

Studying Abroad Experience Report

- 1) **Are we allowed to publish your report anonymously on our webpage (without your name and e-Mail)?**
 Yes [] No
 - 2) **Are we allowed to forward your report and contact information to a Viadrina student on request?**
 Yes [] No
 - 3) **Please confirm hereby that you did not mention names of a third party (lecturer, landlord etc.)**
 Yes [] No – in this case your report won't be published
 - 4) **Please be aware that all the published photos in this report have to be taken by you and are not the property of a third party. By sending this report you are giving us the legal right of use for your pictures (if we publish the report). The copyrights still belong to you after all.**
 Yes, I confirm that all photos are mine.
- **Preparation:** Recommendations about preparing to leave, for example (if applicable) Visa, insurance, travel? How was the application process at the university abroad? Were there any introduction events? Were they obligatory and when did they take place? Was there a Buddy program or tutors?
 - **Accommodation:** How did you find your accommodation? Any tips about mistakes that should be avoided? Were there any special student accommodations? The cost of rent? Which area of living would you recommend?
 - **Studying at the university abroad:** How was the day to day life on campus? Was the attendance mandatory? Which courses did you take? Were you allowed to take courses from different faculties? Please attach links to the course list if possible. How did the exams take place? Were there any language courses? What is your overall opinion of the university in general? How well did the university take care of international/exchange students?
 - **Day to day life and free time:** How high are the costs of living in total? How much money should be accessible monthly? How much does the public transportation cost? What can an exchange student do in their free time? What did you do?
 - **Conclusion:** worst and best experience

1. Preparation

I chose France as my Erasmus destination because of my interest in international business and my curiosity about French culture. ICN Business School appealed to me because of its academic reputation and its international focus. At the beginning, I did not know much about the French academic system, but I was motivated to challenge myself and gain a new perspective through this exchange.

The application process at ICN was generally well organised, although some information arrived quite late. Before the lectures started, the university organised introduction events for international students. These were helpful for understanding how the university works, what was expected academically, and how to manage administrative matters. Overall, they made the transition into the semester easier.

2. Accommodation

Finding accommodation was one of the most stressful parts of my Erasmus stay. Since I could not secure a place in a student residence early enough, I had to look for private accommodation. In the end, I lived in a shared private apartment with two other people. Fortunately, my roommates were okay, and the living situation itself worked well, but finding the apartment was very time-consuming and stressful.

Based on my experience, I strongly recommend starting the housing search at least five months in advance, or immediately after receiving the confirmation of acceptance. Affordable apartments and student residences are limited and very competitive, so waiting too long makes the process much more difficult.

Rent in Nancy usually starts at around €450 per month. Students can apply for housing support from the CAF (Caisse d'Allocations Familiales), which can help reduce monthly costs. Applying early is highly recommended.

3. Studying at the University Abroad

ICN Business School is a well-known private university, especially in the areas of finance and international management. Studying there felt quite different from my experience at Viadrina, particularly in terms of teaching style and assessment methods.

Attendance was mandatory, and the workload was quite high compared to the ECTS credits awarded. Courses worth only 2 ECTS required continuous group work and presentations, which made up 40% of the final grade, as well as a two-hour individual written exam worth 60%. Classes often took place from early morning until late evening, which left little free time during the week.

At the beginning of the semester, this structure felt overwhelming. Adjusting to the schedule, teaching style, and constant assessments was challenging, and the intensity of group work required a lot of time and energy. However, as the semester progressed, I slowly adapted and became more comfortable with the system.

Over time, I started to appreciate this assessment structure. It felt closer to real working life, as it required teamwork, regular participation, and continuous effort instead of focusing only on final exams.

Personal and Academic Development

As the semester went on, my experience became much more positive. Although the beginning was stressful, I gradually settled into my routine and felt more confident both academically and socially. By the end of the semester, I felt fully involved in university life and was genuinely sad to leave Nancy. Looking back, I even regretted not extending my stay.

The strong focus on group work played an important role in my personal development. At first, frequent presentations and working closely with classmates felt uncomfortable for me. However, these situations helped me become more confident, improve my communication skills, and feel more comfortable sharing my ideas in an international environment. Working with students from different backgrounds also helped me become more flexible and open-minded.

From an academic point of view, the Management Control course was one of the most valuable parts of my exchange. Before this semester, I did not really know what a management controller does. Through this course, I gained a clear understanding of the field and developed a strong interest in it as a possible career path. The course was well organized, practical, and engaging, and the lecturers were supportive and approachable throughout the semester.



Overall, this Erasmus experience helped me grow both personally and academically. What initially felt difficult turned into one of the most rewarding parts of my studies, leaving me with new skills, greater confidence, and a clearer academic direction.

4. Day-to-Day Life and Free Time

Nancy is a medium-sized city in the Grand Est region, about three and a half hours from Paris. The city has a lot to offer, including cafés, shops, museums, and galleries. In the evenings, there are many bars, restaurants, and clubs, making the city lively and enjoyable for students.

Compared to Germany, the cost of living in Nancy is quite high. I needed around €1,000 per month to cover rent, food, transportation, and other daily expenses. Public transportation works well but adds to monthly costs.

Because of the intensive academic schedule, free time during the week was limited. However, as I became more settled, I was still able to enjoy the city and spend time with other international students.

5. Conclusion: Best and Worst Experiences

Overall, my Erasmus semester at ICN Business School was challenging but very rewarding. The most difficult parts were the initial adjustment period, the stress of finding accommodation, and the demanding academic workload.

At the same time, these challenges helped me grow a lot. By the end of the semester, I felt confident, well integrated, and academically motivated. Leaving Nancy was harder than expected, and I truly felt that this experience had a positive and lasting impact on my studies and personal development.