

# Madrid 2023 - 24



## Study Abroad Handbook

A useful guide to your  
study abroad experience



**OVERSEAS STUDY**

*The usefulness of this handbook depends on student input.  
If you find erroneous information, please contact [overseas@iu.edu](mailto:overseas@iu.edu).  
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## PROGRAM CONTACTS

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## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of a study abroad program are as diverse as the students, faculty, and administrators involved. Some goals may be common (e.g. language acquisition), while others may be more personal (e.g. becoming independent). Some goals may seem more important to some than to others (e.g. desire for academic integrity in coursework vs. desire to travel).

Study abroad programs will provide a more enriching experience if they incorporate a wide range of goals. The first step toward the achievement of these goals is acknowledging and defining them before the program begins. Once you are abroad, the process continues with a structured and cooperative approach to achieving these goals. We've begun the process by outlining some goals for your program.

## WIP Madrid Program Goals

- Competence with the Spanish language and knowledge of Spanish literature, culture, history and the arts
- Integration into the academic and social environment of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid
- Immersion experience in a supportive environment
- Personal development and growth

## Program Elements that Support these Goals

- Resident staff to provide personal and academic advising
- Program office located on the Complutense campus
- Special courses taught by Spanish faculty in area studies for program participants
- Attendance in Universidad Complutense de Madrid courses with Spanish students (Academic Year and Spring semester students)
- Coursework integrated into students' academic goals
- Volunteer opportunities available for Academic Year students
- Cultural excursions to various regions in Spain
- Independently-arranged housing with Spanish and international peers
- Intercambio language exchange with UCM students

## ICONS IN THIS GUIDE



### Helpful Program Information

Information to help prepare you for study abroad



### Student Advice

Suggestions from study abroad returnees



### Savvy Traveler Tips

Traveling tips to get you where you're going

# PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

This handbook provides information relevant for all Wisconsin, Indiana, Purdue and Tulane students going on the WIP Madrid semester or academic year program. Contact your school's study abroad advisor regarding general travel-preparation information, school-specific academic program and degree requirements, tuition and program fees, scholarships and financial aid, and contractual arrangements.

You should use this handbook and other supplemental materials now as you prepare to leave and later while you are abroad. Since many student questions are addressed in this handbook, please consult it before contacting your study abroad office.

This handbook is also available on the web:

<https://overseas.iu.edu/docs/handbooks/madrid-iu.pdf>

## **Additional University Handbooks and Information:**

- Wisconsin: [www.studyabroad.wisc.edu/handbook](http://www.studyabroad.wisc.edu/handbook).
- Purdue:
  - Program Information: <https://www.studyabroad.purdue.edu/programs/flyer.cfm?flyer=35&SICountryCode=485&LanguageOffered=Spanish>
  - Handbook Information: [www.purdue.edu/IPPU/SA/Documents/MySA/ProgramDocuments/SavvyGuide.pdf?\\_ga=2.62821029.883087002.1646921448-217516911.1612210665](http://www.purdue.edu/IPPU/SA/Documents/MySA/ProgramDocuments/SavvyGuide.pdf?_ga=2.62821029.883087002.1646921448-217516911.1612210665)
- Tulane: [cge.tulane.edu](http://cge.tulane.edu)



# The Program in Madrid

## 2023-24 Calendar\*

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Arrival in Madrid (Academic-Year and Fall Students).....	Aug. 30
Fall Orientation.....	Aug. 30 - Sept. 6
Reunidas fall term.....	Sept. 7 - Dec. 22
Winter recess.....	Dec. 22 - Jan. 9
Arrival in Madrid (Spring Semester Students).....	Jan. 16*
Spring orientation .....	Jan. 16 - 24*
Complutense Spring Term.....	Jan. 22 - June 4*
Reunidas spring term.....	Feb. 1 - May 24*
Spring recess.....	March 22 - April 1*
Final Exams .....	May 20 - June 4*

The final exam schedule for Reunidas (and Complutense courses for academic year [AY] students and Spring semester students) may not be available until after students arrive in Madrid. Fall semester student should NOT plan to leave the program prior to the first day of winter break and should schedule their return flights no earlier than December 22. Spring/AY students should NOT plan to leave the program prior to June 5.

In addition, the following religious and national holidays are observed: Oct. 12 (Día de la Hispanidad), Nov. 1 (Día de Todos los Santos), Nov. 9 (Día de la Almudena), Dec. 6 (Día de la Constitución), Dec. 8 (Día de la Inmaculada), May 1 (Día del Trabajo), May 2 (Día de la Comunidad de Madrid), and May 15 (Día de San Isidro, Patrón de Madrid). Holidays that occur on Fridays or Mondays usually create long weekends called "puentes."

Once set and formally announced, the dates for classes and examinations are firm. They may be changed only in case of extreme hardship, such as a death in the family or serious illness of the student. You are not permitted to request changes to accommodate your travel schedule.

*\*These dates are subject to change. The student will be notified in advance if any changes are to be made.*

## Travel & Arrival Information

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### Academic Year and Fall Participants

**August 30 is the official arrival day for academic year and fall-only participants, and you must be in Madrid by 11:00 a.m. You must not enter Spain before your visa validity begins.**

You will be responsible for making your own travel arrangements to Madrid. This summer, you will receive detailed arrival instructions. These instructions will include information about being greeted at the airport by staff, meeting together as a group, getting into the city and to your lodgings. You will also receive important practical information to get you settled upon arrival, orientation activities and housing options in a separate mailing.

Program staff cannot be available to assist you before the official arrival date. If you arrive early, you must make your own housing arrangements for the interim.

Special note for AY students: You must be sure to save your boarding pass from the flight into Madrid and give it to the staff upon arrival. The boarding pass will be used to prove entry into Spain and must be submitted to authorities during the process of application for student residency.

### Spring Semester Participants

**The official arrival day for spring semester participants is tentatively set for January 16 and you must be in Madrid by 11:00 a.m.** in order to attend the official WIP program orientation meeting. Place and time will be announced by email at a later date prior to arrival. You must not enter Spain before your visa validity begins.

You will be responsible for making your own travel arrangements to Madrid. Before arrival, we will send you detailed arrival instructions. These instructions will include information about meeting together as a group, going into the city, and finding transportation to your homestay.

You will also receive important practical information to get you settled upon arrival, orientation activities and housing options for the semester in a separate mailing.

Program staff cannot be available to assist you before the official arrival date. If you arrive early, you must make your own housing arrangements for the interim.

## Visa and Residency Permit

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You will be required to have a Spanish student visa stamped in your passport when you arrive in Spain. Begin researching the application requirements at your consulate immediately and apply for your student visa as soon as you have been instructed to do



so by your home institution. Your study abroad office will provide you with all necessary documents for obtaining this visa at a Spanish consulate in the U.S. since it cannot be obtained in Spain.

Spanish student visa regulations are getting more complicated and time consuming so you are advised not to leave the U.S. for any international travel before the program begins. If you must be out of the country more than a couple of days immediately prior to the program start date, there is no guarantee that the consulate will process the visa in time for your departure. For example, you should be aware that some consulates require a travel itinerary in order to apply, thus a plane ticket may have to be purchased before the visa paperwork deadline. In addition, if you will study in Spain longer than six months, you may be required to obtain certificate(s) by police authorities where you resided during the last five years to prove the absence of police record.

If you will be studying abroad prior to the start of the program, please be advised that it is nearly impossible to obtain a student visa outside of the U.S. In addition, consulates and embassies outside the U.S. are generally unfamiliar with student visa requirements as they relate to U.S. students and will often provide conflicting or incorrect information that will ultimately delay the visa application process and jeopardize your chances of obtaining a visa in a timely manner. Therefore, you should return to the U.S. to obtain your student visa.

Finally, keep in mind that students have to surrender their passports to the appropriate consulate anywhere from several weeks to as long as two months or more before the program starts.

**Year-long students** must be sure to get a **90-day visa** with multiple entries to facilitate travel and re-entry into Spain. After year-long students arrive in Madrid, the program staff will help you obtain the required residency permit (*tarjeta de residencia de estudiante*). This permit takes the place of the visa and allows you to legally live and study in Spain longer than six months. Students must be sure to save their boarding passes from the flight into Madrid and give it to staff upon arrival. The boarding pass will be used to prove entry into Spain and must be submitted to authorities during the process of application for student residency.

**Spring or fall semester students** will not obtain this residency permit, so you must apply for a 180-day visa to cover the entire length of your stay, and multiple entries to facilitate travel and re-entry to Spain. Please verify that the length that is also mentioned in months (e.g. January-June) covers 180 days.

**Important visa considerations for all students:** When your visa is issued, immediately double-check that the dates are correct, and that you have been issued a visa with multiple entries.

**You must not enter Spain before your visa validity begins.** This usually coincides with the start date of the program, so keep this in mind when booking your flight. If you arrive before the start date of the visa, you must leave the Schengen territory (go to the U.K, for example) once the visa's validity begins and re-enter the country in order to "activate" your student visa and legal status as a student. Visas are only correctly activated if you enter on or after the start date of the visa.

**Keep your boarding pass and turn it in to the program office staff upon arrival.** In the event your passport was not correctly stamped, or you entered the Schengen territory

through another EU country, you must prove your date of entry into Spain. Your boarding pass into Madrid is proof. If you do not have this to prove entry, you may need to leave Schengen territory and re-enter it.

**Dual citizens of any EU country and the U.S.** are strongly encouraged to obtain a visa as Americans so your legal residence here is processed along with the rest of the students. However, you may choose to enter the country using your European passport and then make arrangements here upon arrival (within 30 days) to declare your entrance into Spain and complete a registration process with authorities. International students must contact the Spanish Consulate and confirm visa requirements for your nationality. Due to the expenses involved, check with your international student office on campus prior to departure.



Madrid, Spain

## Madrid

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Madrid, the political capital of Spain since the late sixteenth century, today has a population of nearly 6.5 million for the entire Madrid metropolitan area. It is located at an altitude of 2,200 feet, and on clear days the snow-capped Sierra de Guadarrama, rising to over 7,000 feet, is visible from the university campus. The climate is generally dry, with very hot summers and cold but not severe winters. Weather is most pleasant in May, June, September and October.

Madrid is a modern, dynamic, cosmopolitan city, which underwent its first major expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It continues to grow and exhibit all the problems associated with urban areas: it is crowded and noisy, with too many cars and constant traffic jams. There is serious air pollution and the cost of living is high. Nevertheless, the city offers a good, inexpensive, public transportation system, so that travel around the city is relatively easy. (There are apps available to assist with this.) You must be alert for pickpockets on the Metro and take reasonable precautions on the street at night.

The city has abundant and varied restaurants and cafes, numerous theatres, museums, cinemas, and parks, including one of the world's most famous art museums, the Prado. Situated at the center of Spain's rail, air and highway networks, Madrid provides an excellent base for excursions. The WIP Madrid Program organizes excursions each year and encourages its students to take advantage of many other opportunities for individual travel within Spain. Among the major attractions within easy reach for a day trip are El Escorial, Toledo, Ávila, Segovia, Aranjuez, Cuenca, Salamanca and Navacerrada (skiing), as well as other interesting small towns and villages.

You may find adjusting to a large city with its traffic, subway, and throbbing pace is as daunting and exciting as adjusting to a new language and culture.

## Academic Program

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The minimal course enrollment for the WIP program is as follows:

**Fall-only students:** 15 credits in classes for U.S.-based students through Reunidas.

**Spring-only students:** 15 credits in combination of classes through Reunidas and Complutense (6 credits minimum).

**Fall Term (academic year students):** 15 credits in combination of classes for U.S.-based students through Reunidas and Complutense courses (3 credits minimum for WIP students, 6 credits minimum for Tulane students).

**Spring Term (academic year students):** 15 credits in combination of classes through Reunidas and Complutense (6 credits minimum).

### Onsite Orientation

All WIP students are required to participate in an orientation program that will be given by the staff of the WIP office in Madrid and Spanish instructors. It includes practical advice for living in Madrid, succeeding in academics, volunteering and teaching (among other extracurricular activities and cultural activities such as walking and museum tours.

Many Spanish profs are discovering the benefits of class discussion and two-way learning. The amount of memorization can be shocking, but it's part of the cultural adjustment.



STUDENT ADVICE

### Course Load

Each semester you must enroll as a full-time student and complete a minimum of 15 credits per semester. In September and January you will meet with the Resident Director to discuss your planned course of study and work out a feasible schedule from the Reunidas and Complutense (if applicable) courses available. Prior to this meeting, you will do pre-advising with the WIP staff to decide on courses outlined in your academic plan that you create beforehand with your advisor on your home campus. Follow the proposed schedule you planned with your advisor before leaving the United States as closely as possible. You should bring a copy of your advising schedule with you. Students who apply themselves have achieved academic success in their courses.

### Reunidas Classes

[Universidades Reunidas](#) is a consortium of American universities that have been in operation for more than 50 years and offers numerous special three-credit courses in the humanities and social sciences for U.S.-based students only. All courses are taught in Spanish by University of Madrid professors in the Geography and History building, where the WIP program office is located. The Spanish professors selected to teach Reunidas courses have extensive experience working with foreign students. They are aware of your linguistic level and sensitive to the importance of providing you with background explanations and supplementary descriptions that would not be necessary for Spanish students. Academic expectations in Reunidas classes (a syllabus, midterm and final exams, homework assignments, attendance policies) are similar to those in U.S. classrooms. In selecting Reunidas classes you may refer to a large collection of course descriptions in the program office from previous WIP students.

STUDENT ADVICE

"Amount of busy work is almost completely eliminated, grades are based on 1-2 exams and possibly a paper."

For more information about Reunidas (courses, syllabi, class schedules, etc) check out the [Reunidas webpage](#).

## Spanish Instructional Style

Be prepared to adjust to a different instructional style in Spain. Learning within a different cultural context is one of many important study abroad experiences. There is student participation. However, you can expect a traditional lecture. The Spanish educational system does not stress critical thinking as much as its American counterpart does. Instead, special attention is given to students' ability to assimilate the reading and lecture material and accurately reflect this information on exams or in papers. Most professors do not solicit student comments in class or out. The traditional Spanish educational system may be better characterized as "give and return" rather than "give and take." Nevertheless, many Spanish professors enjoy working with Americans who participate in a more dynamic learning environment. If you want to participate actively in your classes, take the initiative since it can be a good way to form lasting professional contact. Regular class attendance is important. Reunidas professors are asked to inform the Resident Director if you miss more than three class hours, and absences in excess of three class hours will have a negative impact on course grades.

## Reunidas Courses (tentative)

The following is a tentative list of courses offered by semester. You must consult the exact course offerings and the class schedules in Madrid with the Resident Director. These classes are offered either fall or spring semester unless it lists spring and fall both in parenthesis. In these cases, the student may take the class either semester since the material covered is not the same. Please consult the exact course offerings in the materials you will be provided with during pre-registration, and also course information online: [www.ucm.es/universidades-reunidas](http://www.ucm.es/universidades-reunidas).

### Arts and Philosophy

- Obras maestras del Museo del Prado: luz y color (Fall)
- Obras maestras del Museo del Prado: representaciones de poder (Spring)
- Taller de teatro español contemporáneo (Fall)
- Cine español (Spring)
- Filosofía contemporánea española (Spring)

### Spanish Literature

- Literatura española: siglos XVIII - XX (Fall)
- Literatura hispanoamericana: siglos XV - XIX (Fall)
- Literatura hispanoamericana: siglos XIX-XXI (Spring)
- La mujer en la literatura española (Spring)

### Spanish Language

- Composición para hablantes bilingües y avanzados (Fall)
- Español de los negocios (Spring)
- Fonética española (Spring)
- Dialectología: el español en el mundo (Spring)

Introducción a la lingüística (Fall)

Sintaxis comparada inglés/español: construcciones verbales (Spring)

### **History and Culture**

Islam, Cristianismo y Judaísmo en España: cultura, religión y sociedad (Spring)

Historia contemporánea de España: 1808 al presente (Spring)

Historia de Hispanoamérica: del siglo XIX al XXI (Spring)

Madrid: Cultura y sociedad (Fall)

### **Social Sciences (Political Science, Economics, Geography, etc.)**

Análisis político y economía comparada de la España actual (Fall)

Relaciones internacionales y política exterior de España (Fall)

Estudios de Género: Feminismos y Reflexiones Queer (Fall)

Los sistemas políticos europeos: El modelo español (Spring)

España en el mundo global (Spring)

## **University of Madrid**

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The University of Madrid is organized on the basis of several schools called facultades, which vary in size from a few hundred students to several thousand. The university's total enrollment is more than 75,000 students. Most of the facultades are located in the Ciudad Universitaria, which encompasses an extensive area on Madrid's western edge. Some of the present buildings date from before the Civil War when most of the old campus was destroyed. Each facultad has its decano and administrative staff and seems to operate quite on its own. There is a rector (roughly equivalent to the president of the university) who has his own office complex (Pabellón de Gobierno) near the Plaza de la Moncloa. The University of Madrid (also called La Universidad Complutense de Madrid) is the national university (practically all other Spanish universities are state institutions) and, like all other educational institutions in Spain, is ultimately under the control of the Ministry of Education.

### **Complutense Courses**

In addition to Reunidas classes, academic year and spring-only students will take Complutense courses. These are regularly scheduled University of Madrid classes with Spanish classmates. While Reunidas classes have the advantage of greater structure and a more familiar academic environment, it is also important for you to participate in the Spanish university system.

Complutense offerings span a full range of depth and breadth in world geography and history (including area studies), world literature, anthropology, philosophy, and economics, and all courses carry three credits.

Complutense courses start around the same time as Reunidas courses, but have their final exams later. Final exams, which may include an oral component, are scheduled in January and May/June. Mid-term examinations are customary. In addition to lectures, you can expect to have group work and papers, practice sessions, and even an oral presentation.

Note that courses taught in English with readings in English do not satisfy the program's Complutense course requirement. You may not take North American, British, or any other literature or history of the English-speaking world courses (even if taught in Spanish) or classes dealing strictly with the U.S. (unless, for example, they are comparative in nature such as comparative politics).

Although opportunities exist to study other foreign languages in Madrid, WIP students are limited to advanced courses in literature, culture, civilization, history of the language, or advanced linguistics that are taught in the foreign language, not beginning and intermediate language courses. (UW students must refer to their IAP Study Abroad Handbook for more information on policies regarding third language classes.)

### Choosing Complutense Courses

Prior to your departure for Spain, take advantage of Complutense course lists available at your school's study abroad office or on their website to make some tentative plans regarding the Complutense courses you will pursue.

### The Complutense University Website

You should consult the class schedules and available syllabi in order to familiarize yourself with what you will find on campus. Class schedules (timetables) are available for the upcoming academic year online, usually by July. Until then the timetables that are posted are for the current year, and will change prior to your arrival.

The main Complutense University (UCM) website is: [www.ucm.es](http://www.ucm.es).

### How to Find Courses, Syllabi and Timetables on the Complutense Website

Please follow the steps below to find courses within the three Facultades (schools) that have an agreement with the WIP program (Filología, Filosofía and Geografía e Historia).

Note: WIP students must take their Complutense courses within those Facultades (with exceptions). All Complutense classes taken by WIP students count for three credits.

### Classes in Filología:

Go to the Complutense website: [www.ucm.es](http://www.ucm.es)

- Under UCM, click on Facultades.
- Click on Filología.

### Syllabi (Programas):

- When the Filología page opens up, on the left hand side under the section heading Estudios, click on Grado.

A list of the different Programas de Grado degree programs will appear. Advisors and students are encouraged to browse through courses in several majors, not just in Grado en Español, because some Grados which in principle seem to be unrelated to the student's needs, may have some courses within the degree program which offer a good option to fulfill student requirements.

To access the syllabi for classes in Filología, after clicking on Estudios and then Grado, click on the Grado Major degree in which you are interested. On the page that opens

up, click on the icon to the right (that resembles a calendar) and a list will open up of all of the classes from Curso 1 (first year) to Curso 4 (fourth year) for this degree. Click on the class you are interested in. Not all of the classes on the list have a syllabus online, but many do. Many will have the schedule for lectures and the semester the class is given posted here, you must scroll down to the bottom of the information page for the class to find the semester offered and the times the class meets.

#### Schedule of Classes (Horario):

The Filología Facultad no longer has a list or timetable of all of the courses, but rather you must find that information by looking at the syllabus for each class. WIP program staff will send you a list prior to the start of the pre-registration process with courses offered that semester. Otherwise, to work ahead you must consult the syllabus for each class to see when it is offered (follow the instructions above).

#### Classes in Filosofía:

- Go to the Complutense website: [www.ucm.es](http://www.ucm.es).
- Under UCM, click on Facultades.
- Click on Filosofía.

#### Syllabi (Programas):

- When the Filosofía page opens up, under the section Titulaciones, click on Grados.
- Next, click on Filosofía in the list of Grados.
- On the right, click on the yellow icon Programas.
- On the page that opens up there is a list of all of the classes in this degree: Curso 1 (first year), Curso 2 (second year), Curso 4 (fourth year) and Sin Curso Definido (electives). Click on the class you are interested in. Not all of the classes on the list have a syllabus online, but many do. Many will have the schedule for lectures and the semester the class is given posted here, you must scroll down to the bottom of the information page for the class to find the semester offered and the times the class meets.

#### Schedule of Classes (Horario):

- When the Filosofía page opens up, on the left hand side under the section heading Docencia click on Horarios Asignaturas y tutorías.
- After clicking on Horarios Asignaturas, under the section Curso 2023-2024, click on Grado en Filosofía and the schedule of classes will open for Primer Curso (first year), Segundo Curso (second year), Tercer Curso (third year), Cuarto Curso (fourth year) and Asignaturas Optativas (electives). Be careful to only consult the classes offered the semester you are looking for (Cuatrimestre 1º is fall, Cuatrimestre 2º is spring).

#### Classes in Geografía e Historia:

- Go to the Complutense website: [www.ucm.es](http://www.ucm.es).
- Under the heading UCM, click on Facultades.
- Click on Geografía e Historia.

#### Syllabi (Programas):

- When the Geografía e Historia page opens up, click on Estudios, then click on Grados.
- There you will see a list of Estudios de Grado. Click on the Grado degree you are interested in.
- On the right, click the second icon that resembles a calendar.
- A list will open up of all of the classes from Curso 1 (first year) to Curso 4 (fourth year) and

Electives (Sin curso definido) for this degree. Click on the class you are interested in. Not all of the classes on the list have a syllabus online, but many do. Also, many will have the schedule for lectures and the semester the class is given posted here, you must scroll down to the bottom of the information page for the class to find the semester offered and the times the class meets.

#### Schedule of Classes (Horario):

- When the Geografía e Historia page opens up, click on Estudios then under the heading “Otros enlaces de interés” click on Horarios/Profesores.
- Under Horarios de Titulaciones, click on Grados de la Facultad de Geografía e Historia.
- On the page that opens, you will see several boxes with the different Grado degree majors and a link for each of the different Cursos (years of study) for each degree. There is a first box for new students with basic introductory courses (huge lectures) and then boxes for each degree area with the rest of the classes offered for each degree area. Concentrate on each degree area instead to have a larger list of courses (first year classes are also included there).
- Click on these links for a list of the regular classes Clases teóricas and the schedule of mandatory labs and discussion groups for each class Seminarios y Prácticas. When planning your schedule you will need to find the schedule for both components of your class. When looking at these class lists, be careful to look at the bar on the left hand side to see what semester the class is; Primer Cuatrimestre (Fall) or Segundo Cuatrimestre (Spring). Also, when looking at the Seminarios and Prácticas or Actividades de Seminario you should note that many times there are more than one group.

#### Succeeding in Complutense Classes

In Madrid, talk with the Resident Director to focus on areas of interest or competence, and use the class schedules and syllabi to find possible classes that fit within your advising plan that you made with your academic advisor prior to the program. Challenge yourself. Seize the chance to study topics available only in Spain. Advanced classes with smaller enrollment may provide better academic opportunities and more individualized attention than large introductory lectures.

Once you have selected your Complutense courses, find out exactly what is expected to complete the course successfully. The program syllabus will indicate the areas of study for the class and a bibliography to use for complimenting what you learn in lecture. Spanish university classes place emphasis on the professor's lectures, class notes, complimentary readings and even more on independent research.

Make an effort to approach Spanish students and sit with them in class. They can explain doubts you may have about the class and/or the syllabus and the coursework required. Most WIP students find Spanish students friendly and quite willing to share their copious notes, **if asked**. Arrive for class early so you can sit near the front of the room. You will be able to hear and understand the teacher much better. If you have not previously mastered the *vosotros* verb forms, study them, because they are constantly used in Spain.

Do not be deceived by Complutense students' apparent relaxed attitude toward class attendance. They are accustomed to independent study culminating in comprehensive annual examinations, which they are allowed to retake the following fall (American students are not allowed to do this).

You should expect that you can do as well academically in Madrid as on your home campus if you apply yourself seriously. This generalization becomes highly problematic



if you miss classes or exams or fail to take your studies as seriously as the Spanish professors assume you will.

### Tutorials

WIP provides tutorial assistance for Complutense courses throughout the semester, which is not to be confused with remedial tutoring. The purpose of the tutorials is to help you clarify and complete lecture notes, help explain basic entry-level concepts and vocabulary of the discipline in Spanish, and help you identify and locate the bibliography for exams, papers and projects. The WIP program strongly encourages students to meet with tutors for their Complutense classes. Data show that students who had tutorial assistance did better overall in Complutense classes.

## Final Exam Schedule

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**Fall semester:** the final exam schedule for Reunidas (and Complutense courses for academic year students) may not be available until after students arrive in Madrid. Fall semester students should NOT plan to leave the program prior to the first day of winter break and should schedule their return flights no earlier than December 22. Students are not permitted to reschedule exams in order to depart the Madrid WIP program prior to the dates that individual exams are set. Re-taking exams is not allowed.

**Spring semester:** the final exam schedule for both Reunidas and Complutense courses may not be available until after students arrive in Madrid. Students should NOT plan to leave the program prior to early June (unless updated final exam dates are available) and should schedule their return flights no earlier than June 5. Students are not permitted to reschedule exams in order to depart the Madrid WIP program prior to the dates that individual exams are set. Re-taking exams is not allowed.

## Pass/Fail Policies

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Pass/fail policies vary by school. It is the student's responsibility to be in contact with their home institution to inquire about the pass/fail policy, procedures, and deadlines. At the end of each semester, the Resident/Faculty Director sends all grade reports, with letter grades and course titles, to students' home institutions, each of which has its own system for reporting program courses and grades on its transcripts.

## Student Rights and Responsibilities

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All behavioral incidents that violate either the Madrid program's rules (i.e. arranged student apartments or homestay, Complutense, Reunidas, etc.) or the home institution's rights and responsibilities as addressed by that institution's code of conduct, must be documented and reported to the home institution's study abroad office which will decide on proper reporting procedures in order to protect the best interests of the students, the program staff and the institution.

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## Withdrawal from the Program

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Each university has different policies regarding complete withdrawal from the program. You MUST consult the WIP program administration and your home campus study abroad office before withdrawing from the program to learn what the implications are for your academic record.

## Libraries

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In general, public libraries in Madrid are not as conducive to study as their American counterparts. They are open usually until 8:00 or 9:00 pm, and offer longer hours during exam periods. In order to work in them you might have to acquire a membership card, which can be obtained with an ID and passport. Many public libraries offer Internet.

There is no central University of Madrid library, and the individual facultad libraries tend to be crowded, especially at exam time. There are several libraries near the WIP program office and the faculty building where most classes are held. The María Zambrano library, with plenty of room to study, and even an area to work on group projects, is across the street from the faculty building where WIP students have most of their classes.

In the main Geography and History library, there are some open stacks with a large selection of reference books for use in the library. When checking out books, you may be asked to fill out a request slip and turn it in, and an attendant will get the book for you from the deposit. Books are in great demand and can be checked out for only a week or two at the most.

In short, you must be ready to forget the comfort of central U.S. university libraries as you know them and adjust as European students do. This means making sufficient allowance in your budget for buying books. Nonetheless, total book costs in Spain are far less than those at U.S. universities. Spanish or history majors have a wonderful opportunity to begin a private collection of basic works through Madrid's many excellent bookstores. Each "school" in the university has its own bookstore where textbooks can be purchased (with student ID) for a 10% discount, and Madrid has hundreds of bookstores (librerías).

## Campus Virtual

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Many classes require students to open a Campus Virtual account where professors post the syllabus, class readings, projects, homework, and class information - similar to Canvas. In the event that your professor mentions Campus Virtual in class, you will need to activate your account through the Complutense website (you will receive instructions from the WIP office on how to do this) and ask your professor to add you to the class list by providing him/her with your Complutense email account, once activated. Many students have found that Campus Virtual is a very useful tool that helps them follow the course.

## Computer Usage

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There are university computers available for academic and investigative use. They may

be used to type papers and projects, as well as to perform searches on the internet while doing research projects. There are no printers in the computer room, so any work that you do must be saved on a USB flash drive and printed out on one of the copy machines in the building, at the student copy window, or in the WIP office.

Email is permitted, but internet use is limited by very strict guidelines that must be read upon arrival. Students are not allowed to chat, download, or play video games; nor view pages with sexually explicit content. If any of the usage rules are disobeyed, the computer lab will revoke your privileges for the remainder of the academic year. You will most likely have Wi-Fi in your apartment and the Complutense gives students access to the university Wi-Fi network once classes begin in September (or in February for spring semester students).

Students that own laptops should bring them to Madrid. A serious word of caution, however: laptops continue to be a luxury in Spain, especially Mac computers and all Apple products. They draw considerable attention from thieves and pick pockets in public. Their use should be limited to your apartment and buildings on campus, and great care should be taken while carrying them on your person. If it is obvious that you have a laptop on you, someone may try to take it from you if the opportunity presents itself. For that reason, do not ask a stranger to watch your belongings for you.

Many students use Skype on their laptops to keep in touch with friends and family. Usually you can use it for free with others who have it. You can also call home phones in the U.S. for much cheaper than calls made by cell phones. Whatsapp is the cell application most widely used in Europe, and you can make voice and video calls for free to friends and family in the U.S.

## Student Activities

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Although the University of Madrid is located in what is called the Ciudad Universitaria, it is not a campus in the American sense of the word, for it offers few organized student activities. Instead, the university is more like a commuter campus, and you will do little more there than attend classes, go to the library or the snack bar of the Facultad, or stop by the program office between classes. Most of the facultades do have active sports clubs where you can make friends and continue to play your favorite sports. Bring at least the basic clothing and gear. Past WIP students have joined student soccer, basketball, rugby and volleyball teams.

Volunteer opportunities afford students a unique opportunity to get to know aspects of Spanish culture that would otherwise be invisible and they provide a chance for you to use your language skills in practical ways while contributing something to Spanish society. Students have found these unique opportunities very meaningful in enriching their portfolio of life experiences.

You will find volunteer opportunities in Madrid through *Solidarios para el desarrollo* ([www.solidarios.org.es](http://www.solidarios.org.es)) at the University of Madrid or through one of many ONG's (*organizaciones no gubernamentales*). Information about these groups is available in the WIP program office. Most volunteer organizations require a minimum six-month commitment from students in order to participate, so students only in Madrid for one semester have a harder time finding volunteering opportunities, although WIP staff has

located several organizations offering shorter-term or one-time volunteering activities you can participate in. For bigger NGOs, once you are trained and can operate on your own there is little time left to actually do volunteering unless you start immediately upon arrival. For that reason, more and more organizations are asking for a commitment for the entire academic year. If you are interested in volunteering while you are in Madrid, you will need to inquire about volunteering opportunities immediately upon arrival in order to be considered. You can also take advantage of your neighborhood. Find a hospital, library, etc., where you can independently volunteer.

Travel agencies are located throughout the city, and many have great deals on flights or package trips throughout the year. TIVE, a national student union, runs a travel agency near the university campus (c/ Fernando el Católico, 88, metro: Moncloa). The TIVE office offers good student rates, but make reservations early for popular travel times. You should also check flyers posted around campus for trips organized by City Life Madrid and the Erasmus Student Network.

Erasmus students are European exchange students. There is an Erasmus student organization on campus called the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) that many students join in order to meet international students and participate in activities where they make Spanish friends. For more information, check out the ESN website: [www.esnucm.org](http://www.esnucm.org).

There have been few student strikes and demonstrations at Spanish universities in recent years, but, when they occur, it can be both politically and physically dangerous for you to be involved.

# Life in Madrid

## Housing

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Prior to arriving to Madrid, you will receive detailed information via email on the housing options available to you, and staff will assist you in the pre-registration and reservation process.

Essentially, you will choose between a homestay, an apartment specifically for WIP students, or an independent apartment option in which you can rent a room through a student housing agency with international and Spanish peers. Students will be responsible for paying the security deposit and first month's rent. The providers and agencies will work directly with you on how to do this.

\*\* Tulane students participating on the WIP REUNIDAS program are not permitted to opt out of designated program housing unless they are in possession of an official, qualifying housing accommodation through the Goldman Center, no exceptions.

Apartments:

There are two options for living in a student apartment:

WIP only students:

There is an apartment agency that works with students on the WIP program to house you in 3 or 4 bedroom apartmentes together. You will be able to request to live with certain roommates, and apartments will be assigned according to availability and student preferences. WIP staff will guide you through the initial process, and once you are assigned an apartment, you will deal directly with the agency to make the reservation and payments.

The properties are rented as a whole, with the rent split equally among the tenants, and each student is responsible for making their payments to the housing agency. Students interested in this option will receive information and instructions in a separate mailing.

The renting of a property comes with specific responsibilities and commitments. In order for this arrangement to be fair, once students commit to this type of living arrangement they are responsible for the payment of the entire semester.

Renting a room in a shared international apartment:

If you prefer the option of living with international and Spanish students, you will be given the contact information for the main student apartment agencies in Madrid. You can ask WIP staff for advice when choosing a room, but ultimately the decision and contract responsibilities will be yours.

The terms of the agreement vary by agency, but generally you are responsible for paying for the entire semester once you enter into a contract (the same applies for the WIP only apartments). The typical reservation fees are: one month's security deposit, first month's rent, and agency fee (varies by agency).

### Living at a Homestay:

For many years, the WIP program has worked closely with the housing provider Europa Plus and their señoras and families. The homestays are carefully selected and reviewed by WIP staff in Madrid, and students are assigned to them based on their specific needs and by paying as close attention as possible to personal preferences. This housing provider can arrange homestays for academic year and semester students. Students interested in this option will receive information in a separate mailing on how to contact Europa Plus for more details on how to make a reservation. If you choose this option, you will receive information and contact details in an email once the housing selection process has begun.

Home will be an apartment (piso) rather than a house, for almost all *Madrileños* live in buildings of six to eight floors. In most cases, your homestay will be a señora, usually a widow with or without children. In others, your homestay could be comprised of several different family members with or without children. In a Spanish home, you will be allowed independence but will have to adopt your homestay's daily schedule, especially meal times. The homestay arranged through Europa Plus includes two meals: a light, continental breakfast (coffee and toast) and a full dinner. You will not be allowed to use the kitchen to prepare meals, so you should plan on eating lunch at the university or grabbing a sandwich at the deli. Your clothes will also be washed for you.

The benefits of living in a homestay include gaining insights into Spanish culture and having the opportunity to speak Spanish every day, eat typical Spanish food, live in a comfortable home with a more family feel to it, and develop a relationship with family members. Such a relationship is built on mutual understanding and consideration. Students who are most successful in homestays observe the customs of not bringing friends of the opposite sex to the house, not staying out too late every night, call when they are going to be late for a meal, and are conscious of the use of resources like water and electricity.

This option is a cultural and linguistic exchange, and requires effort from both parties to communicate and make an effort to overcome cultural differences and misunderstandings. The homestay is a typical Spanish experience, but not a 5-star hotel, so it is important to have realistic expectations.

## Health Insurance

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Program fees paid by WIP students include a group health insurance policy that will cover a range of medical situations, including emergency medical evacuation. All students will be required to pay in cash immediately after all medical treatment

and then apply for reimbursement from the U.S. insurance company. In some cases, students can contact the group health insurance provider for their university to arrange for a guarantee of payment, and only be required to show your insurance card when you go in for the doctor's appointment. You will receive more information upon arrival.

## Medical Care

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Upon arrival, you will receive the WIP Madrid program manual. Inside there is a section on Medical Matters with the names and phone numbers of recommended doctors. The American Association of Programs in Spain (AAPS/APUNE) has negotiated reduced rates for its students with two well-known clinics; both have English-speaking general physicians and specialists. When hospitalization is required, all necessary medical services can be arranged. Similar arrangements can also be made for non-routine dental care and extractions. When you go to a clinic or physician, take along the necessary claim forms to be filled out for insurance reimbursement or consult the WIP Madrid program manual for the clinics that accept your group insurance without charge for the visit.

If you need a specialist while in Madrid for a chronic medical condition, let staff know prior to arrival so that they can assist you in finding an English-speaking specialist in Madrid. You should also check the list of recommended specialists that can be obtained from the group insurance provider for your home university.

If you regularly take a prescription medicine, you should bring a supply with you for the entire year or semester if possible. Spanish law prohibits prescription medicine to be shipped to Spain by mail, and will be confiscated in customs. (See the Shipping section for more details on items that cannot be shipped to Spain.) If necessary, a Spanish doctor can prescribe your medicine to you here provided that you have the main ingredients of the medicine along with a prescription and diagnosis from your U.S. doctor.

## Money and Banking

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The European Union monetary unit is the euro (€). The euro functions similarly to the U.S. dollar in that it is subdivided into 100 cents. There are eight euro coins denominated in 2 and 1 euros, then 50, 20, 10, 5, 2, and 1 cents. Each Euro coin has a common European face and a face designed by each country that can be used in every country. There are seven euro notes which are differently sized and colored, and come in denominations of 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10, and 5. The notes, unlike the coins, do not have national sides and are completely uniform. For more information about the euro, the European Union, and related topics, check the EU website: <http://europa.eu>.

**Work out a budget for the year or semester.** You should calculate how much money you can spend on a monthly basis during your year or semester abroad. This will help you, as you will know what your monthly limit is for rent, leisure, food, personal items, books, and travel.

**Bring a debit card and its four-digit PIN.** With it you can withdraw funds directly from your U.S. account at many ATM machines in Madrid and throughout Europe at

very favorable exchange rates. Be sure to check with your bank to see if you need an international PIN. European keypads do not have letters, so know your 4-digit PIN.

**Important Note:** Prior to your departure from the U.S., check on the ATM fees that your home bank will charge you abroad. Often they charge a surcharge and commission every time you take money out. You also must alert your bank of the dates you will be studying abroad. Otherwise, they may cancel your card once they receive international charges thinking that it has been stolen or is being used fraudulently. Be sure you are able to access enough money to pay your security deposit, first month's rent, transportation fares, and meals for this initial time.

Visa and MasterCard are accepted for purchases and services, and can also be used to obtain cash advances but at a much higher rate than using a debit card. Students have not been able to use American Express and Diner's Club, since those cards are not widely accepted in Europe. Charges are billed to your account in the U.S. Visa is the most widely accepted bank card in Western Europe. Before leaving for Spain, you must contact your credit card company and give them the dates that you will be out of the U.S. and notify them that you will be using your credit card while you are there. That way they will accept international charges on your card without suspecting that it may have been stolen and is being used fraudulently.

**Reloadable pre-paid credit/debit cards:** A few students have used products that work as pre-paid reloadable credit cards or debit cards. They are not linked to any bank account, and students or their families can reload the cards (there are many plans and balances to choose from). These cards reportedly can be used in stores and cash machines. One student strongly recommends the company Travelex that offers the "multi-currency cash passport currency card" that she has used for the semester with ease. Students from other American universities in Spain have used a MasterCard product, called "Spark MasterCard". Both of these options can be found online.

There are a few Spanish banks that allow foreign students to open an account with minimal maintenance fees. However, unless opening an account is something you have to do, staff recommends that you discuss with your bank the use of your account (through debit and credit cards) since wire transferring of money into an international account can be very costly and take up to 10 days.

About traveler's checks. Traveler's checks are not used in Spain or the rest of Europe for purchases and are extremely difficult to cash, unless you open up a Spanish bank account and deposit them into that (and even then large commissions apply).

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Third-party checks (e.g. financial aid and personal checks from relatives back home) are non-negotiable in Spain! Arrange to have these funds deposited to your account in the U.S. and then access the funds in Spain via one of the means mentioned above. Money orders from the U.S. are not accepted. However, there are several Western Union offices in Madrid that can be used as long as the sender gives you a tracking number. You will receive information in your welcome materials in Madrid about this, as well as about other options of accessing money.

## Telephones

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Having a cell phone (móvil) is a basic necessity in Madrid. This is not only for you to contact friends and family, but also so that WIP staff can contact you in any type of security emergency. You will need to have a Spanish number in order for staff to



contact you and for Spanish friends to call you.

A few students have tried using American phone operator plans on their American cell phones in Spain and have had very mixed results. The plans promise a cheap rate for phone use in Spain (both making and receiving calls), but the reality is quite different. Despite assurances to the contrary, for those calling you, Spanish cell phones are really charged a higher rate because of the international area code. It is costly for others to call you, and therefore, they don't. Students who have tried this have all ended up purchasing a Spanish cell phone, (or arranging for their U.S. phone to be unlocked and carry two SIM cards) .

Most students use cell phones, and the most practical option for you is to "unlock" your U.S. cell phone by calling your service provider, or bringing an already unlocked phone with you and purchasing a Spanish SIM card and data plan here through a Spanish operator. You will receive information in a separate mailing about purchasing a SIM card and a calling/ data package from a provider, You2Call, that has worked with our students for over a decade, and can compare these prices to other operators. You can arrange to have your SIM card waiting for you upon your arrival to Madrid.

There are five main phone operators with different data plans:

- You2Call: <https://www.you2call.com/>
- Orange: <https://en.orange.es/>
- Yoigo: [www.yoigo.com](http://www.yoigo.com)
- Vodafone: [www.vodafone.es/particulares](http://www.vodafone.es/particulares)
- Movistar: <https://www.movistar.es/>

Students usually use the WhatsApp messaging application here (accessed through a data plan or Wi-Fi) and are sure to have a cheap rate per minute for calls. They also tend to use Skype, Facebook, iMessenger, FaceTime, GroupMe, or WhatsApp for communicating with family in the U.S.

## Public Transportation

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You will save a lot on metro (subway) and bus transportation with a combination bus and metro transportation card, called the Tarjeta de Transporte, which is a laminated ID card that you can charge for 30-day periods.

Your study abroad office will ask you to submit a digital ID photo and a very clear scanned copy of the passport page that has your name, personal information, and signature on it. The passport must be signed before you scan it (it is only considered valid once it is signed). The quality of the scan must allow for it to be perfectly legible when printed. If you submit the materials promptly, the Madrid staff can arrange for a transportation pass to be ready for you upon arrival, meaning you can immediately have unlimited access for 30 days to the subway and bus, and then easily recharge it every 30 days. This is the most economical mode of transport in the city. If you do not



**Savvy Traveler Tips**

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Before traveling too far, check out these sights and activities in Madrid:

- Basílica de San Francisco el Grande
- Casa de América
- Centro de Arte Reina Sofía
- Jardín Botánico
- Museo Arqueológico
- Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza
- Museo del Ejército
- Museo del Prado
- Palacio Real
- Parque del Retiro
- Plaza Mayor
- Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial
- San Nicolás de las Servitas

submit these items, you will need to make an appointment to go to the transportation authorities to apply for this pass and then return four days later to pick it up.

## Volunteerism

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Program participants have told us that volunteering in local social agencies helped them become better integrated into the culture. Volunteering requires a serious commitment, and most organizations will only accept students who make a commitment to service for the entire school year. The WIP program has contact information for the main NGOs and student volunteering organizations of interest. Although it may be challenging to find the right situation and get involved, you will find these opportunities rewarding in the end. Volunteering is an opportunity to gain insight on many cultural aspects that you otherwise would not be exposed to, and work towards community-driven goals with Spaniards your age.

A number of students have also found *intercambios* (language partners) a useful way to improve their language skills. The program organizes an *intercambio* program that pairs interested students with Spanish students at the Complutense. Many later comment that it was through these contacts that they made their closest Spanish friends and learned the most about Spanish culture. Students who spend the year only with other program participants regret leaving Madrid without getting to know the city and its inhabitants.

## Packing

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Pack light! Closet space in Spain will be limited, and there are plenty of affordable and fun clothing stores where you can purchase some of the styles that your Spanish peers are wearing. The Madrid winter is wet and cold. Indoor heating is often inadequate, so bring warm, lightweight clothing you can wear in layers. The effect should be casual and comfortable, but not sloppy. You can purchase almost any item of clothing in Spain, although some are more expensive there than in the U.S.

Spanish students dress much like their peers on U.S. campuses, except that they do not wear sweatshirts, sweatpants, pajamas, or baseball hats to class; they dress slightly more fashionably. Otherwise, plan on dressing in the same style comfortable for you in the U.S. One semi-formal outfit is recommended for special occasions like dining out in a nice restaurant.

### Packing Suggestions

- Clothing that is easily washed and drip-dried (Dryers are NOT common in apartments.)
- Warm winter coat, winter boots, rain coat, gloves, scarf, travel umbrella
- Sports clothes for the activities you enjoy
- Sturdy shoes (You'll do lots of walking.)
- Slippers (or indoor shoes), robe
- Swim suit
- Two bath towels, two washcloths
- Toiletries (only if you are particular about American brands, or prefer antiperspirant-deodorant to more basic deodorant found in Spain)

- Your laptop and a USB flash drive (essential for printing)
- An adaptor plug for Spanish outlets for your laptop, phone chargers (providing that they are set up to convert to the 220 voltage). *\*See note on electrical appliances under section of what NOT to pack.*
- Camera
- Journal or diary
- Addresses and photos of family and friends back home
- Small items you can use for gifts
- Money belt or money neck pouch
- Locks for luggage and backpack
- Thermometer and remedies for colds and minor intestinal disorders
- Latex condoms and other birth control supplies
- Copies of prescriptions for eyeglasses and contact lenses (extras, if possible)
- Prescriptions for medications written clearly in generic (not brand name) terms, with the chemical composition clearly written

**Computers:** You will find word processing, email, and printing facilities accessible throughout Madrid at reasonable hourly rates, but you should bring a laptop computer if you have one. Spain is primarily a PC country with few Apple computers, so Apple users should know how to convert your documents for printing on a PC. Be certain that any computer is already set up to run on 220 current (most are). Then all you will need is the adapter plug that fits into Spanish wall sockets (available in Spain).

**Do not mail your laptop.** If you do, you may have to pay a duty on their commercial value, which is high. Instead, bring the laptop with you on the plane. Bring a USB flash drive for saving and printing your documents. The computer room does not offer printing services, and the printing window at the Facultad does not allow you to access your email to print.

**\*Do not pack:**

**Bedding or housewares. In Spain, bed linens are provided in most of the housing options. You will need to pay for them in a student apartment, but they are purchased for you beforehand because of the varying sizes of beds (completely different from beds in the U.S. You may purchase them in department stores when necessary. There are several IKEAs in Madrid that you can get to on the subway.**

**Electrical appliances. The U.S. operates on 110-volt alternating current (AC), whereas Spain (and much of the rest of the world) runs on 220-volt AC. As a result, most U.S. electrical items do not work in Spain because the motor runs twice as fast as it is designed to do and is soon burned out or damaged. So do not bring hair dryers, curling irons, straighteners, etc because they will short-circuit.**

## Shipping

**Be sure to share this information with parents or others who may send you a package.**

If you must ship items to Spain, address packages to the program office and time their arrival for after you are in Madrid. The U.S. Embassy in Madrid does not recommend

receiving packages because of the numerous problems they have been alerted to by Americans about the costly and unreliable postal system. There is no guarantee you will receive your package. Packages mailed to the program are not always delivered directly to the WIP office. Instead, the postal service delivers a notification, and the package is held at the post office. If the package arrives in August or December when the office is closed, no one will pick it up and it will be returned to the United States.

Address packages to yourself in care of the WIP office. Use the full and complete address, including postal code. Limit yourself to sturdy cardboard boxes. There are many regulations about what types of items you may send to Spain. Check with your local post office about dimensions, prices, and import regulations.

**Prescription medicine:** According to Spanish law, you may NOT have prescription drugs sent to you from the U.S. You must bring a supply with you for the entire semester, or go to a Spanish doctor to have the equivalent prescription (if available) prescribed to you in Spain. WIP staff can assist you with this. You must therefore know the main ingredients of any prescription drug you are taking in its generic name terms, since brand names are sometimes very different in Spain from their U.S. equivalent. Talk to your doctor before departing for Spain.

**Filling out the customs form:** For customs purposes, the sender of any package sent to you will have to fill out a "green sticker" identifying the contents of the package. **WARNING:** The person sending you the package will have to put an estimated value on the sticker. This is not for insurance purposes, but is considered the "commercial" value of the contents. Consequently, if the price is over a certain amount, you will be liable for customs duty here and may have to pay a tax to pick up your package. Therefore, be sure the value is less than \$20. Under "content" on the green slip write, "No commercial value" and "used items for personal use" to explain the content of snacks and other things friends and family send you. This makes it clear that you are not importing merchandise and may help avoid paying an import tax. If the package contains a valuable item or document which must be sent, register it and only ship items with a low value.

**Taxable items:** Cell phones, computers and their components (cables, chargers, etc.), CDs, DVDs, video games, cameras, and all other electronics are almost always stopped at customs and taxed according to Spanish law. The minimum tax is 21% of the estimated value of the item(s). Other duties and handling surcharges are also applied. Packages with a declared value over \$20 will most likely be stopped and taxed.

**Sending snacks from the U.S.:** Many times, friends and family spend a lot of money shipping snacks to Spain, and unfortunately, Spanish customs lately has been stopping them. Many things not allowed: homemade cookies, beef jerky or any other meat product, vitamins and other health supplements, and the list is growing as imports become more restricted. There are several American food stores in Madrid called Taste of America where you can purchase the snacks you love and miss. It is more costly than in the U.S., but in the long run saves you money and headaches since recovering a package from customs is extremely expensive and you may find half of the contents of your package missing and many others opened and inspected.

## Pre-departure Reading

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Before studying abroad, you should read about the history and culture of Spain. This not only will prepare you for the many cultural differences, but it will also give you an

advantage for making Spanish friends. Most Spaniards enjoy talking about international politics and refer to Spanish history often as well. You might want to start listening to Spanish news podcasts in order to stay informed. Also, start listening to/reading news catering to U.S. foreign policy. Nothing horrifies Spaniards more than the stereotypical foreigner that knows little about other countries or global current affairs, especially when Spain is involved in them. Spain is a complex country with a fascinating history that leaves no Spaniard indifferent. Such distant events as the Spanish Civil War and the Franco Regime still produce animated debate and very passionate viewpoints.

You will find that the more you know about Spaniards and Spain before arrival, the easier it will be to make friends and express yourself well in informal conversations.

It is strongly recommended that you read Spanish newspapers before arrival to become familiar with current issues. El País can be accessed at [www.elpais.com](http://www.elpais.com) and El Mundo at [www.elmundo.es](http://www.elmundo.es). Another useful website is [www.timeout.com/madrid](http://www.timeout.com/madrid), a city guide (in English) that gives you an idea of what to expect once you arrive. Wikipedia is another favorite.

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## Safety in Madrid

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Madrid is a big city, and you should take the same common sense security precautions

there that you would in Chicago or New York. Traffic is very intense throughout the city and drivers quite unpredictable. Do not cross the street only based on the pedestrian crosswalk indicators. You should additionally look both ways and proceed with caution.

During your orientation week in Spain you will be advised about the kind of street-wise behavior that will help protect you from petty crime. **A handful of program participants last year were victims of a petty crime incident.** Pickpocketing is the most common security issue you will face. To combat it, avoid carrying your passport or other important documents when you go out; instead, make a photocopy to keep with you at all times. Do not carry large sums of money on you, and keep an eye on your backpack, purse, and cell phone AT ALL TIMES, particularly in bars, discos, and cyber cafes. **Men should keep wallets in either shirt or front pants pocket and when women carry a purse we recommend a small one with the opening turned inward, on a strap across your body. When out at night, carry valuables in a money belt or decoy purse.**

**Keep identification on you at all times, even when participating in sports, exercise or other leisure pastimes.**

An additional safety precaution necessary in Madrid is paying close attention to possible gas fumes from a malfunctioning *calentador* (water heater) in your home or apartment. If the apparatus is located in the bathroom, you might want to keep the window open while you're using it, just in case of a malfunction that could create carbon monoxide.

## Vacation Travel

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### Trains

For travel within Spain, investigate Spanish national rail passes or buy individual tickets from town to town. For travel outside Spain, check out Eurail passes, which permit travel throughout Western Europe for various periods at reduced cost. Eurail passes must be purchased in the U.S. InterRail passes may be purchased by academic year students who can show proof of official legal residence in Spain of six months (by showing their student residency cards).

### Rental Cars

Car rental fees in Europe are expensive, and gasoline costs considerably more (FOUR times more) than in the U.S. To rent a car from most companies, you must be 23 years old and have a major credit card. International driving permits are available in the United States through AAA.

### Bicycles

Madrid is not an entirely bicycle-friendly city quite yet, but WIP students have enjoyed rewarding cycling experiences in more rural areas of Spain. The city is now starting an initiative in which bicycles can be rented throughout the city, but extreme care must be taken since there are many accidents because of careless car drivers unaccustomed to "watching" for bikes. Various Madrid cycling clubs offer planned regional excursions. Special care must be taken in route planning and safety. Bicycles can be rented for the day or by the hour in Madrid, and the tourism office has organized several guided bike tours of the city.

## Planes

Commercial air travel within Europe is expensive; but there are many low cost operators with flights to most major European cities. You must be careful to read the fine print since many charge for baggage, and additional fees apply when you don't have your ticket printed out beforehand, etc. The most popular operators are Ryanair and easyJet. There are also numerous student trips organized with interesting destinations, particularly at vacation time, at bargain prices. Check with the student travel bureaus in Madrid (TIVE, CityLife, Madrid, and the Erasmus Student Network) for details.

## Youth Hostels

Youth hostels provide clean, inexpensive, albeit spartan accommodations throughout Western Europe. You must have a hostel card to spend the night at official Hosteling International member hostels. You may apply for a hostel card online at [www.hiusa.org](http://www.hiusa.org). Membership can also be purchased in Spain or at any youth hostel overseas. Call ahead for reservations in big cities or on weekends.

# Appendix A

Familiarize yourself now with the vocabulary used here so that your housing search goes smoothly.

## Housing Vocabulary

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### A

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a/a- aire acondicionado (air conditioning)  
*absténganse agencias* - agencies abstain from calling  
*abstenerse estudiantes* - no students  
*acogedora* - cozy  
*a convenir* - negotiable  
*acristaladas* - terrace with glass windows  
*a estrenar* - brand new  
*agua caliente central* - hot central water  
*alcoba* - bedroom  
*alojamiento* - lodging  
*alquiler de pisos y apartamentos* - renting of apartments  
*ambiente familiar* - family atmosphere  
*amueblado* - furnished  
*apartamento* - apartment  
*a partir* - after (for calling purposes)  
*apto.* - apartment  
*armario* - closet (*armario empotrado* - built-in closet)  
*aseo* - bathroom  
*ascensor* - elevator  
*aval* - references needed, bank guarantee

## B

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*bajo* - ground floor  
*balcón* - balcony  
*bombona*- butane gas tank  
*brasero* - electric heater under table  
*buhardilla* - attic  
*butano* - butane gas

## C

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*calefacción central* - central heat  
*calefactor*- space heater  
*calentador*- water heater  
*c/c* - calefacción central  
*casa particular* - private home  
*céntrico* - located in or near center  
*cocina* - kitchen  
*cocina americana* - kitchenette  
*cómodo* - comfortable  
*compartida/o* - shared  
*comunidad* - sum paid by residents of a building to cover "community" expenses (trash pick-up, portero, etc.)  
*conserje* - doorman/ caretaker  
*contestador* - answering machine

## D

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*derecho a cocina* - kitchen privileges  
*derecho a todo* - priviledges to everything  
*doble ventana* - double windows (2 panels)  
*dormitorio* - bedroom  
*dueño* - owner

## E

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*electrodomésticos* - stove, refrigerator, washing machine  
*enseña portero* - doorman shows the apartment  
"que entienda"- LGBT  
*estudio* - studio apartment  
*exterior* - a room who's window faces the street  
*ext.* - exterior



*estufa butano* - heater run by butane

## F

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*fianza* – security deposit

*formal* - mature, responsible

*frigorífico* - refrigerator

*funcionario* - public employee

*fumador* - smoker

## G

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*gas butano* - butane gas

*gas natural* - natural gas

*gastos* - utilities

*gastos de comunidad* - sum paid by residents of a building to cover "community" expenses (trash pick up, portero)

## I

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*inquilino* - tenant

*interior* - room whose window does not face the outside (could be dark)

*int.* - interior

*indv.* - individual

## L

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*lavadora* - washing machine

*lavaplatos* - dishwasher

*lavavajillas* – dishwasher

*liberal* - do not look into announcements that ask for a "chico/a liberal" (it translates roughly as "loose morals")

*limpieza* - cleaning

*lujo* - luxury

*luminosa/o* - well-lighted

## M

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*media pensión* - some meals included

*mensualidad* - monthly payment

*microondas* - microwave oven

*moqueta* - wall to wall carpeting

## N

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*nevera* - refrigerator

*nómina* - proof of employment in Spain (paycheck)

*no fumador* - non smoker

## O

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*opositores* - people preparing exams to be civil servants

## P

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*parabólica* - TV satellite

*particular* - private owner

*parquet* - wood floors

*pensión completa* - three meals a day provided

*piso* - apartment

*piso amplio* - spacious apartment

*piso a estrenar* - brand-new apartment

*planchado de ropa* - ironing

*plaza* - room, space

*polideportivo* - sports complex

*portero* - doorman

*portero automático* - buzzer

*propano* - propane

*precio a convenir* - price negotiable

*puerta blindada* - security door

## R

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*radiador* - radiator

*recién pintado* - recently painted

*referencias (con)* - personal references needed

*reformado* - reformed (renovated)

*responsable* - mature people

*ropa de cama/casa* - sheets, blankets

## S

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*salón/salón comedor* - living room

*señal* - a token payment or deposit

*soleada/o* - sunny

*sólo dormir* - a room and access to the bathroom, no kitchen or living room, for people who work long hours and don't spend much

time at home. Not for students.

*solvente* - proof of financial solvency (ability to pay)

*sótano* - basement apartment

## **T**

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*terrace* - terrace

*termo* - water heater

## **U**

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*urbanización (urb.)* - in the suburbs (far)

## **V**

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*vacío/sin muebles* - unfurnished

*vajilla* - kitchen goods

*ventiladas* - breezy (well-ventilated)

## **W**

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w.c. - bathroom