Exchange Report – Universitat Internacional de Catalunya (UIC Barcelona)

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Program: Erasmus+ Exchange

Introduction & Campus Locations

I completed my exchange program (*Auslandssemester*) as an International Business student at the Universitat Internacional de Catalunya (UIC) in Barcelona, Spain, through the Erasmus+ program.

UIC is a private university that offers a strong international environment, relatively small class sizes, and a very practical approach to teaching. One important thing future exchange students need to pay attention to before choosing courses or booking accommodation is that UIC has two different campuses depending on your field of study:

- **Barcelona Campus (Sarrià):** Located in the upper part of Barcelona city. This is where Business Administration, Management, Law, Architecture, and Humanities are taught.

- **Sant Cugat Campus:** Located outside the city center, mainly for Health Sciences, Medicine, Dentistry, Bioengineering, and Education. Depending on where you live in Barcelona, commuting to Sant Cugat can easily take 60 to 120 minutes by public transport, so make sure you verify which campus your faculty belongs to early on.

Academic Experience

UIC offers a wide variety of interesting, practical courses for business students, though one challenge during registration is that timetables frequently overlap. You often have to be flexible with your Learning Agreement during the first two weeks because several electives run at the exact same time.

What I enjoyed most about studying at UIC was the interactive teaching style. Rather than relying only on final written exams, almost every course required regular presentations, group projects, and real-world case discussions. This hands-on format helped me improve my public speaking, teamwork, and practical business knowledge.

Winter Semester Courses

- **Advanced Marketing:** Focused on strategic marketing planning, brand positioning, and analyzing real-world marketing campaigns.
- **Analysis & Consolidation of Financial Statements:** Provided practical training in interpreting corporate financial statements, balance sheets, and group accounting.
- **Business Consulting:** Centered around real-life business case studies and consultancy simulations where we worked in teams to solve company challenges.
- **Business Taxation:** Covered the fundamentals of the Spanish and international corporate tax systems, including VAT, income tax, and fiscal planning for businesses.
- **Logistics:** Explored supply chain management fundamentals, inventory control, distribution networks, and international shipping operations.
- **Management Skills:** A practical seminar focused on leadership, negotiation, professional communication, and managing team dynamics.
- **People Management:** Looked at human resource strategies, including talent acquisition, employee motivation, and organizational performance.

Summer Semester Courses

- **AI for Decision Making:** Explored how artificial intelligence and data-driven tools are used by modern managers to optimize business operations and strategic decisions.
- **Digital Marketing & Web Analysis:** Focused on online marketing strategies, SEO, social media campaigns, and tracking website performance using analytics tools.
- **Family Business:** A signature course at UIC that examines the unique governance, succession planning, and internal dynamics of multi-generational family companies.
- **Impact Investment:** Introduced financial strategies that aim to generate measurable social and environmental impact alongside financial returns.
- **Information Systems:** Learning how to operate Microsoft Office for beginners.
- **Marketing Research:** Taught qualitative and quantitative research methods, survey design, and data analysis to understand consumer behavior.
- **Social Entrepreneurship:** Focused on building business models that solve social or environmental issues, featuring guest speakers and group pitch presentations.

Accommodation & Living in Barcelona

Housing & Cost of Living

Finding a good room in Barcelona takes time, so it is best to start looking early. Most international students rent a room in a shared flat (*piso compartido*) in lively, well-connected neighborhoods like **Gràcia**, **Eixample**, or **Poble Sec**.

I recommend using **Idealista** because it has the largest listing of apartments and is generally the cheapest platform since you can avoid high agency booking fees. However, you have to be very careful, housing scams are quite common in Barcelona. Never transfer money before verifying the apartment or having someone check it in person, and stick to verified listings if you are booking from abroad (I was careful with this and thankfully did not get scammed).

Here is a realistic breakdown of monthly living costs:

- **Monthly Rent (shared flat):** €500 – €800 (depending on the neighbourhood and apartment condition)

- **Living Expenses (groceries, leisure, eating out):** ~€450 – €550/month

Transportation

Barcelona has a reliable and well-connected public transport network of metro lines, buses, trams, and regional trains (FGC and Rodalies). If you are **under 30 years old**, the best deal by far is the **T-Jove** pass.

- **T-Jove Card:** Costs **€45.50 for 90 consecutive days** (plus a one-time €4.50 fee to set up your personalized *T-mobilitat* card or app with your passport/ID).

- It gives you unlimited travel across all transport zones in the Barcelona metropolitan area, making daily commutes to the Sarrià campus (via the FGC train) and weekend trips outside the city super affordable.

Activities at the University & in Barcelona

University Life & Sports

Since many classes at UIC are scheduled in the morning or early afternoon, you have plenty of time to enjoy student life. UIC's Student Services and Sports department organize regular events that make it easy to meet both local and international students and build your network. They offer a great variety of university sports activities, tournaments, and clubs including padel, golf, tennis, running, and football. I definitely recommend checking the official UIC website (uic.es) under the *University Life / Sports* section at the start of the semester to sign up early.

Daily Life in Barcelona

Because Barcelona is one of Europe's major international hubs, there is always something happening outside the classroom. Beyond the famous sights like the Sagrada Família, Park Güell, and the beach at Barceloneta, the city hosts huge international sporting events (such as the Premier Padel Tour Finals at Palau Sant Jordi, Formula 1, and FC Barcelona matches), music festivals, and Erasmus social nights. Whether you want to play padel at local outdoor clubs like Padel 7 Glòries, grab specialty coffee in Gràcia, or take a weekend road trip up the coast to Costa Brava, it is hard ever to get bored here.

Reflections & Advice for Future Students

Personal Experience & Growth

Doing my exchange at UIC Barcelona was a rewarding experience both academically and personally. Working in international teams for class presentations helped me become much more confident in intercultural communication, while living in Spain pushed me to adapt quickly to a new environment and build friendships with people from all over the world.

Quick Tips for Future Exchange Students:

- **Check your campus: Double-check** that all your chosen courses take place at the Barcelona (Sarrià) campus so you don't end up commuting to Sant Cugat.
- **Watch out for housing scams:** Use Idealista for the best prices, but stay alert and never pay deposits blindly.
- **Get the T-Jove immediately:** Register for your T-mobilitat account online before arriving so you can use the €45.50 youth pass right away.
- **Get involved:** Join the university sports events or local padel matches, it is the easiest way to make friends outside your regular classes.

If you have any questions about the courses, UIC, or living in Barcelona, feel free to reach out to me!

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