

| General Information | |
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| Host Country | Spain |
| Host School | Toulouse Business School |
| Program start & end dates | Start: 09-08-2023, End: 12-16-2023 |
| Program of Study | Sustainable Business |
| Type of Study Abroad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exchange <input type="checkbox"/> UMAP exchange <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | |
| General Evaluation | |
| In a couple of sentences, summarize and explain your general evaluation of your experience. | This experience was the most memorable and educational trip I have been on. I learned a lot about myself, people around me and cultures around the world. Everyday was interesting in it's own way since I was in a completely new environment. This allowed me to appreciate every moment while abroad. |
| Arrival | |
| How easy or challenging was it to obtain your travel documents (visa, permits, etc.)? | It is a bit stressful obtaining a study visa to go to Spain since there are no embassies in Vancouver, however, after researching online I found the embassy in Toronto which provided me with everything I needed to submit for my visa. Other than that I believe it was quite easy arranging my travels to Spain. |
| Describe your transportation arrangements to your host country. Would you alter any part of those arrangements? | I flew on standby with the help of my sisters benefits which can be challenging but I faced no problems on the way there and would not alter the method I used. Not everyone has this assistance so one thing I would suggest is to ensure you look for plane tickets on incognito allowing yourself to get the best prices |
| How was your experience clearing customs and immigration upon arrival in your host country? Any surprises? | Customs and Immigration went smoother than I thought it would. When I landed they just checked my student visa and let me into the country. I made sure to keep documents from my school (acceptance) and where I was living in case any surprises did come up. |
| Describe how you traveled to your host facility. How long did it take and how much did it cost? | The first time I arrived I took a taxi since I was unfamiliar with the area. This taxi cost me about \$60 and I quickly realized it was not worth the 20-30min ride. The next time I arrived at the airport I took the bus which took an hour and a half but only cost me \$10 |
| Orientation and Assistance | |
| How satisfied were you with the assistance available to you at your host school? Were there people and resources available for you for support? | I was quite satisfied with the resources my school provided. They had many different ways of assisting students in need and they were quite effective in their work. One thing I wish was a bit better was the time it took to meet with someone. It seemed a bit short staffed but this was not a big deal since you can book in advance. |
| What help did you receive from the international staff or office? | The staff helped me deal with a course error that was made. I took a Spanish Intensive course but never got enrolled and my transcript said I missed it. The staff helped clear this up. |
| How was new student orientation at the host university? What did they do? | It was quite informative and they helped students understand the school and the area. They explained the school's policies, gave a tour and helped us get involved in activities like weekly soccer events and more. |
| Housing & Daily Life | |
| Describe your accommodation in your host country. Were you pleased with this choice or what would you have done differently? | I lived on a student residence and thoroughly enjoyed my time there. It was the best way to make friends and have something to do all the time. The only downside was that it was quite expensive but I believe living there made my experience much better. |

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| When could you move into housing and how long were you allowed to stay? | My stay was booked from Jan. 1st till Dec. 31st. I had to arrive and leave in between these dates |
| What kinds of services and facilities were nearby where you lived (shop, cafe gym, parks, pharmacy, stations...) | I lived a bit outside of the city and had many little stores selling groceries near me. There was also a few big cafes. I lived walking distance to a mall, pharmacy, soccer field, and many useful small shops. |
| Describe what you did about meals and what other options were available. How satisfied were you with the food? | I cooked my own meals for the most part. Many times friends get together and have mini potlucks. For example, my friends and I would make a meal together where one person can make rice while one makes chicken and potatoes. This was a nice way to simplify cooking. Otherwise, there was a cheap kebab shop we would love to eat at |
| How close was your accommodation to where you studied? | My residency and school were neighbors which was very convenient |
| Academics & Course Registration | |
| Please describe the registration process at your host institution. What assistance was available to you? Were you satisfied? | Once I got accepted to my school they had me pick what study path I wanted to follow. From my three choices I got my third one which was quite unsatisfying since it had the least to do with my major. On the bright side it was still a business study path but it was focused on topics I was not the most passionate about. Fortunately, the courses I took will transfer as electives. |
| What advice would you offer to another exchange student about registration at your host institution? | It is very important to register as soon as you are given the opportunity. Classes fill up quick and to ensure you get the ones you want you have to be quick. |
| What tips to you have for finding the courses and course syllabuses/outlines? | The best way to find courses and course syllabuses is by navigating the schools website. They will always have this information on their website and if you struggle to find it you can contact the school by email. They tend to respond back fast keeping in my any time difference |
| Academics & Course Registration (cont'd) | |
| How satisfied were you with the amount of knowledge/skills you obtained from your host? | I learned many different skills from my host. Many of these skills fall under communication and cultural sensitivity. I believe in the classroom I faced bigger challenges back home due to the strong emphasis on group projects in Barcelona. This emphasis helped me learn how to effectively work with people from all sorts of backgrounds |
| How did the style of teaching, and workload compare to Canada? Was it more independent or group learning? | It was definitely focused on group learning. I believe from my 5 classes most had about 60-70% of the final grade on group work. This reduced the overall workload significantly. Although the workload was smaller this did not mean it was easier to gain a good mark. Many students are also on exchange and don't care to put as much of an effort in group work which can raise concerns for the other members. Overall, focusing on group learning made the workload much lighter compared to Canada yet made the ability to score a high mark more difficult. |
| How many courses did you take during your time abroad? Are there particular courses would you recommend? | I took 5 courses abroad and I would recommend them to any student studying business. I studied sustainable business and human resources. Sustainable business enlightened me on the effects businesses have on our environment and human resources was a useful course in understanding how to deal with different workplace behaviours. |
| What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, internet access, specialized equipment and supplies available at your host facility? | I was surprised to see how new and high tech my host university was. Everything from entering the building to making prints was digital. The classrooms and campus reminded me of KPU since they were smaller classrooms with 20-30 students. The library was a bit small and limited but it was a nice place to work. It was also cool to see they had bean bag chairs for students wanting to nap between classes. |
| Cost | |

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| Books and Supplies/per term: | 0 |
| Flight: | 400 (with benefits) |
| Accommodation/per month: | 1600 150 |
| Meals/per month: | 30 |
| Local transportation/per month: | N/A |
| Health insurance/per term: | 30 |
| Communication (internet, phone, etc.) – per term | 150 |
| Travel documents (Passport, Study permit, visa, etc.) | 0 |
| Vaccinations: | 3000 |
| Personal spending (entertainment and extra travel) – per term | |
| Were there unexpected costs you encounter? What items were less or more expensive than expected? | Groceries were a bit cheaper than I expected. I didn't realize how eager I would be to complete extra travel and went over budget in that aspect. |
| Extra-Curricular & Social Activities | |
| What type of organized activities were available to you? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future students? | I was able to participate in weekly soccer games and other activities here and there. My school would plan trips to local cities and other tourist attractions. I was also able to get a free walking tour of Barcelona my first week there from my school. I recommend trying any trips or games planned by your school since it's a great way to meet people in the same situation as yourself. |
| Did you travel outside the host location? If so, where do you recommend? | One of my favorite countries I visited was Morocco. I went on a trip for 4 nights through a group that plans trips, games and much more for all international students (ERASMUS). This trip allowed me to go to the Sahara dessert, camel riding, sand boarding and included a private bus for my group. I also visited Italy, Hungary, and the Canary Islands. I would highly recommend Dolomites, Italy if you are interested in Snowboarding. |
| What opportunities were there to work or volunteer? Did you require special permits to do this? | If I wanted to work I was required to have a student/work visa which I did not. I was able to volunteer for my school as a representative of Canada to the first year students looking at countries to go on exchange to. I talked to them about what Canada is like and why it's worth a visit. |
| Health and Safety | |
| Describe any health/safety concerns or issues you had during your experience. | Luckily, the only health concern I faced was some strong food poisoning. I dealt with this by resting and having very simple and light meals. It is common to have problems adjusting to the food so be sure to take stomach medicine (I didn't). Fortunately, someone in my building had medicine which made me feel much better. |
| What helped you keep safe and healthy? Did you access any health care supports and if so how was the experience? | I'm very grateful I didn't face any major health challenges during my time abroad. It is important to know your limits when abroad since the only person looking out for you is yourself. Make sure you are always aware of your surroundings and the crowd you are with. By doing this you can keep yourself safe and out of trouble. |
| What wellness supports did they offer at the University? Were there counselling or medical services? | My school had a active counselling team who would come to classes and remind students they are there for support. This was very reassuring and helped students deal with any stress they had. |
| Personal and Cultural Connections | |
| Were there any cultural differences you had to adjust to? | |
| Were there language barrier | The main cultural differences I was noticing were things I was already taking apart of. I noticed when I had plans and thought I was arriving late I would be arriving at the same time as everyone else. It was funny to see myself adapt to little things like that easily. I was not aware they use the 24 hour clock there which was a bit of a surprise. There was a slight language barrier but through hand communication and broken Spanish/Catalan I was able to get by. |

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| issues? | |
| What part(s) of the country and culture did you most appreciate? | I loved how they were very relaxed with their lifestyle. Breakfast spots would be open till afternoon, people wouldn't come out to have fun until 10-11pm and everyone would close their shop on Sundays. Although I don't believe this is the most efficient lifestyle, I appreciated the fact that you can see them enjoying their lives rather than constantly locked in on work. |
| How was it traveling alone and making friends? | Travelling alone is my new favorite thing to do. It's the best feeling being able to do exactly what you want on a trip and not having to worry about what your peers want to do. It can get lonely at times, but this inclined me to put myself out there more. |
| How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students? | For the most part the people kept to themselves and were kind when you spoke to them. The university staff was helpful and answered any questions I had which made the trip a bit easier. Dealing with the students at the school was a bit harder than I expected. I assumed since many of the students were international it would be easy to make friends but I was wrong. My classes tended to have students who came to Barcelona with their friends which created a bit of a cliquy environment rather than a open, friendly classroom. For this reason I was very happy I stayed at a student residence. |
| How accommodating are they to students with a disability? Were there any accommodations offered? | From what I noticed they had every basic requirement to help accommodate students with disabilities. This includes an elevator, large gate entrance and large classroom doors with the auto open feature. |
| How is the situation for students who are visible minorities in your host country? | Barcelona, Spain was a very diverse city and had people from all sorts of backgrounds. I believe it is a very good city that is inclusive to all races. I was lucky enough to meet a very large Pakistani population making me more comfortable and feel less like a minority. |
| How welcoming are they to for those who identify as LGBTQIA+? | I believe Barcelona is very welcoming to the LGBTQIA+ community. I saw the support they would show in the streets advocating for the community which can make any member feel better. |
| Overall | |
| What are 5-10 important things other students should know before going to your host country/region? | |
| 1. Take a look at the public transportation since it is efficient and will be your main transportation method | |
| 2. The cost of living is quite high and will be a large part of your budget | |
| 3. You must stay vigilant and protect your belongings. Mainly on trains and in the nightlife | |
| 4. It does get cold in the winter | |
| 5. Usually the ESIM deals are not as good as getting a prepaid sim in the city | |
| 6. Shop for some groceries like fruits and vegetables at the small shops over the big franchise store (cheaper) | |
| 7. If you plan to take part of the nightlife search @shaz.guestlist on Instagram for free entries. | |
| 8. Do not leave your belongings alone, ever! | |
| 9. | |
| 10. | |
| What was the most rewarding part of your study abroad experience? | It will always be the friendships I have made. I met people from all over the world and have created some of the greatest memories with them. |
| What was the greatest challenge you faced during your experience abroad? | The greatest challenge was becoming completely independent and facing any problem on your own. Also, leaving. |
| How has your perspective changed as a result of your study abroad experience? | I believe my perspective changed in myself after this trip. I feel more confident in myself and my abilities which has improved my problem solving skills. This trip has helped my critical thinking, communication and social awareness. It has also shifted my perspective on how I want my life to play out which is quite interesting |
| What else do you want to add about your study abroad? | This will be one of the most cherished times in my life and I believe I won't experience something like that again. Although this has opened the door for many more adventures, I won't be able to experience something like that again |

Below is a space to share any photos

