

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE STUDENT REPORT

You can write the report in English or Icelandic

Name of host University: Pompeo Fabra University

Department/school you studied within: Economics / Communication

Name (student): Herborg Sörensen

Exchange semester: Fall 2014

School at RU: Business

I GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

1. Briefly describe the school and its surroundings

- Since I took courses in both the department of economics and the department of communication my classes were in two different campuses. The one for economics is called Ciutadella and the one for communication is called Poble Nou. The facilities at both were great although the buildings at Poble Nou are newer. The buildings surround spacious courtyards where you can sit outside and enjoy the sun. Both have cafeterias and the classrooms are very spacious. The surrounding area is beautiful, Ciutadella is right next to the beach as well as a big public park. Poble Nou is right next to the business district as well as two sizable commercial areas. Both campuses are close to metro stations so it's both easy and fast to commute to them as well as between them.

2. Please list the current faculty divisions and special areas.

- Faculty of Economics and Business
- Faculty of Communication
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Health and Life Sciences
- Faculty of Political and Social Sciences
- Faculty of Humanities
- Faculty of Engineering
- Faculty of Translation and Language Sciences

3. Number of exchange students

- There were around 1500 other exchange students from all over the world.

4. Study structure

There are three semesters every year:

- Fall term: 14th of September – 23th of December (Earliest departure day: 23th of December)
- Spring term: 6th of January – 28th of March (Earliest departure day: 28th of March)
- Summer term: 6th of April – 27th of June (Earliest departure day: 27th of June)

II PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Pre – Departure: Quality of Information before you left

- **When did you receive the information package from the University?**
 - 12th of May 2014.

- **Any difficulties, such as communication or late responses?**

OMA (Mobility and welcome offices), the international office at Pompeo Fabra, responded to every email that I sent them and often replied within a couple of hours.

Academic Calendar – Important dates

- **Arrival date – introductory week:**
 - Arrival day: 14th of September - Welcome week: 15th – 19th of September
- **First day of the semester:**
 - 22th of September
- **Last day of classes:**
 - December 3rd
- **Examination period:**
 - 9th of December – 22th of December

Reception of incoming students – describe how you were welcomed

- Was the administration and faculty well prepared for your arrival?
 - Pompeo Fabra welcomes so many students that there was a special event in the school's auditorium to welcome all exchange students. Unfortunately I missed it but the principal made a speech and also the staff at OMA (mobility office). Everyone got a special Pompeo Fabra folder and then after the event exchange students could buy special ESN cards to be able to take part in the "Welcome week" for exchange students.
- **Did the school's students participate in the reception of the exchange students?**
 - Yes, there were a number of Pompeo Fabra students that participated in and organized the "Welcome week" as volunteers for the ESN program.

Housing

- **Did you have housing at your disposal or did you have to find your own housing?**
 - The university has two student residence halls close to Ciutadella and Mar Campuses. The school also hosts a housing service which allows students to search its database and make reservations online for free. In my case my boyfriend went with me to Barcelona so we wanted to find our own apartment. I can definitely recommend aspasios.com when searching for an apartment. The apartments may be a little expensive but they are good and the service is excellent.
- **What support did you receive from the school in locating housing?**
 - I didn't receive any since I didn't request any.

▪ **Any special issues or good ideas for prospective students?**

- Barcelona is really popular city among international students so the market for rental apartments and rooms is very competitive. I would try to find an apartment/room as soon as possible. I know some students could arrange an apartment/room on the internet before their arrival to Barcelona but that can be risky. Never transfer any money to anyone who is willing to offer you a room or apartment unless it is an acknowledged company. Most of the students came to Barcelona one week before the school started and used that week to look for a room/apartment. It is also good to try to get in touch with other exchange students through Facebook and Pompeo Fabra has a Facebook page where you can get in touch with other students.

Costs

▪ **Describe the most important expenses such as rent, books, food, etc.**

- The most important expenses are rent and food. I didn't need to buy a single book. The only material used for classes were articles and handouts which you could get for free from the internet. Food in Spain is not expensive compared to Iceland. Instead of cooking I ate out a lot because there are so many restaurants that offer food for a good price.

▪ **General cost of living**

- Food and rent. I guess the average payment for rent in Barcelona is 400-500 euros for a room. I paid 1000 euros for an apartment. For food I spent around 350 euros per person each month.

The International Office

▪ **Who is responsible for incoming exchange students?**

- OMA (Mobility and welcome offices).

▪ **Did you receive good service from the office?**

- Yes, like I mentioned here above OMA did an excellent job assisting exchange student for various reasons.

▪ **Do you receive all relevant information?**

- Yes, I received all relevant information and even more to it.

Exchange promotion

▪ **What kind of activity did you take part in to promote exchange studies at your host university?**

- I didn't promote any exchange studies.

Social Activities

- **How was your relationship with other students?**
 - I had a good relationship with other students. I got in touch with many other exchange students. I also got to know the Spanish students but they tend to speak mostly Spanish and can be a little shy to speak English. It would have been good to know a little Spanish before going to Barcelona.
- **How was the relationship among the exchange students?**
 - I had a good relationship with the exchange students. But since I was a master student and I could only take bachelor courses most of them were 4-5 years younger than I. That was okay in most cases but 4-5 years can matter in some circumstances.
- **Is there a student organization, and if so, are the exchange student's part of it?**
 - Yes there are a number of student organizations. The exchange students mainly sought events that ESN organized. ESN is the Erasmus Student Network and is the biggest student association in Europe. It focuses mainly on promoting exchange studies and assisting international students.
- **Are there any special activities and gatherings for exchange students?**
 - Yes ESN organizes special activities for exchange students. There is also a program in UPF called Voluntariat Linguistic. They plan tours that represent Catalan culture. The tours often take 2-4 hours and are either in the center of Barcelona or a little outside of Barcelona.
- **Did you participate actively in social activities?**
 - I wouldn't say that I was really active but I tried to go as often I could. Almost half of the social activities involved going to various dance clubs around Barcelona. If you are really into partying then you won't be disappointed.

Culture and Language

- **Did you have any language problems with the faculty or other students?**
 - No I wouldn't say I had any difficulties. The Spanish students often prefer to speak Spanish with each other even though there are non-Spanish speakers present. That was at least my experience so it is good to have some background in Spanish but that is of course not necessary. Spanish people in general aren't the best at English but the teachers at the university and of course all of the staff spoke good English.
- **How are the possibilities to experience the country and the culture?**
 - Traveling to and from Barcelona to other parts of Spain is easy and fast. There are trains that go all around Catalonia as well as beyond and the tickets are not too expensive. Additionally the airport is also very accessible and domestic flights, or even international flights to other Mediterranean countries, are not expensive.

▪ **Any recommendations for students?**

- I would definitely go to the tours organized by Voluntariat Linguistic. They put great effort into making the trips worth remembering.

Cultural and Social Effects from the Exchange Experience

▪ **How do you think the exchange experience will affect you from a cultural and social point of view?**

- I think this experience has broadened my horizons and I feel I have learned a lot by living in another country. You get a better sense of your own culture and how it differs from others when you live in another country. It is not enough just to travel to different countries; you also need to be there in order to be able to get a good feel for the culture. I think what affected me most is how wonderful it is to visit another country and get away from Iceland for a while. I can't wait to go abroad again and gain more experience abroad.

▪ **How do you think the exchange experience influences your future career possibilities?**

- I think it will have positive effect on my future career. Today it is important to go abroad and being independent. To see how things are done in another part of the world is really educating. I am quite sure that hiring managers look at having experience from abroad as an advantage.

III ACADEMIC INFORMATION

The Teaching situation

▪ **In which language are the courses taught?**

- English, Spanish and Catalan

▪ **How would you evaluate the level of study in relationship to the level at RU?**

- I took one course in economics, two in Communication and one course in Spanish. I would say that the level of study is better at RU, the courses being less demanding and the material not as advanced at Pompeu Fabra. However I heard from other exchange students at Pompeu Fabra that most of the courses in economics are quite tough and the workload is heavy.

▪ **Is the teaching primarily practical or theoretical?**

- I would say it is a mix of both. It also depends on courses.

▪ **Are the professors using cases, group work or lectures (or a mix)?**

- The teachers use a lot of group work with a mix of lectures. Usually the teacher talked for like half of each class and the rest was utilized for group work.

▪ **How is the workload compared to that at RU?**

- The workload at RU is greater than at Pompeu Fabra.

▪ **How is the relationship between faculty and students?**

- There is a good relationship. The teachers are more open in Spain and often more relaxed. I think they have a closer relationship to their students than teachers at RU.

- **What is the relationship between the students in the classroom?**
 - There is a great relationship between students in the classroom, or at least from what I noticed.

Required reading

- **Was all required reading in English?**
 - Yes all the material was in English.
- **Is the reading material used for detailed knowledge or a broad overview?**
 - I would say both. In some courses the reading material was used for detailed knowledge and in other courses it was just to see the whole picture.
- **Were examinations based on the reading or on the lectures?**
 - Examinations were based on both the reading and the lectures.

Exams

- **Please describe what types of exams were you given?**
 - I only took two exams. They were both written tests and consisted of essays questions. I had 2 hours to finish them.

Other

- **Do students have easy access to the library and its resources?**
 - Yes, all students have access to the library and everything it has to offer.
- **How is the access to the computers?**
 - They have plenty of computers, at least I never had to wait for one. They don't have the newest computers, but at least they work. Every student who has a username can get access to a computer. You get the username at the beginning of the semester.
- **How is IT used in the teaching or as a distributor of information?**
 - First of all I want to say the intranet that the school uses is not good. I don't like the intranet that RU uses but I think it is worse at Pompeo Fabra. If the school sends out information it usually does so via email or there are some announcements on the intranet webpage. The intranet is also used for keeping materials for each and every course. But it is not really organized all that well, sometimes it's hard to know which is what and not everything on the intranet can be translated to English. Another disadvantage is that the intranet doesn't generate a time schedule when your assign to courses and you must make your own schedule if you want one.
 - I must say also that the system that they use to have students sign up for courses is not the best. It takes too much time and they are a little old fashioned when it comes to it. If you want to change your courses for example you need to stay online for the whole day they allow those changes and constantly click the sign up button in the hope that someone has dropped the course.

Description of Courses

Please list all the courses you are taking in the form below:

- Name and code of the course
- Prerequisites, if any
- Exam form
- Comments: Relevance, Difficult/easy, Practical/theoretical, Enrolment problems

<i>Course name:</i>	<i>Prereq.</i>	<i>Exam</i>	<i>Major at RU</i>	<i>Approved as (Common/elective/extra)</i>
<i>20516 Internal Communication</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Written</i>	<i>International Business</i>	<i>Elective</i>
<i>21878 Business Games</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>International Business</i>	<i>Elective</i>
<i>20519 Communication and Influ.Gr.</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>International Business</i>	<i>Elective</i>
<i>A1 Spanish</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Written</i>	<i>International Business</i>	<i>Elective</i>

Please fill in all the courses you have taken

Names and e-mails:

The International Exchange Office will appreciate if you leave your e-mail address here, so that other students can contact you for more information.

My email is herborg88@gmail.com