

Exchange Report

IE Business School, Madrid (Spain)

2018 Spring Exchange



BUSINESS SCHOOL



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BBA in Global Business and Finance | Year 3

Monthly Log

January 2018

School officially started on January 8 but I arrived Madrid a bit late on January 11 due to some problems in my visa application (see Visa Procedures section). Luckily, it didn't stop me from attending the "Tapas Night", an orientation activity hosted for exchange students, where I met some good friends as well. Regarding the academics, although IE provides a long add drop period, students can only add or drop courses within the 20% of the sessions (3 ECTS course – 3rd session & 6 ECTS course – 6th session). Therefore, the first two weeks of school is usually busy with class enrolment.

After settling down, I went to Segovia and Cuenca for day trips. Segovia is famous for its historical buildings and it only takes around 1 hour from Madrid. After Segovia, we headed to Cuenca, also a beautiful city near Madrid, where you can enjoy the stunning natural scenery. I also went to Budapest and Bratislava at the end of January. Remember not to miss the thermal baths in Budapest as they were the best experience for the first month of my exchange!!



Fig. 1.1 Segovia



Fig. 1.2 Segovia



Fig. 2 Cuenca



Fig. 3.1 Budapest



Fig. 3.2 Budapest



Fig. 3.3 Budapest

February 2018

Three weeks after the beginning of school, classes were getting more intense. Most of the midterms, assignments and group projects were packed in this month for my courses, and that I had to spend some time on revision. But before all these work, I went to Copenhagen and Aarhus in the first week of February. As what is expected, buildings are all colored in bright colors but the weather is deadly cold that I thought I will get a cold back in Madrid (luckily it didn't happen). Overall, it was a nice trip. I also went to a day trip to Ávila, a small town where you can see a lot of churches that were built in gothic style. It is a city full of history!



Fig. 4.1 Copenhagen



Fig. 4.2 Copenhagen



Fig. 5.1 Aarhus



Fig. 5.2 Aarhus



Fig. 5.3 Aarhus



Fig. 6 Ávila

March 2018

March was a month of travelling. After finishing all the midterms and taking the advantage of the Easter break, I had plenty of time to explore different countries. I first went to Porto and Lisbon in the first week of March and everything was so good in Portugal that I enjoyed the trip very much. The second week I headed to Prague and Vienna, and I was impressed by the vibe in Prague and the food in Vienna.

I also had a really great time during the Easter break: Brussels, Paris, Zurich, Milan, Rome and Vatican. Things you must do: try the fries and waffle in Brussels, visit the Eiffel Tower in Paris, feel the city vibe in Zurich, go to the shopping center in Milan and experience the historical culture in Rome and Vatican.



Fig. 7 Porto



Fig. 8.1 Lisbon



Fig. 8.2 Lisbon



Fig. 9.1 Prague



Fig. 9.2 Prague



Fig. 10 Vienna



Fig. 11 Brussels

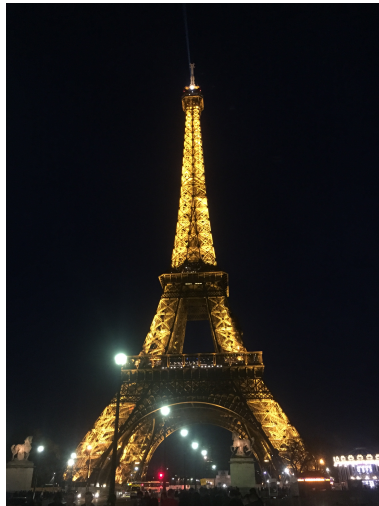


Fig. 12 Paris



Fig. 13 Zurich



Fig. 14 Milan



Fig. 15.1 Rome



Fig. 16 Vatican



Fig. 15.2 Rome

April 2018

Approaching the end of the semester, you will get a bit busier for essays and exams to wrap up the exchange. Still, I managed to watch a Real Madrid football game against Atletico Madrid, the popular Madrid Derby. Being a football fan and a Real Madrid fan, this experience was definitely one of the best experience I have ever had in Madrid.

My classes all ended on April 20 and exams took part in the following week. Compared to UST, the course materials and the exams are relatively easy and that you should be fine for finishing them without lots of pressure.



Fig. 17 The Madrid Derby



Fig. 18 Amigos en español 0.1



Fig. 19 Farewell

May 2018

After the semester ends, I started my 1 month travelling and returned to Hong Kong on May 30.

General Exchange Information

1. Visa Procedures

It was really a MESS to kickstart my exchange program due to the visa application. Since I was in the U.S. last semester for exchange and I was not able to apply the visa there, I had to schedule the visa appointment right after I came back to Hong Kong, which is on 18 December 2017. However, my flight originally scheduled on 4 January 2018, so it was really rush. The office said the processes will take a month, but mine took only around two weeks. Here comes the trouble. Although they finished the processes right before my flight, they DISAPPROVED my application for reasons that they cannot explain. They asked me to wait until they can figure out the reasons for rejection and said it may take another month, which I almost had to cancel the whole exchange due to the attendance requirement in IE. Luckily, I got the approved visa a few days later, but still, I highly encourage you to do it as soon as you receive all the documents to avoid last minute rush.

2. Orientation Activities

Like UST, IE has the exchange buddy program, so that you can connect with the local student before moving to Madrid. However, IE doesn't provide a lot of orientation activities for exchange students. Basically, "Tapas Night" is the only activity that allow you to meet other exchange

students before the semester starts.

3. International Services & Activities

The International Mobility Team provides extensive support to international students, and their office is located in the MMB building. If you have any questions about anything such as visa enquires, course enrolment, accommodation, or even emergencies, feel free to email or visit their office in person.

4. Accommodations

There is no on campus housing in IE, so you better secure a place before moving to Madrid. For me, I lived in Airbnb for the first month and found a double room through Spotahome for the rest of my stay.

5. Courses Registration

Course enrolment began in December for the spring semester, therefore you would have to plan ahead for what courses to take and check the course equivalency system (and course assessment for new courses) for credit transfer. All the courses shown up in the system are available for registration, but be careful about the attendance requirement because some courses may overlap.

6. Teaching & Assessment Methods

I have taken five courses and below are some of my comments.

Course Code and Name	Difficulty	Workload	Grading	Professor
29031 Corporate Finance	3/5	1/5	Class Participation, Midterm, Final	Carlos De Abajo Llamero
29034 Corporate Valuation	3/5	4/5	Class Participation, Homework/Assignments (in groups), Final Exam	Enrique Marquina Perez
29162 Topics in International Finance	3/5	2/5	Class Participation (Class Discussions, Case Studies, Presentations and Homework), Midterm Exam, Final Exam	Silviu Glavan
39020 International Law	5/5	3/5	Class Participation, 2 Group Essays, Individual Essay, Final Exam	Luis Peral Fernandez
42000 Spanish 0.1	3/5	2/5	Class Participation, Homework/Assignments, Midterm Exam, Final Exam	Carmen Insausti Alberdi

7. Sports & Recreation Facilities

You can find two table tennis tables right outside the building and that's it. There is not much sports facilities at school, but you can always look for gyms that are near the campus or your place.

8. Finance & Banking

Caixa bank, Sabadell, Bankia, Santander Bank, BBVA are some common banks in Madrid, and Sabadell is associated with the school so that exchange students usually choose to open a bank account there. For me, I tried to open a bank account in Sabadell through Citylife Madrid (an organization that provides different services for non-local people). However, I didn't get any reply from them as well as the bank, so I gave up on opening an account. Instead, I withdraw money directly at Bankia, with a service charge of HKD\$20 every withdrawal.

Costs and Expenses

Item	Approximate Cost (EURO)
Visa Application	60
Air Ticket (round trip)	670
Housing	1,720
Phone Plan	55
Transportation	75
Travel	4650
Miscellaneous	100
Total	7330

9. Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

I think I missed the club registration day due to my late arrival, but you can always check out different events in “IE campus”.

10. Health & Safety

I didn't get sick in Madrid so I am not so sure about the healthcare system. But I heard that visiting the doctor is expensive there, so you may consider bringing your own medicine from Hong Kong like what I did.

Madrid is pretty safe to me and I had no issues at all. Just be aware of pickpocketing in crowded areas and I think you will be fine.

11. Food

Eating out is expensive in European countries compared to Hong Kong, but it is still affordable (on average around 10 euro per meal). Try out the Tapas, paella (fried rice), jamon (ham) and tortilla de patata (omelet) in Madrid. If you miss the Chinese food, go to “Usera” station where there are a lot of Chinese restaurants.

12. Transportation

Set up the transportation card in the metro station and you can have unlimited travel at 20 euro per month.

13. Climate

It is pretty cold between January and April, but it rarely snows (except few times in January). You can typically see beautiful skies as well.

14. Communication

IE uses the same WiFi as UST – eduroam, so there should not be any problems. Meanwhile, I purchased Lycamobile from Citylife Madrid as the phone plan, with pretty affordable prices.

15. Cautionary Measures

Always be aware of pickpocketing in European countries.

Items to bring

Documents (HKID, Passport)	Cash	Adaptors
Laptop	Stationary	Charger
Medication	Umbrella	USB

Useful Links and Contacts

Email of International Mobility Team

international.mobility@ie.edu