

# IT University Travel Report

Politecnico di Milano by Sebastian Karstensen



**Study Programme at ITU:** Software Development & Technology (Advanced Computing)

**Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad:** Exchange Agreement

**Exchange Period:** Autumn 2017

## Courses Studied Abroad

Course Title	Covered Course at ITU	ECTS Points
Strategy & Marketing	Elective	10 credits
Accounting, Finance, & Control	Elective	10 credits
Web Science	Elective	5 credits
Digital Image Processing	Elective	5 credits

## Introduction

At the time of writing, the exchange took place with the computer science department located in Como. However, during the past couple of years, several other departments of Politecnico di Milano have moved from Como to Milano, and there have been speculations that the same will happen to computer science. Therefore, I suggest checking whether the exchange agreement is with the department in Como or Milano, as there is a big difference between the two locations. This should also be taken into consideration, when reading this travel report.

## Arranging Your Stay

Please give a short description of the process of arranging your stay

After being nominated to go abroad by the university, I had to apply to Politecnico di Milano through their online platform. Once completed, the international coordinator at ITU was able to verify my application, which was accepted by the university in Italy. In the meantime, I had been looking at possible courses and applied for pre-approval of these.

The next step was to complete an online language assessment and fill out a learning agreement, both related to Erasmus. These tasks were executed relatively easily with help from the international coordinators at both universities. Finally, the remaining details to get settled were the Erasmus grant (see section 'Expenses and Financing') and accommodation, which is described below.

### What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use?

Due to the size of the university, there are many websites to navigate and a lot of information to take in, so I would suggest getting in contact with the local office for exchange students, if you have any questions. They should be located in either Milano or Como.

### How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

Luckily, Politecnico di Milano has a selection of dorms connected to the university, which students are able to apply for. I managed to get a shared room in the dorm located in Como, although I know of other exchange students, who were not lucky enough to get a space. Therefore, I suggest applying as soon as possible through the residence platform.

## Your Stay Abroad

### What was it like to study at Politecnico di Milano?

As a SDT-student of 2017, when going on exchange, you will be accepted into the department of Computer Science in Como, a smaller city situated just 45-minutes north of Milano. If you wish to attend classes outside of your area (as I did), you will have to make the commute to Milano, where the bigger campuses are located. Due to this, the majority of Erasmus activities takes place in the Milano area, and are therefore difficult to be part of as a residence of Como. I quickly got to like the town, which quickly gives you the feeling of being in a traditional Italian city. Staying at a dorm provided me with all the social life I needed. It is difficult for me to describe the academic level, due to my choice of courses outside the software development area, but I got the feeling that the students are somewhat similar in experience, if not a little below the academic level at ITU.

Classes at the Italian university were very different from what I am used to, and really made me appreciative of how the professors at ITU approach learning. As most of my courses took place at the management engineering school, I was attending classes with a lot more students than in Como (where the average course has about 20-30 students enrolled). Being up to 150 students in one classroom was a big change for me, and unfortunately there is not nearly as much hands-on work in the finance and marketing courses, as I am used to in computer science. Although the class material was very interesting, I will not miss spending 3,5 hours in a classroom listening to a professor speak. The courses in Como, which are part of the MSc in Computer Science, are more engaging, and usually include practical sections besides the lectures.

### What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations?

I have previously studied a semester abroad in the United States of America and had an incredible time. Therefore, I was hoping to repeat the experience by making a lot of new connections and getting to know a different culture than what we are used to in Denmark. However, going to Italy was also fueled by a wish of improving my knowledge in the area of general management, which is not available at ITU. At Politecnico di Milano, I was able to study courses such as “Accounting, Finance, & Control”, as well as

“Strategy & Marketing”, which are not part of the curriculum back home. Looking back, I am very grateful for how my stay abroad turned out. I got the opportunity to learn about courses that really piqued my interests, while simultaneously making friendships with people from all over the world.

What did you get out of your stay, both personally and academically, and how do you expect it to contribute to your further studies?

Staying at a dorm with a lot of other students turned out to be a very international setting, and the Italian culture was not the only one I got to know more about. Sharing accommodation with people from countries such as Iran, Azerbaijan, China, Serbia, Moldova, and Albania makes you aware of how international the world has become, and how much alike we all are.

Regarding my academic level, I got exactly what I was looking for in the management engineering courses. The computer science courses in Como also provided me with great knowledge closely related to my regular field, and I still got my interests in entrepreneurship and business satisfied. The knowledge I gained in Italy may become some of the most important wisdom I have gathered for my future career.

## Expenses and Financing

Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad

As this was an exchange agreement, I did not pay any tuition fees. Most expenses are as life in Denmark, and consist of accommodation, food, and transportation. Plane tickets are reasonably cheap, and cost of living is similar to Copenhagen as well.

Did you apply for scholarships and would you recommend any ones in particular?

By going through the Erasmus exchange program, you are entitled to receive the monthly Erasmus grant. This only requires you to fill out the exchange agreement and complete a language assessment test before and after the stay, which will provide you with 200-250 Euro per month. Additional information can be found in your Studyguide.