



**EXCHANGE SUMMERY - ESADE BUSINESS SCHOOL**  
**FALL TERM 2013**

The student exchange program has been a great meaningful experience and I would highly recommend it to any of the MBA students. To live in a foreign country, study at one of the world’s finest business schools, challenge yourself with a new culture and meet new people, is truly a once in a lifetime experience (not to mention-BARCELONA). These months will go by quicker than you can imagine, so don’t forget to go out and enjoy the city, meet new people, broaden your international connections, travel around Europe & Spain, do the things you like and make the best out of it.

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**Arriving to Barcelona**

I recommend arriving at least a few days before the official orientation day and the beginning of the semester. You may want to use this time to get to know the city, your neighborhood and get into the Spanish atmosphere. If you don’t have a place to stay, 7-10 days should be enough in order to find one.

\*The best way I found to get to and from the airport was to use the [EaroBus](#) (5.90 Euro and 35 minutes and you are in Plaza Catalunya).

## Visa

In general, as a foreign student you need a visa for visits of more than 90 days. If you are planning to stay 90-180 days you need to apply for a short-term, type D student visa, which allows you to remain in for up to 180 days.

Personally, as I was traveling outside of Europe during my stay there, and as it was around 4 months in total - I didn't get a visa. Keep in mind that the Spanish are known to be very easy on the Visa issue (and in general) but you never know ...

## Accommodation

**Finding one:** There are various ways to find housing in Barcelona: agencies, websites and the ESADE network and facebook group. The ESADE guide book will introduce you to all of it (you will get it about a month prior to your arrival).

\*I used a local agent, nice guy and reliable. He has a few apartments around the center, most of them for short-medium term and fully equipped.

\*Other recommended websites: [idealista.com](http://idealista.com) [easypiso.com](http://easypiso.com) [loquo.com](http://loquo.com)

**Prices:** The prices for a short term (4-5 months) rental are around 600-1000 Euros a month for a fully equipped nice 1 bedroom apartment. Average cost of a shared apartment: €300 – €600 per person per month. Prices vary based on the neighborhood, apartment, furnishings, size and so on. This typically only includes municipality bills, while payment for water and electricity is separate. In addition, there are agency fees (one/two months' rent) to be paid and a deposit (one/two months' rent).

**Where to stay:** Deciding where you want to live depends on who you are, what's important to you and what you are looking for. Most students choose to live around these areas:

**1. Gracia:** Most students choose to live here. Its popular squares with outdoor cafes, its narrow streets and local markets, giving it a distinct neighborhood atmosphere (This area slightly resembles – Florentin, in Tel Aviv). It is very popular with both students and foreigners. The area is well served with transport links to school (FGC Gràcia st. with direct access to S1, S2, S5 and S55 trains to Sant Cugat)

**2. Barri Gòtic & El Born:** Both in the center. The Barri Gòtic is the oldest part of the city. It's in the very center of the city and includes small streets, buildings from medieval times beside lots of nightlife and tourists. El Born is probably the trendiest of the Barcelona Areas, occupying the space between Via Laietana and Ciutadella Park, and full of tapas bars and fashion boutiques. The accommodation in both is a mixture of old and new, traditional and trendy and -it's highly recommended but

keep in mind that it might be noisy. If you choose to live here, try to stay closer to the upper side close to Pl. Catalunya in order to shorten your way to ESADE (FGC Pl. Catalunya with direct access to S1, S2, S5 and S55 trains to Sant Cugat- 25m)

**3. L'Eixample:** Close to the city center but not THE center. It is a more residential area, with a 'big european city' feel. Has some variety of local bars and restaurants along with modernist architecture e.g. Gaudí's Casa Batlló, Casa Mila and Sagrada Familia. Flats tend to be large with spacious rooms. Some areas and some streets are more expensive than others, so it is difficult to generalize. (FGC Provença st. with direct access to S1, S2, S5 and S55 trains to Sant Cugat)

### Transportation

The public transportation in Barcelona is very convenient and very easy to use. However, keep in mind that the city center is quite small so you can easily get from one place to another just by walking/riding bicycles.

**Integrated TMB travel card** - The integrated TMB travel card system allows you to travel on buses, the metro, the tram and the two train services, Renfe and FGC (a local train system which you use in order to get from Barcelona to Sant Cugat) and to transfer from one to the other. Here's a brief description of the various TMB travel cards:

	<b>Barcelona 1 zone</b>	<b>Sant Cugat 2 zones</b>
10-ride	€9.80	€19.40
T-mes	€52.75	€77.45
<b>50/30</b>	<b>€39.20</b>	<b>€65.55</b>
T-trim	€142.00	€211.00
T-jove	€105.00	€155.00

fares valid until 31 DEC 2013

NOTE: To get to Sant Cugat from Barcelona, you need to use a **ZONE 2** Ticket, while everywhere else will be ZONE 1.

There are two types of passes I recommend you to consider using: **T-10 or T-50/30**.

- **T10:** It is unlimited in time and impersonal - can be used by one person for 10 rides or 10 people for 1 ride.
- **T50/30:** gives you 50 voyages over 30 consecutive days but this one is a single person ticket.

Buying this or that depends on the number of voyages you are planning: less than 40 journeys/month = T-10, 40-60 journeys/month = T-50/30.

**Transportation Schedule:** Busses run all day quite frequently (5-20 minutes). At night there is a night bus system that mimics most of the daytime lines, although less frequent (N bus). The metro runs from 5AM to Midnight on weekdays and Sunday, and arrives every 3-5 minutes. On Fridays the subway runs until 2AM and on Saturday it runs all night.

## Getting to Sant Cugat:

- STEP A: City center - FGC Sant Cugat Station: You will have to use the FGC train system, which has a few stops in the city center (i.e. Plaça Catalunya, Provença, Gracia). FGC Lines: S1, S2, S5, S55 (the journey from Plaça Catalunya to Sant Cugat will take approx. 25 minutes)
- STEP B: FGC Sant Cugat Station - ESADE: 12-15 minute walk or 15-minute ride on the L8 bus; the bus stop is just to the left of the station as you leave and drops you off at the campus. Buses run every 20 minutes but I always walked so I can't say much about using them.

## Day to Day Expenses

Barcelona is relatively cheap in living expenses.

**Eat & Drink:** The food in supermarkets is way cheaper than in Israel and you can find everything you need in your local market. The restaurants vary in prices the same as everywhere, but it is very common to find a 8-10 Euros set menu for lunch, or a quick bite for less. Alcohol is very cheap and in most places a glass of wine or a beer would cost you about 2 Euros, cocktails will reach to 6-8 Euros. Night clubs usually cost between 10 to 20 Euros and include a free drink or two included in the entry price. For food recommendations you can check [this map](#).

**Internet & cellular:** The first things you will need, especially if you are looking for an apartment/room is a cell phone (or to be more accurate a SIM card). There are several big operators in Spain (Movistar/Orange/Vodafone). However, as the market develops so quickly and what you choose depend a bit on your needs- it is difficult to give any other advice. In general, cellular rates are cheap (For example: Vodafone's prepaid option was about 20 Euros a month for 1.5 GB, unlimited national SMS's, and 100 minutes free)

**Shopping:** Barcelona is no New York or London when it comes to shopping, but it is definitely among the great shopping cities in the world. You can find almost everything you like here. If you look for big commercial chains stick to the main streets. If you are looking for something special you can get lost in the myriad of narrow streets – especially in areas like Gracia, Gotico or El Born. The big brands, such as H&M, Zara, and Bershka are about 10% cheaper than in Israel, although the selection of brands here is wider. The major sales are during the summer and during the beginning of January.

**Things for your new house** - To complement your new home interior design you mainly have several options: Chino Shops (Chinese owned shops that have everything you need for low to reasonable prices -these are hard to miss and are

available in abundance), the flea market (Mercat del Encants), IKEA (A bus ride that takes 20 minutes), or Zara Home.

## Places To See & Things To Do

1. **Explore some Gaudí** - The most famous are the **Sagrada Família**, impressive both outside and in; **Park Güell** on a nice sunny day; and **La Pedrera**. If you want more you can also try Casa Batlló and Palau Güell (but for me the first three were enough).
2. **Check the Art Museums** - **Museu Picasso** is a gallery that houses works from Picasso's formative years. It has free entry from 3pm every Sunday, and it's also free every first Sunday of the month. **Fundació Joan Miró** is home to a collection of paintings and sculptures by Miro, along with a number of works by his contemporaries. It is located on the Montjuïc and definitely worth visiting. **MACBA** the city's contemporary art museum located in Reval. If you love modern art I highly recommend on visiting this one.
3. **Climb up the Montjuïc** - the view from the top is beautiful and the climb is easy as they have escalators all the way. While you are there visit the Juan Miro museum, the Olympic park and the amazing gardens around. If you do it on the weekend – check the magic fountain of Plaça Espanya.
4. **Go to the beach** - the beaches in Barcelona itself are not amazing (kind a like Tel Aviv) , but you can always travel 15-30 min with the train and get to much more exciting places- [attached is a guide to the Barcelona beaches](#). On your way to the Barceloneta beach - don't miss the opportunity to eat in one of the best local tapas places, [La Cova Fumada](#) - very small and simple, but highly recommended. Check the opening hours before you go, get ready to wait in line and then to eat the best calamari on the 'plancha' you have ever had.
5. **La Boqueira** - The most famous marketplace in Barcelona, right in the middle of Las Ramblas. It is an absolute must for food lovers. Try going midweek as its packed with tourist during the weekends. While you are there - try either [El Quim](#) or [Kiosko Universal](#) (both a bit pricey but very good) or go all the way down, on the left far corner you will find another great place and not as pricey 😊
6. **Take a day in Gracia** – it is the perfect area to stroll during Friday-Saturday. The surrounding area is full of bars, local designers, restaurants, movie theatres, and more. You can start with some hot chocolate & Churros at [La Nena](#) (breakfast is also very recommended there) and finish your day with a drink around [Plaça del Sol](#).
7. **Get lost in El born and Barrio Gotico.**

## Traveling Around

Since you're in Spain you'll probably want to explore other places in Spain or Europe. It's a great opportunity to catch some low cost flights and travel, and it seems that this is one of the main conversation topics in ESADE ("where have you been on the weekend?").

If you are looking to get the most of the experience, plan your schedule so your classes are concentrated during the middle the week (and your weekends are free) and learn more about other attractions in Europe during the time you are there (for example, Oktoberfest-Germany). Check [Ryan air](#) for super cheap flights.

## About ESADE

The ESADE MBA program has been ranked among the best in the world. Recent rankings published by The Economist and Forbes placed among the top 5 in Europe and the top 10 in the international category.

The Campus is situated in a suburb outside of Barcelona called Sant Cugat, 25 minutes train ride from the town center. The Campus was build two years ago, such that it is a modern, highly impressive structure, surrounded by nature and green groves and supplied with all the required infrastructure and equipment (including a gym, cafeterias, work spaces, meeting rooms et cetera)

The ESADE Business School offers a customizable full-time MBA. Students can choose among a 12, 15 and 18-month track. Students are highly international, with 95% international students who represent 48 nationalities (and an average age of 29). Therefore, the studying environment is very diverse in cultures and personal learning methods which enrich the experience of an international program.

## Teaching Method & Grading

In general the work load during the semester is higher than in TAU, and what is expected of you is different. Almost each session you'll have to be prepared for a HBS case discussion in class. You are expected to be very active in class and the use of group work and presentations is frequent. As for the groups they try to make as diverse groups as possible and usually the professor will choose the groups in advance.

ESADE puts less focus on individual competition / grades and therefore the grading system is not based on a bell curve, it is simply on a scale from 0 to 10. Most courses do not have an exam (which means that you are never really tested on anything), but participation, group deliverables and peer evaluation make the foundation for your

grade. ESADE does not hold a separate exam period as we have in Recanati- and if your course has an exam it is usually scheduled for the last class of the semester.

Finally, I must point out that although the learning requirements are high – the studies are not as difficult, and it seems that it constitutes a small part of the overall experience of the students. A big part of the time is dedicated to extracurricular activities – events, parties, enriching lectures, conventions et cetera). No one has failed the electives, the grades are usually high, and it is not going to be hard to get a good grade.

### **The Welcome Committee**

ESADE holds a welcome committee for the exchange students, as well as a facebook group to keep you posted on all events and information. They will contact you prior to your arrival and will introduce themselves. In my case, on the first week we had an introduction session held by the committee but afterwards there wasn't any special activity organized for the exchange students (I guess it is all up to the current international committee or the CEMS Club).

### **EXTRA Activities**

Except for the Academics, the main difference between studying in ESADE and studying in TAU are the activities the school holds besides courses. The school has many [students clubs](#) in various fields of interest such as finance, marketing, entrepreneurship, food, sports, wines & spirits, and many more. ....

These clubs will host weekly meetings, bring guest speakers from the industry, hold interesting events, and encourage members to network. Almost every other day there is an interesting event happening - which you can join.

Besides the clubs, ESADE is well known for its wide social activities. The student board of ESADE leads various recreational activities and extracurricular activities: You will have a chance to participate every week in dinners, outings, clubbing, and cultural events.

### **Bidding**

The courses are selected by a bidding system a few months before the semester starts (mine started on the 8th of September). You will receive a fix amount of points and bid for your courses (in a system quite similar to the one we have in TAU). The selection of courses in English is wide and includes elective courses from various fields including: Finance, Marketing, Operations, HR, Innovation & entrepreneurship, Hand-on workshops, and more.

Keep in mind that the ESADE team and Program Managers are super nice and easy, and if something doesn't work out the way you planned it, they will help you and change courses in the first 2 weeks (if there's an open course it will be super easy, and you can do it via email)

## Schedule

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Courses are divided into two types: Intensive / Regular. The **“Regular”** courses take place once a week beginning 1 month after the official start date of the semester (in my case, on October 1st) and ending at the last week of the semester. Classes typically run in either 09:30-13:00 or 14:30-18:00 (with a 20-30 min break). The **“Intensive”** - During the first month of the semester (In my case, September) ESADE “imports” professors from all over the globe to teach a one week intensive course. You will be studying 5 days, 9AM to 7PM, usually with a final project/presentation on the last day (some individual/team work might be incorporated in this schedule).

\*I highly recommend the intensives. Although intense, I think it's a great opportunity to blend in and to get to know the people you are about to study with. Additionally, although they are 'intensive' while in class, the ones I took were more like a 'workshop' containing a lot of activities and teamwork and didn't require much "at home" assignments. Moreover, if you take by 1-2 intensive courses you will clear the schedule for the following semester - so you can travel and experience more.

\*“Doing business in Spanish” is part of the International Language Center. In my case unfortunately they didn't open a class due to the low demand, so I can't say much about it. I had an amazing private teacher which I highly recommend: Eva Patapatiou. Don't hesitate to contact her: [perelloeva@gmail.com](mailto:perelloeva@gmail.com).

**ENJOY!**

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