

***Please describe your experiences and comment on the following:***

*A) Your program of study (courses, assignments, course format). Add the exact number of class hours per course.*

The courses at Universidade Católica Portuguesa – Porto are management and economics based. I am currently taking 5 courses, and class hours are 4.5 hours per week. Lectures occur once a week in a three hour time block, and workshops are 1.5 hours. Workshops are of similar style to discussion groups at the University of Ottawa; There is typically a percentage of your final grade allocated to class attendance, so going to class is encouraged. I thought attending really helped lighten my load for midterms. There are usually 2 to 3 midterms per class. In some classes, the lowest exam mark is dropped. The school allocates the first week of each month, starting in March for midterms. There are no classes during these weeks. On average, courses tend to be the same level of difficulty in comparison to school in Canada; however, there are a few courses that are more difficult. If you fail the final course or want to improve your grade, there is the possibility to take a re-sit exam in the end of June. On average, the professors at Universidade Católica Portuguesa are highly skilled. For example, my Portuguese and European Economy professor was very high up in the European Union. He had a bodyguard for the majority of his career! Class sizes are much smaller at the university. They typically consist of 30 or 60 students, and professors really make an effort to get to know you! There aren't bird courses at Católica,

### **Portuguese and European Economy**

Difficulty: Hard- but a really interesting course, the professor was great

Continuous Assessments: 3 multiple choice tests and the lowest mark is dropped (60% of final grade)

Final Exam: 40%

Note: there are two re-sit exams for this class due to the high failure rate

### **Social Philosophy and Ethics**

Difficulty: Easy

Continuous Assessments: Participation (12% of final grade), 3 tests- lowest mark is dropped (48% of final grade)

Final Exam: 40%

### **Marketing**

Difficulty: Easy

Continuous Assessments: Midterm (24%), 4 presentations- lowest mark is dropped (30%), participation (6%)

Final Exam: 40%

### **International Management**

Difficulty: Medium (although it is listed as a management course, it is purely economics)

Continuous Assessments: Midterm (42.5% or 21.25%), group project- can skip this assessment and take the higher weight on the midterm (21.25% or 0%), lecture attendance (2.5%), homework (5%)

Final Exam: 50%

## **Design Thinking**

Difficulty: Easy

Continuous Assessments: 2 midterms, lowest mark is dropped (30%), weekly homework and presentations- very short, usually about a paragraph (24%), attendance to workshop (6%)

Final Exam: 40%

Note: This is a really cool course, and is completely different from any course you will take at uOttawa. This semester we redesigned the experience of an exchange student. You can watch the professor's Ted Talk to find out more information about the course:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Qyy4UmINvM>

Although the courses might seem hard in the beginning, it is important to note that you get multiple chances throughout the semester to improve your mark. Going to class and taking notes really helps.

***B) The timetable (academic calendar, registration dates, orientation, beginning and end of classes, exams, holidays, number of semesters, etc.) Please submit the precise dates so students will know when to book their flights next year.***

Registration for the spring semester was due on October 15<sup>th</sup>. In addition to an online application, I was also required to send the following documents by mail:

- Copy of your Passport
- Official Transcript
- Passport Sized Picture
- Learning Agreement
- Insurance Policy

Orientation began on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January, and lasted three days. Classes then began on the following Monday, on February 4<sup>th</sup>. There are three test weeks throughout the semester, each one occurring during the first week of the month. You do not have lectures during these weeks. You will also receive the Thursday to Monday off for Easter. Reading week occurs during the second week of May. This week is also known as *Queimas das Fitas* which is typically a big party week for students. Exams begin on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June and last 3 weeks. We were given the week before off to study. There is also a round of re-sit exams that last till the end of June.

***C) Procedures to follow upon arrival. List and description of services offered by the International Exchange Office of the host institution. Registration and course selection. Social activities.***

Registration and course selection occur prior to arrival. During the first week of school, you do have the opportunity to make changes to your timetable; however, it can be difficult as there are a limited number of courses offered in English. I found I was in a time crunch to change courses, because the both uOttawa and Católica had to approve the course within a few days.

Upon arrival, you will attend an orientation held from the Thursday to Saturday before school starts. On the first day of orientation, there is a presentation by the international office. They give you a brief rundown of the things you need to know while studying at Católica and living in Porto. There is then a cocktail hour with staff, host and exchange students. It's a great time to meet people, and ask questions. You will also meet your buddy during the first day of orientation. In January, you will receive an e-mail with their contact information. They are a great point of reference. Day 2 and 3 of the orientation consist of tourist activities such as Port wine tasting, and a boat cruise.

2<sup>nd</sup> Home is a group ran by students from Católica. There are weekly events organized for students. It is a great way to meet other exchange students. There are also a large number of Portuguese students involved in the group, so you'll also get to meet some locals. Events include dinners, F.C. Porto soccer games, day trips to cities in Portugal, go karting, beer pong tournaments, etc. Most of their events are up on Instagram, @2ndhome.ucp. They really made the best of my exchange experience.

The international office also mentioned that there were opportunities to volunteer in English. For example, teaching English to young children.

***D) Budget outlining the cost of studying abroad (i.e. airplane tickets, housing, vacation and daily travel costs, textbooks, meals, etc.).***

The cost of living in Porto is very similar, if not cheaper than that of Ottawa. My rent is 450€ per month, which is approximately what I pay in Ottawa. The apartment however, is better equipped. The apartment is fully furnished, and includes everything from containers to a weekly cleaning service. There is also a gym and pool in the basement. I share the place with three other people. F

Food is cheaper in comparison to Ottawa, especially when eating out. You can get a full lunch for only 3€ on campus. Bus passes are 30€ per month. You will not need textbooks for your classes. Most professors post PDF documents for readings.

***E) Application procedures before your arrival (visa deadlines, documents required for visa, course registration, housing deposit, etc.).***

I am a Portuguese citizen, so I did not have to go through the visa process.

In April, I received an email confirming that I had been recommended by uOttawa. I was then asked to complete an application for the spring semester that was due on October 15<sup>th</sup>. In addition to an online questionnaire, I was also required to send the following documents by mail:

- Copy of your Passport
- Official Transcript
- Passport Sized Picture
- Learning Agreement \*\*

- Insurance Policy

\*\*The learning agreement is a document that outlines the courses that you will take abroad, and the ADM electives that will be excused from at uOttawa. In November, you will receive an email that confirms your selection, or you will be asked to make changes. I had to remove *International Economics* from my learning agreement, because it was too similar to *International Management*. You may also be asked to make changes because of conflicts in regards to your timetable.

I didn't realize how long it takes to mail documents oversea, so it's best not to leave this to the last minute.

I found my apartment on Uniplaces. The website offers online payments (Visa, Debit, etc.), so it made the housing deposit process easy.

### ***F) Address and description of housing. Cost of housing.***

I lived at Rua Chãs, 95, Bloco A3. I found the apartment using Uniplaces. Rent is 450€ per month, which is similar to what I pay in Ottawa. Depending on traffic, it took me anywhere from 25 to 40 minutes to arrive at school. There are very few places to rent by the university; however, the public transport system is good. Buses typically come every 10 minutes. Juntas de Massarelos is a great location to live. It's right in between the school and downtown.

The apartment was fully furnished. It included everything from containers to a weekly cleaning service. It is also very common for someone to replace towels and sheets on a weekly basis. I had a spacious room, with a queen sized bed and a balcony. In total, there were 4 rooms in the apartment. The landlord was great, and very accommodating. For example, he noticed that I had studied a lot at the dining room table, so he purchased a desk and chair for my room.

There was a mall and grocery store nearby. I enjoyed living in Arrabida, it was a very calm area; however, still easy to get to the school and downtown.

If you have any trouble finding a place, you can send me an e-mail and I can get you in contact with my landlord. He has fully furnished properties throughout Porto.

### ***G) Work term (if applicable).***

Not applicable.

***H) Other comments or recommendations.***

I recommend that you get an ESN card. It's a membership to an exchange student network. You'll have access to trips, cultural events and parties. Events are for students throughout Porto, so you get to meet students from other universities. There are also discounts with companies throughout Porto (i.e. surf schools, airlines).

***I) Add a description of about five to seven sentences summarizing your experience.***

I loved going on exchange in Portugal. The country has everything from great waves for surfing to hiking in the mountains, pastéis de nata to award winning wine, century old castles to modern architecture. Everything is a train ride away! More specifically, Porto is a great city- its big enough that you get a city vibe, but still have that feeling of community. Católica also does a great job of creating a community. Overall, Portuguese culture is super laid back, and once March hits you spend most of your days on the beach 😊



