**Partner University:** Bocconi  
**Location:** Milan, Italy  
**Major:** Business  
**Exchange Term:** Fall 2019

**PREPARATION FOR EXCHANGE**

The application process for study abroad was very simple and easily completed. However, after submitting the application, it was difficult to get any information from the Study Abroad advisors on specifics regarding my host university. I would recommend contacting your host university directly.

*Packing*

Climate was very similar to BC. Slightly warmer and less rain. But definitely bring your rain jacket – when it rains it pours.

*Travel and Transportation*

The most common airport is Malpensa MXP. You will need to travel into the city using an express train that costs 13 euros. There is an app you can download in advanced to purchase the train ticket if you want to avoid lines at the ticket concession stands.

*Cost of Living*

Very comparable to Vancouver. Restaurants are slightly cheaper, but only for Italian food. Go to “Pasta Fresca” places for the best pasta for amazing prices. They are only open for lunch.

Italy is a cash-based society in general. But most restaurants will accept credit cards.

**DURING EXCHANGE**

*Arrival*

I was slightly disappointed with how the university organised orientation. A lot of the events to meet other students were organised by outside organisations rather than by the university.
Accommodation

I stayed in residence at the Arcobaleno building. I believe my semester there was the final semester that Bocconi is renting the building so my experiences there will be irrelevant. But I would recommend living in residence as it is a great opportunity to meet other exchange and Italian students.

Courses

Bocconi is a private business and economics university and a lot of the courses offered are directly comparable to SFU’s course catalogue. I was able to enrol in four courses that transferred directly to my required courses back at SFU. I would recommend reading everything you can about the course description, requirements, and pre-requisites rather than just the course title as the content may differ from SFU’s courses and you may have a difficult time getting the transfer credit. The courses generally included a series of assignments and a final exam.

The quality of teaching was comparable to SFU. Some courses are reserved solely for exchange students, whereas other courses are “core” courses for full-time Bocconi students. The exchange-only courses definitely had a lighter work-load. I found that there was less standardisation in assessment methods in comparison to Beedie. This is where Bocconi could really improve in my opinion. Final exams times ranged from only 30 minutes to 2 hours. Their “pass” requirements are quite high (17 marks out of 30), however assessments were fairly marked. You should not have difficulty passing your courses if you do well at SFU.

Culture

Italy has a significantly rich cultural history. You can hop on a train and in an hour or so you will be in a completely different region with different specialty dishes, architecture, and people. In general, I found Northern Italians quite fast-paced. However, in the South, I found people extremely kind, hospitable, and appreciative if you try to communicate in Italian.

A centralised and affordable local train system makes Milan the perfect location for traveling in Italy. I tried to take at least a day trip most weekends by train within Italy. My highlights were the lake and mountain regions just North of Milan. A picture attached below shows the view from a three-day trek I completed with a friend where we didn’t see a single person on the trail. It was only a 2-hour train and 1-hour bus ride away for absolutely stunning views and hiking.
The food. Oh, the food. If you go to the right places you cannot go wrong. You have to know where to look, but the local pasta, pizza, and wine places will give you the best value for your money and leave you spoiled.

**REFLECTION AFTER EXCHANGE**

I am really glad that I ended up in Milan for my first semester on exchange. Growing up in Europe, I initially thought I would complete my degree solely in Vancouver, but I quickly got the itch to go back.

As a city itself, Milan is very livable, but not your typical tourist destination. The city is urban and a business hub in Italy. It’s a working city. That said, with a bit of effort it is not difficult to find the gems that make the city a great place to live.

Living in a new country with new people, it will not be difficult to keep busy. I would recommend that you reflect on the experiences you yourself are hoping to get from being on exchange and your personal priorities. Do things on your own, do things with friends, and plan trips yourself. This will prevent you from just going along for the ride and help you get the most meaningful experiences you can.
A hike in Cinque Terre:
Me at the beach in Cinque Terre (selfies are difficult with a film camera haha):
A sunrise at over 2700 meters above sea level during a three-day trek:
A basketball court outside of the Arcobaleno Residence: