

## Personal Report

### Complutense University of Madrid, SoSe 2022, 1 Semester FB 4 – Social Work - Bachelor

#### Language

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

The classes were held in Spanish and English. It was sometimes difficult to follow the conversation, but the professors made an effort to convey the material well to me. I was able to communicate and work in groups with my fellow students.

##### **How well were you able to follow classes linguistically at the partner institution? Did the partner university provide language classes?**

I could follow classes well. The partner university provided a crash language course.

#### Accommodation

##### **Did the host university arrange for accommodation? How would you describe the quality of your accommodation?**

No, they did not provide accommodations.

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

550€

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

My flat was in the center of Madrid so it was easy to get around. The university was located outside of the city which is why it took around 45 minutes to get there, but for other activities it was very useful to live in the center.

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

idealista, facebook

##### **Where have you been accommodated (name of dormitory, location, part of town, etc.)?**

I lived in the neighbourhood called Chueca. It is a very good location close to supermarkets, shopping streets, parks, bars and clubs. I was almost always able to walk everywhere. It is also a very young and liberal neighbourhood.

## **Arrival at the Partner University and Orientation**

### **Which is the best arrival time?**

It depends if you are still looking for an apartment or not. I think it would make sense to arrive a week or two before classes start.

### **How did you organize your arrival? 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?**

I organized my arrival a little earlier because I had to look for a room. In the beginning of the semester the university helped us to find our way around the uni. Even when we had questions about courses, we always found an answer in the international office. They were very nice and supportive.

## **Living Abroad**

### **Compared to Frankfurt, how high was the cost of living abroad? What additional expenses did you have during your semester abroad?**

It was similar to Frankfurt. In order to save money, I can recommend going to Lidl or Dia for grocery shopping.

### **How far were you able to travel with your semester ticket? How were the libraries? Was their use free? Did the university provide computer workplaces/ computer pools? Was Wi-Fi available on-campus? Did the university provide a sports program? Was this free of charge?**

I was not able to take much time off at the beginning of the semester because I still had to complete exams from the previous semester, as the winter semester in Frankfurt overlapped with the summer semester in Spain. However, it was possible to travel more at a later time. There were also a lot of culture and leisure activities in the city. Which sometimes were not so easy to find. I did aerial acrobatics twice a week which was quite expensive but very enriching. In addition, people up to 26 can go to museums for free and with the train ticket still explore the surroundings of Madrid. Student life was somewhat inactive because of covid. Most students came to the university and then went home directly after class. In the cafeteria there was a hot meal but it was difficult for vegetarians. But you could take food from home and heat it up there. There was also an Aldi nearby in case you didn't have anything with you. I often used the library for studying.

## **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?**

The system at my host university was very school-like. The workload during the semester was much higher than in Frankfurt, but at the end of the semester it was not quite as stressful. There was a lot of group work. I had good experiences with professors as well as bad ones. The English courses I had were less demanding than the Spanish ones. However, most professors were very accommodating and also repeated things. Also fellow students were always very friendly. Unfortunately, I was not so satisfied with the content of the lectures. In some cases, topics were viewed very one-sidedly and not very critically, or were only touched on superficially. The exams were graded fairly and the professors always communicated expectations to the students very transparently. It was also no problem to change courses after a few weeks. At the beginning I looked at different modules and in the end I decided on four courses.

## **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?**

On the whole, I had a good time. The university took good care of Erasmus students and it was exciting to get to know a new university. I didn't really get much out of it academically, but I did make progress in terms of language. It was also enriching to meet other people from the Erasmus program and to make friends. I would recommend future Erasmus students to also get involved in extracurricular activities to make contacts with locals, because that is not always that easy at the university. Madrid is also a very lively city, which is why there is always something to do. I was not aware at the beginning how expensive Madrid is. Therefore, I would also emphasize to adjust to high rents. Furthermore, it is an advantage to live in the city center and not at the university. My campus was in Somosaguas where there was a good train and bus connection but it was not so easy to get there in the evening because the metro does not run at night. Most students therefore live in the city center.

The friendships I have made have influenced me positively. I had people in my environment who inspired me to be brave and to take a creative path. Each of these people brought their own story, which is why I was confronted with new topics and tempted me to be more critical of society. I also had a very good experience in the apartment I have lived. I lived with 8 other people who all contributed to my positive experience.