arrange various activities including the Italian crash course, Permit of Stay session, cross-cultural session, Milan city tours and a cocktail session to meet more friends. I personally only go to some of them.

**International Services & Activities**

The International Student Desk (ISD) at Bocconi is responsible for all exchange-related affairs. The office is located right at the heart of Bocconi campus and is very accessible. Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is a European university student network for exchange students. ESN will offer the ESN card for around 20 euro, which is a must-get if you are going to travel a lot. The card is partner with Ryanair, and it provide 15% off discount and free luggage for the first 8 trips.

**Accommodations**

Since hall places are limited and the price is same as renting outside, many students will choose to rent a house. I found my house through Spotahome before I came to Milan. I was lucky enough to get a house for 600 euro with pretty decent settings even it’s 40 mins away from school. I think it’s a risky movement since I didn’t have the chance to see the house. You need to pay extra agency fee if you use Spotahome, but I think ESN offer code for students to get discount on it. I didn’t realize that until I got to Bocconi. One of my friend found his house through Airbnb. The deal is not bad if you are living for four months, you can negotiate the price with the landlord. Another common place to find house is from the Facebook group. Please be extra careful on this, since there’s really no guarantee. If you see something too good to be true
or you feel a bit weird at any point. Don’t risk your money even there’s just 1 percent of the chance that the offer is a scam. There’re also students finding their house through local agency after they got to Milan. I think this is a safer and more legit way to rent a house, but I was just too lazy to move.

**Course Registration**

ISD will send out email to inform you to register courses through yoU@B which is the online portal that Bocconi use. HKUST equivalent is myPortal. I have no difficulty in enrolling all of my four courses. I think exchange students are given priority on this. The system is a bit old school. It’s not very easy to navigate through and there’s no waitlist for courses. One thing to remember is that you can enroll courses with time clashes.

**Teaching & Assessment Methods**

Since all my courses are Finance and Accounting, they are all based on examination. Some of my courses offer option to take midterm or not for students to spread their workload. I basically skipped most of the classes and focus on traveling. One thing to note about is Bocconi likes to invite guest speaker during the semester to give students a sense of the actual industry, which I think is pretty good. The exam is also more open ended and more difficult than UST exam. Overall, if you just want a pass, it shouldn’t be too difficult.

**Sports & Recreation Facilities**

Bocconi is smaller than my high school. All the facilities are limited. Bocconi has a gym that you need to pay membership fee. The library is ok, with a lot of rooms available for students to do projects and discussion.

**Cost/ Expenses**

Overall, I spent around 70,000 HKD in total include all the expense and airfare. I think Milan is not that expensive if you cook every meal. The school also offer a pretty good meal deal. I think it’s around 4-5 euro per meal if you buy 10 meal at one time. I basically cook every meal myself. The wine and sparkling water are extremely cheap. If you love them, you will love Italy.
Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities
I didn’t pay much attention on this since I wasn’t in Milan for half of my exchange.
I will say if you want to stay in Milan and know more people. There’s definitely plenty of opportunities offer in the campus. There’s also a large job fair for you to network in the spring semester.

Health & Safety
I’ve never encountered anything bad in Milan, but I heard of a lot of story from my friends. Some of them lost their phone, wallet, and money. Be mindful at public places especially crowded places and you will be fine. I think Milan is safe if you choose a good neighborhood to live in.

Food
Food is awesome in Italy. The culture is amazing. Coffee, wine, pizza, and pasta all comes endless options. If you choose to eat in a ristorante, it’s not surprising to see a 20 euro check.

Transportation
At the beginning of the semester, most students will choose to apply for the student travel card which is about 23 euro for a month for all the transportation in Milan. I think is one of the cheapest in Europe and it’s really convenient.

Climate
The weather can be quite cold at the start of spring semester and super hot when it’s approaching the end of the semester. Bring all your summer and winter clothes to survive in Milan.

Communication
I use a local operator called Wind which provides me 5GB data per month with the price of 15 euro per month. The card also cost around 15 euro. The speed and the signal are not bad and it can be used in all Schengen region thanks to the policy change.
Cautionary Measures

Pay attention to your bags and pocket in the public places.

Items to Bring and Contacts

Important items:

- Clothes for summer and winter
- Adaptors
- Laptop
- Medicine
- Small suitcase/ bag for traveling
- Cash/ cards (cards are universal in Europe; most transactions are done through cards)

Contact:

The International Student Desk (ISD) is the Bocconi office responsible for exchange affairs. Please contact them for any questions regarding Bocconi at inexchange@unibocconi.it