

Personal Report

University of Valencia, winter semester 2018/19, 1 Semester International Business Administration, Fachbereich 3, Frankfurt

Language

Which language did you use? How did you communicate with your fellow students?

All my lectures were in English. Therefore, I used mainly English in university. Most of the Erasmus students were from lots of different countries, so we normally spoke English. With some friends and within the "normal life" I spoke a lot of Spanish to improve it.

Accommodation

Did the host university arrange for accommodation?

No, unfortunately not.

How high were your overall monthly costs for accommodation (in Euro)?

275€

How would you describe the quality of your accommodation?

Good.

How well was the accommodation situated? How long did it take you on average to reach the partner university (in minutes)?

My flat was situated in the middle between the university, the beach and the city and was very close to a metro station and a bicycle station, so it was easy to get everywhere. To the campus of economics (Tarongers) it took 5 minutes with the bike or 15 minutes by walking.

Which web sites, forums, facebookpages, contacts, etc. can you recommend for looking for accommodation?

I booked my room with the agency "Erasmus Life", which can be found via this link: <http://www.erasmus-valencia.com/>
the rooms have good prices, are normally good equipped and the office is normally good reachable. In addition, when renting a flat with them, you receive a membership card that provides discounts for all the trips that are offered during the semester.

There are also some Facebook pages, where people post rooms daily.

Where have you been accommodated (name of dormitory, location, part of town, etc.)? And how would you describe the surroundings of your accommodation (shopping facilities, distance to the city center, nightlife, etc.?)

The flat was in Ayora, which was situated close to the metro station "Amistat". It is very close to Blasco Ibanez, where a lot of restaurants, bars and clubs are located.

By metro, it took 5 minutes to be in the city centre (with the bike approximately 20 minutes). To get to the beach, I normally took the bike for 20 minutes. The flat was also very close to the big Turia parc, which is a perfect place to be if the weather is good (which is normally the case) - you can go running or biking, just relax or go for a walk. It was approximately 15 minutes by walking.

In general, everything was quite close because the city is not too big. With a Valenbisi (the bike renting system in Valencia) you can get everywhere really quick.

Arrival at the Partner University and Orientation

Which is the best arrival time?

I arrived in the beginning of September. Because I already rented my room before, I could immediately live in my flat and was not forced to search for a room in the beginning. The lectures started in the middle of September, so I could use the first two weeks to get to know the city and to go the beach.

In case you need to search for a flat, you should arrive a little earlier. In addition, there are intensive language courses that start earlier.

How did you organize your arrival? Was the extent of the orientation program sufficient? What activities can you recommend? Were all important questions answered? What did you have to find out yourself? How fast were you able to get in contact with the domestic students? How were the services for exchange students?

When I arrived in September, I immediately got my keys and could live in the flat, which was really relaxed. My flatmates arrived within the next days and as we made friends quickly, we went on trips together.

I had to register for the orientation program "Valencian Workshops" beforehand because the number of students was limited. The workshop was really nice because you could immediately get to know a lot of new people and network. Moreover, we got information on what to do and where to go in the city. The workshop was for three days for two hours each day and after it, we always went together to a bar.

In the week before the official start, we had an information meeting in the faculty, where we received our timetables, and on the first day there was a general welcome meeting. In the beginning, it was a bit confusing with the course changes and organizational stuff, but the local office normally helped us.

Living Abroad

Compared to Frankfurt, how high was the cost of living abroad?

Lower, it costs about 75%

What additional expenses did you have during your semester abroad? How far were you able to travel with your semester ticket? How was your student life off-campus? How were the mensas/ student cafeterias? What types of meals were served? How much did the meals cost? How were the libraries? Was their use free? Did the university provide computer workplaces/ computer pools? Was Wi-Fi available on-campus? Were you able to use study rooms? Were you able to rent separate rooms for studying? Did the university provide a sports program? Was this free of charge?

I bought a ticket for the Valenbisi, which is a local bike renting system. I had to pay 30 € for a whole year and could then rent a bike for 30 minutes for free. You can drop them everywhere all over the city and normally there are always bikes available. As there are everywhere bike lanes, it is very recommendable! In addition, I used the metro a lot, where I bought a "Bonometro" - these are 10 single trips at a discounted price. If you buy every trip individually, it is much more expensive.

When I went for lunch during the break at university, we normally went to the restaurants close to the university. They offer menus for 10 €, which was always worth it and was much better than the Mensa in the university.

I didn't visit the library, but the opening hours during the exam periods were extended and it seemed quite big and had study rooms. Wi-Fi was available all over the campus for free. The sport program of the university was broad and costed 25€ per semester, I think.

Studying at the Host University

How would you describe the academic standard of classes compared to Frankfurt?

Similar to Frankfurt.

Did you experience any difference in teaching methods/ class structure? Which were the difference regarding your expectations and your experiences at the partner university? What surprised you, what should newly arriving students know? How were the student services? Was the fact, that you were an exchange student taken into account (by professors or other staff)? If so, how? How were difficulties, which you or other exchange students may have met, handled by the partner university?

The whole concept in the university was different. Every lecture was separated in a theoretical and a practical class. The handling of the practical classes was every time different: in some we had compulsory attendance, in others we had to hand in papers every week, sometimes we had to do group works.

The classes consisted in the theory of the whole group (approx. 80 people), whereas we were separated in two groups in the practical classes. In some classes it felt a lot more like in school and less like a university because of the frontal teaching methods and all the group work we had to participate in.

I did not expect all the group work and the ongoing evaluation during the semester was very different from Frankfurt. In every course the final exam did count a different % of the final grade. In general: You have to pass theory and practice, so it is advisable to check what to do in each lecture.

The professors did not differentiate between Erasmus students and Spanish ones.

Final Remarks

What should future exchange students know/ do/ avoid? How would you overall rate your exchange experience? In what ways have you benefitted academically, personally, linguistically for your future career?

I would recommend trying to enjoy every single day during the stay abroad because time goes by too quickly. There are lots of possibilities to take part in organized trips or long weekends to organize own trips to discover the country and region.

For me, the semester in Valencia was perfect and I would always do it again - the experiences and memories that you make and all the international people that you meet during the time are really worth it! I could learn a lot about myself and develop my language as well as personal skills.