

Hey everyone,

I have decided to write a little something about my staying in Rennes. In doing so I hope it will help you make your decision if the latter has not been made yet or if you are hesitating! I thought quite a while about the way I should present the feedback of my staying, knowing that I want it to be as helpful as possible. I thought about writing something casual “from me (former student) to you (future students)” and something you cannot find in google ;)

To begin with a little bit about myself, my name is Tjaša Bjedov I am 26 years old (25 during my Rennes experience ;)). I have studied economics in Fribourg (Switzerland) and I spent my last academic year (2009-2010) in Rennes. I am now starting with my PhD and work as an assistant for the Professor who is also my PhD supervisor. For my PhD, I am once again in a kind of a double degree program since Prof. Yvon Rocaboy is my second PhD supervisor. Well I guess ... that is enough about myself ;) my purpose not being to get you bored.

I thought that I will write to you the steps I went through my staying in Rennes my first purpose being to encourage you in joining this program because I truly believe (now that is over) that I have made the right choice by spending my last year in Rennes. My second purpose is to comfort you because I know that it is a hard decision to make...

Let us start and speak about hesitation... yes ... because we all had, I believe, at some point doubts and a lot of hesitation about going abroad for an academic year. I was, personally, quite challenged when I made my decision and left Switzerland for France even though according to the other I seem pretty self-confident... When I thought about joining the European Master in Public Economics and Public Finance I was really not sure what I should expect. I was apprehensive because I was not sure that I want to major in this field neither was I sure that I would enjoy going abroad. Well that's life a lot of “*I am not sure*” : think less do more! And that's exactly what I have done!

When I arrived in Rennes my second feeling was ho Gosh! How do I go from my dorm to the uni ;) haha! Well every Erasmus student feels like that: do not ever forget that. Yes, you are lost and feel weird but the guy sitting next to you feels exactly like you and soon enough he/she will be your best buddy just wait for the first party to come!

What I am trying to say here is that I know that leaving its home city, family, close friends, boyfriend/girlfriend, even his/her pet... is hard. But it is hard for everyone. You will feel sad and lost at first but very soon you will make amazing friends who will bring to you so so so much! You will get to know yourself and discover that you are much stronger and capable than you ever thought. All the people you will meet will bring something new to your personality and all the new things you will discover will improve you! You will live, work and study with people all around the world and you will have the chance to make them love the country they are from! You will lose quite a lot of “clichés” and that's for the best!

So my first learning from this experience was: going abroad is challenging nevertheless a truly great and fulfilling experience. Be ambitious, be strong, be courage and just do it!

Now few words about the Master itself, I was finally very happy with my major. The lectures were interesting and completing what I have already learned in Fribourg especially the applied econometrics lectures. The teachers of the present Master in Rennes made the lectures comprehensive and feasible for all of us. Even though, we were coming from different countries not speaking English perfectly not have the same backgrounds somehow they managed to make the

lectures not only interesting and challenging but also attainable for any one! And this also applies to lectures we had to take in common with the other French students. We worked in teams, helped each other, the general atmosphere was cordial and friendly. All of us worked hard, I never felt a bad competition in between us. The people who spoke French helped the ones who didn't the students with great skills in mathematics and econometrics helped the ones who were weaker in those fields. At the end, all of us succeeded all the exams and with good marks! I believe that this great working mood was settled down by, first, our teachers who were very conscientious, careful and attentive. They made sure during their lectures that everyone is following and understanding the main points but they also made sure that we feel good in Rennes and that we do not have problems with our visas, dorms or any other issues we could have had. Finally, we were allowed to knock on their door whenever we needed something. They, really, were available for us. Second, I believe that we had the chance of being a great group of students and we have made quite some good, very good and close friends.

Generally, speaking I enjoyed the University of Rennes 1. Our building was beautiful people were very nice and always ready to help or inform. Aside from its beauty and charm, the University of Rennes 1 is also ranked in the Shanghai ranking which is quite prestigious. The lectures are of high quality. Teaching rooms and material are also extremely available and of good quality which makes the work easier. This info might seem a detail but when you do not know the city neither the language you are happy to be in a Uni where internet works and computer are available for the projects you have to do in team. Our teachers also managed to book a working room for our Master program which was very comfortable and made the work in a team very easy and pleasant.

My second learning was: joining this program enabled me to learn and develop skills that, with no doubt, helped me getting my position as a PhD student in my faculty and my first job as an assistant.

Rennes is a very nice city and Brittany is worth visiting. I travelled with my car, when I had to go to Rennes, and since I had my car with my friends we took this opportunity to travel around. I have visited all Brittany and I was very amazed with the landscapes, the ocean, the churches ... I was able to photograph ;) people are nice, extremely polite, food is great. Well I truly loved Brittany and Rennes! Just google it and you will be quite easily convinced ;)

My third learning was: it was fun! Yes, it truly was! Aside from hard work and learning so many things we had also time to make friends, go out and travel around! I really did have fun and this is also important. Life is not only about working and pushing itself hard it is also about enjoying the city the food the night clubs and bars. It is also about getting to know the French culture language and people. And you can do that only if you socialize and go out. Our teachers encouraged us to take care of our social lives they wanted us to enjoy the life in Rennes.

Well, I am reaching the end of my letter and I think I have said everything I wanted ;) To sum up my year in Rennes was three-fold: 1) it was personally fulfilling, I improved my personal skills 2) it was a good and strategic choice for my career 3) finally, it was fun and I enjoyed myself a lot. Rennes for my last academic year was the right choice. Given the learning and great memories I was able to build in Rennes, I have decided to keep this collaboration with Rennes within my PhD.

My last words to you would be: I wish you good luck. Work hard. And, ... HAVE FUN!

Greetings,  
Tjaša