

Unforgettable Erasmus+ Journey: Discovering Audencia Business School in Nantes, France

M.Sc in International Business Economics

My Erasmus+ exchange at Audencia Business School in France during the mid-winter semester of 2023/2024 was truly unforgettable. As an Indian student living in Germany for the past 12 months, I was eager to explore new opportunities and meet more international students. I specifically sought out finance-related courses at various universities, and choosing Audencia was one of the best decisions I've made. This report highlights my journey, covering my preparation, on-site studies, accommodation, leisure activities, and the incredible adventures I experienced during my time abroad.

I first learned about the Erasmus exchange program at an information seminar organised by Erasmus representative. After getting an overview of the program, I reached out to Ms. Franziska, the Erasmus representative at TU Ilmenau. She provided me with all the necessary details. After submitting the required documents, I was thrilled to be selected for an exchange at Audencia Business School for the mid-winter semester of 2023/2024.

Once I received approval, I needed to prepare a learning agreement that outlined the courses I planned to take at Audencia. This agreement had to be confirmed and signed by the Erasmus coordinators at the host university to ensure I could enrol in those courses. Finally, our university's Examination Office also needed to approve and sign the learning agreement.

Major/course choice at Audencia

As a business school, Audencia offers a wide array of majors, allowing you to focus your studies for the semester. Whether you're interested in marketing, consulting, or, like me, corporate finance, you can find a major that suits your goals. Once you select your major, your course choices are almost finalized. Each major includes a package of seven courses, all tailored to your chosen focus. If you don't need all the credits or some courses aren't applicable, you can make adjustments. The best approach is to consult your examination office and create a document based on your learning agreement to finalize these changes.

Visa requirements for non-EU students

Most non-EU students need a visa for an exchange semester lasting more than three months. It's important to check the French embassy's country-specific visa requirements. As an Indian student, I had to apply for a visa myself. The process typically takes 3-4 weeks. I recommend following the embassy's guidelines and submitting all required documents specific to your country. It's not as complicated as it might seem.

Finding accommodation in Nantes

In Nantes, students have two main accommodation options: student dormitories and private apartments. Student dormitories and shared student apartments are managed by CROUS, and applications can be made on their website about a month before the semester starts. Many students choose CROUS apartments because they are generally more affordable than private rentals. I stayed in CROUS student apartments because the rent is cheaper compared to private apartments.

For those interested in private apartments, platforms like Studapart and Livin are particularly helpful. These platforms collaborate with Audencia Business School to ensure a secure and reliable apartment search. A unique aspect of renting in France is that many landlords and CROUS require a guarantor who resides in France. Since most international students don't have relatives or acquaintances in France, platforms like Studapart can assist with this requirement. Additionally, an organization called Visale provides guarantor certificates to students at no cost.

Insurance

The most crucial insurance for your stay in France includes comprehensive foreign health insurance and liability insurance, particularly household contents insurance. This is mandatory for renting an apartment in France. There are various providers depending on the length of your stay. I found my insurance through the Livin France platform and had no issues completing it with the provider Lovys.

Studies at Audencia:

As mentioned earlier, I chose the "Corporate Finance" major during my time at Audencia. Compared to the courses and structure at TU Ilmenau, the most significant difference is the emphasis on practical relevance. Each of my courses included at least 30% project work. Throughout the semester, groups worked on presentations, papers, and other practical tasks. For instance, we were assigned to perform a valuation and credit rating of a European company, with feedback provided by the professors. This hands-on approach made my experience at Audencia truly special. I was able to apply the knowledge I had gained throughout my studies, and the professors' feedback was incredibly valuable.

The remaining 70% of the courses consisted of classic lecture content and written exams at the end of the semester. Most professors managed to make the courses very engaging, often sharing insights and experiences from their previous top positions in various companies. The majority of the exams were structured in a multiple-choice format.

About campus amenities:

The Audencia campus, actually comprised of two campuses, was exceptionally well-equipped and significantly contributed to the overall learning experience. The availability

of numerous databases, along with subscriptions to publications like the New York Times and Financial Times, greatly facilitated daily university activities. Another advantage of Audencia was the abundance of microwaves and water dispensers offering both cold and hot water, making it convenient for students.

For those who prefer not to prepare meals, the option to pre-order lunch from the cafeteria in the form of baguettes, salads, and bowls was available, or students could opt to dine at the Crous Restaurant. Additionally, there is a complimentary gymnasium available to students at the Atlantic campus.

Free Time Activities:

In Nantes, France, students can enjoy a variety of free activities that showcase the city's cultural and natural beauty. Exploring the Machines of the Isle of Nantes offers a chance to admire fascinating mechanical creations in public spaces. The Jardin des Plantes is a beautiful botanical garden perfect for relaxing walks. Strolling along the Loire River provides scenic views and a vibrant atmosphere. History enthusiasts can tour the stunning Nantes Cathedral. Parc de Procé is an ideal spot for picnics and leisurely strolls. Art lovers can visit Le Lieu Unique, a cultural center that hosts exhibitions and events. Additionally, the historic Passage Pommeraye offers a unique shopping experience in a beautifully preserved arcade. These activities provide a rich mix of cultural, historical, and natural experiences at no cost.

Conclusion

My Erasmus exchange program at Audencia Business School in Nantes, France, was an enriching and unforgettable experience. The combination of practical coursework, engaging professors, and a well-equipped campus provided a strong academic foundation. Living in a CROUS student apartment not only made accommodation affordable but also allowed me to immerse myself in the local culture and student community. The free activities and vibrant atmosphere of Nantes added to the overall charm of my stay. This exchange broadened my horizons, enhanced my academic knowledge, and provided invaluable life experiences. It was one of the best decisions I've made, and I highly recommend the Erasmus program to anyone seeking personal and academic growth.

Glimpse of memories from Nantes

