

Personal Report

Ecole de Commerce Européenne (ECE) de Bordeaux, Winter Term 2018/19, 1 Semester International Business Administration, Fachbereich 3, Frankfurt

Language

Which language did you use? How did you communicate with your fellow students?

My program was in English so I learned some new words in relation to business but in general it did not improve my English much. Additionally I took the French Advanced class which helped me to refresh the French grammar basics. As there are only Erasmus students in the classes we communicated in English.

Accommodation

Did the host university arrange for accommodation?

No, unfortunately not.

How high were your overall monthly costs for accommodation (in Euro)?

425€

How would you describe the quality of your accommodation?

Very good.

How well was the accommodation situated? How long did it take you on average to reach the partner university (in minutes)?

I lived close to Hospital Saint-Andre from where you can take the Tram or the bike to university which both takes about 20 minutes.

Which web sites, forums, Facebook pages, contacts, etc. can you recommend for looking for accommodation?

The university sent a link for an accommodation platform which did not help me much. I would recommend looking at Facebook groups for Bordeaux. There is a student's residency close to Cite du Vin but I would not recommend it as the area is completely different than the rest of the city so you do not get the actual Bordeaux feeling plus it is far away from the city center and Victoire where there are many pubs and as the tram is not going all night and often has issues it is hard to reach anything from the residency. One good thing is that it is not far from some of the clubs.

Where have you been accommodated (name of dormitory, location, part of town, etc.)? And how would you describe the surroundings of your accommodation (shopping facilities, distance to the city center, nightlife, etc?)

I was accommodated close to Hospital Saint Andre which was perfect as you can walk in 10 minutes to the main Shopping street Rue Saint Catherine where you can find many shops of any kind and also in 10 minutes you can reach Victoire where there are many pubs. It takes about 20 minutes to walk to the river La Garonne where we often stayed for a drink during summer. Only to the main clubs it is at least 45 minutes' walk but you can take Uber.

Arrival at the Partner University and Orientation

Which is the best arrival time?

It is best to arrive a few days before the orientation program so you have time to get to know the city a bit.

How did you organize your arrival? Was the extent of the orientation program sufficient? What activities can you recommend? Were all important questions answered? What did you have to find out yourself? How fast were you able to get in contact with the domestic students? How were the services for exchange students?

I arrived around 10 days before university started so I had plenty of time and met some of the students, who I contacted via Facebook, already before uni started which was cool as you already know some people when you go to university. The orientation program was fun and good to get to know the others. But as there are only foreigners in the classes it is hard to meet French people in university. Sadly the whole organization in the university was very bad so e.g. we just got our study chips about 3 weeks before the end of our stay and at the beginning was a meeting scheduled to explain the CAF system which then never took place.

Living Abroad

Compared to Frankfurt, how high was the cost of living abroad?

Similar to Frankfurt.

What additional expenses did you have during your semester abroad? How far were you able to travel with your semester ticket? How was your student life off-campus? How were the Mensa's/ student cafeterias? What types of meals were served? How much did the meals cost? How were the libraries? Was their use free? Did the university provide computer workplaces/ computer pools? Was Wi-Fi available on-campus? Were you able to use study rooms? Were you able to rent separate rooms for studying? Did the university provide a sports program? Was this free of charge?

There was no semester ticket but I think you get a discount on the tram tickets as a student. The monthly costs for public transportation are about 35 Euro.

As the university was really small there was no Mensa but in about 15 minutes' walk you can find 'Le 98' where you get a starter, main dish and dessert for 3,25 Euro and there are many bakery's and restaurants around the university but these are in general expensive. In the university is not much space to work or even sit, you often have to go elsewhere to have space. The whole building is not very comfortable, there are only few class rooms with windows and it is always either too hot or too cold. Wi-Fi was available but not always working very well. You can print many pages for free in the university. They offered football but not much more of sports.

Studying at the Host University

How would you describe the academic standard of classes compared to Frankfurt?

A little easier.

Did you experience any difference in teaching methods/ class structure? Which were the difference regarding your expectations and your experiences at the partner university? What surprised you, what should newly arriving students know? How were the student services? Was the fact, that you were an exchange student taken into account (by professors or other staff)? If so, how? How were difficulties, which you or other exchange students may have met, handled by the partner university?

The teaching methods are totally different: It is like in school, the teachers will ask you questions and in almost every class you have to do group works and presentations. In some classes you even get oral grades. As the whole class was Erasmus it should be taken into account that we are exchange students. The teachers were from all other the world which was nice but the French teachers were mostly weird and had a very strong accent. Classes are mandatory which is annoying as some teachers are really strict about that and when you try to travel a lot it is not possible to just skip some classes. But in general we did not have too many classes so it was still possible to travel.

Final Remarks

What should future exchange students know/ do/ avoid? How would you overall rate your exchange experience? In what ways have you benefitted academically, personally, linguistically for your future career?

The university is really different from what we are used to from our university and it is not worth the money the French students pay but it was nice to have this experience. The city is super nice and definitely worth the go. From Bordeaux you can go by bus to the beach in about 1.5 hours and there is also a close beach at the lake in the city. You can also visit other cities around like Biarritz, La Rochelle, Paris (TGV 2 hours) and even San Sebastian in Spain. There is a cute wine village called St. Emilion not far away and of course many other wine regions.