

Study Abroad Experience Report

I am happy for my experience report to be viewed by other students interested in studying abroad, as detailed in the guidelines **(please tick to confirm)**

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Degree Programme	International Business Postgraduate
Host Institution(s) and country:	Audencia Business School
Academic Year of Exchange	2019-2020

When did you go on your exchange? (Please tick)

- International Business Part B Semester 2
- Part I (full year)
- Part I (6+6)
- MSc International Management Semester 2

Please sum up your overall experience in a couple of sentences:

The exchange semester for me was amazing. I got to meet new people and practice adaptation skills while enjoying life in the new environments that never experienced before. Without a doubt, there were some difficulties but with the help of both home and host universities, things got easier. Hence, the more difficulties you had, the stronger you become.

Academic Experience

Despite the difference in terms of the building and the design, one of the main concerns for me before I went to school was the way how they taught in class. Before I travel, the only thing regarding the education in Audencia Business School that I knew was the way they grading that rated the performance of the student from 0-20, while, Loughborough University graded the student in term of 100%. However, things got better when I got the first orientation that the school has set up for the new coming student like us. The teaching in the host university also separated into lecture and final project while using the project and exam to testify the performance of the student at the end of the semester. While international business at Loughborough University only teach the student through lecture and assignments and use the only assignment to grading the students. Likewise, one of the things that I found very fascinating when beginning the class at the host university was how the aligned or begin each subject differently unlike in UK and Thailand that started every subject at the same time. In my understanding, the orders of the started class depend on how much the workloads that each subject has and the contents within the subjects that link to the other class. As a result, I started the exchange semester by study managing the legal risk subject first following by marketing project management and tools, capturing marketing insight, marketing communication in the digital age, bringing to market, critical marketing, marketing of innovation, and specialized marketing skill accordingly. Nevertheless, the teacher at Audencia Business School also organized the feedback and special class that helps the student to perform their project nicely and on track every week as well. In terms of the project, the majority of the teachers were grading the assignments or final project by using the presentation rather than the written documents. More importantly, I am very pleased with the variety of the work or project that have been given to us as it's cover from creating the marketing plan, business plan to creating the advertisement and its concept which I think it benefits me in term of enhancing the other skills besides practicing the knowledge that I have learned from the class. As of the medium of communication in class, all of the teachers who taught me were speaking in English. However, some of the teachers are speaking English in French accent which makes it harder to catch up since I am not used to this accent yet. In terms of the length of the class, the majority of the classes were last 1.30 hours and 3 hours but the time that the classes began are random. Some weeks, the morning classes began at 9 a.m. while the other morning classes at the other weeks started at 8.15 a.m. instead. Whereas the attendant of the class was also compulsory to the course, if the attendant was not meet the requirement then the student will be got mark deduction from the final grade. Therefore, I have to organize my times and activities wisely when I was there. Besides the schedule for the class, another challenge that I faced was the language barrier that came in the form of class materials. In general, all of the class materials such as PowerPoint, articles or assignments will be given to the student via the learning website of the universities, however, the problem was that the learning website of the universities was written in French which means that I have to rely heavily on the google translate to help me sort out. Similar to the class materials that some time came in the French language which made it hard for me to understand, thankfully with the help of my French friends and teacher, I can eventually overcome it. Furthermore, the atmosphere in the class in Audencia Business School for me was very intense as everyone in the class was very focused on what happened in front of the class and what teacher taught which made the class very quiet when the teacher was teaching. Lastly, the most incredible thing that I experienced during the study aboard was friends. As the population of the class was mostly French while only 30% of the class was international that include Indian, Nigerian, Thai, Chinese, American, and Spain. Even though they have different nationalities with me but everybody was very welcoming and helpful as they always help me instantly when I have any trouble or any questions. Despite how nice these

students were, they also very professional and skillful which reflected on the group project. When we did the work together, everyone in the group was very vocally as they discussed a lot of ideas and participating in the meeting very well. Likewise, all of the individual tasks that we split during the discussion were completed nicely and standardly as all of them already have the business knowledge.

My Destination

In terms of location, Nantes was very fascinating as the city was considered to be one of the big city that located next to the sea which granted me the privilege of sea activities such as surfing, even though, I did not do that due to the temperature. Besides the sea, all the architecture in the city that showed on the residential building and church was extraordinary and I found it very attractive. One of my favorite activities during that time was exploring the different churches and museums, to consume art that different from my home country. While traveling within the town was not that difficult even though the city was quite big because the tram was running across the city. Besides, the city also fully equipped with a shopping mall, convenience stores, and different local shops that include all kinds of shops from restaurants to sports equipment. The only thing that concerns me was the language as French people did not speak the English language that much. Therefore it quite hard for me to communicate with others outside the host university. Sometimes, I have to rely on hand language, and google translate to get what I want. As a part of the advantage of getting the long-stay visa holder, I am eligible to travel to the other countries in Europe freely. As a result, I did travel to Barcelona, Spain for visiting my favorite football club and sightseeing in the city that was one of the prettiest cities in the world. It was simply an amazing experience that I could not forget.

Accommodation and Welfare

In terms of accommodation, this was one of the difficult tasks during my pre-departure period as the host university did not provide the accommodation for me and my friends but only provided the housing platform that helps to get in touch and booking the accommodation. Since most of the accommodation in France required the French guarantor at least which was the platform informed us. Eventually, I found one accommodation that did not require the French guarantor but required a high money deposit including the advance rent payment before I moved in. Besides the high deposit, the accommodation also asked for the French home insurance before I moved in as well. In terms of the room, my room was on the fourth, not facing the road which I think was good because it was quieter. In general, my room was categorized as a studio room which included the small section of the kitchen in the room already. Once, I was there all the kitchen such as microwave, sink, and the electronic cooker was in good terms and ready to use. Nevertheless, my accommodation also provided kitchen and cleaning equipment such as dishes, pan, cleaning mop and bloom have been prepared for me. In terms of rubbish, it is mandatory the same as the UK for citizens to separate their rubbish into recycling rubbish and general waste first before throwing it always. As a result, my accommodation has prepared two types of these bin bags for me and it was okay to ask for more when I ran out of these bin bags in any case. Despite the unlimited bin bag, the accommodation provided an unlimited bed sheet for me as well. For the other kind of welfare, the host university also provided us the documents and general information in case I need to open the new French bank account during the first orientation which I did open it. In terms of how my host university was supportive, I think they were very supportive and eager to give me advice in case I asked for it. However, I did not ask them for help regarding these matters that much even though booking an accommodation maybe a little bit harder than I expected

because I believed it was a problem that will be solved more effectively if I solved it myself.

Practical Advice

1. learning a little bit of French

Since French is the main communication language in France. Therefore, knowing some French language would eligible you to enjoy more life in France. At the same time, it would make you gain more connections and ensure your safety during your stay at well. Nevertheless, it would be easier for you to do the bank process easier and more accurate as well.

2. traveling card

In my perspective, it would easier to carry the travel card instead of cash or normal credit or debit card. Carrying a lot of cash will draw a lot of unwanted attention to you which can be very dangerous. In contrast, it may be safer to use credit or debit card but the charge for using them in the different countries was very high. Nevertheless, if you need to withdraw the money from your credit or debit card then the service charge will be even more expensive. Consequently, it is better to prepare the traveling card with you before you stay in the other country.

3. Prepare the tramp card

It was not hard to purchase the tramp ticket but sometimes it can take you too long to purchase one ticket because at each station there are only a few ticket machines available. Therefore, it is better to purchase the tramp card or download the tramp application and purchase it online. In this way, you will be able to save some time.

4. Plan the trip ahead

It is very normal for students who took the exchange semester aboard to traveling within the European area. However, the trip can be very expensive if you plan a trip only a few days ahead of time. Therefore, it is better to take a look at the academic calendar and book all the trips in advance before you went there.

What you gained most from the exchange

In my opinion, what I gained the most from this trip was the adaptation skills. Besides the knowledge in different fields, connections, and friends, my adaptation skills have increased a lot recently. With the difference between culture, surrounding environment and people behaviors of France and UK, I have to clear up my head and started to adjusted, otherwise, I won't be able to survive this exchange semester definitely, not just only in term of academic but also in term of the social life as well. More importantly, I believe these skills will benefit me a lot in the future because I want to be an international businessman which required the ability to adjust your selves to a new environment and people all the time. After all, you might end up doing the work in the new places.

How it could be improved

Visa Documents

I got a lot of trouble from preparing the documents that the French Visa required because the information from the French Visa website and the Visa center was practically not the same. While the website clearly said that I did not need some type of documents but the visa center said I need such documents for instance health certificate. Therefore, I certainly believed that it would be better if the stage of preparing visa documents have been helped.

- Audencia Business School



- Product testing during the semester for one of the project



- City View



