

Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg
ERASMUS Report 2016/17

Personal Information	
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Host university:	University of Valencia
Host country:	Spain
Study programme at host university:	Economics
Duration in semester (WS, SS or whole year):	SS
May the report be published?	(Delete what is NOT applicable) YES
If yes, may name and e-mail be published?	(Delete what is NOT applicable) YES to both

1. Preparation (organization, application at the host university)

During the international day at WiSo I received some basic information about exchange programs available for the FAU students abroad. There was a separate info point for Erasmus mobility, where I could take a list indicating all possible destinations, among which I have chosen two countries, namely Spain (Valencia and Madrid) as a first option and Italy (Milano) as a secondary one. Later on I have applied to the chairs responsible for the agreements with host Universities in abovementioned countries. After the interview regarding the University of Valencia, I have eventually made a decision in its favor. Since there already is an Erasmus agreement between the University of Valencia and FAU, the organizational process was highly standardized and simple. I have attended the information session for all the outgoing students at WiSo and an additional one in Erlangen specifically for those going to Valencia. The latter was conducted by a student representative from the Polytechnic University of Valencia, who has provided us with all the necessary information regarding the educational process in Spain, cultural and linguistic aspects, accommodation and transportation options etc. Thus, I already had a general understanding of the main steps I had to undertake upon my arrival.

I was supposed to arrive to Valencia on 26th of January for the welcoming day at the University. However, due to personal circumstances I was only able to come on 1st of February. Thus, I had to go to the central office of the University of Valencia to sign my Arrival sheet individually. The same day I went to the international office of the economic department to register for the courses. Within the following two weeks I had to pay a fee for the student card and take a photo at the Santander Bank office.

2. Arrival / Visa (flight, train)

There are different ways to get to Valencia, but, since it has a big airport right in the city, flying is the easiest and fastest option. I decided to fly with Eurowings (eurowings.com) from Nuremberg to Valencia through Dusseldorf and I paid around 120 euros for that. Depending on the dates and financial opportunities such other low-cost airlines as vueling, ryanair etc are available. Due to the restrictions on the luggage size and weight I also had to send part of my belongings by post (circa 30 euros for 20 kilos).

3. Accommodation (student residence hall, private apartment)

The student dormitories in Spain are quite expensive (from 540 up to 800 euros per month), thus, most of the students stay in shared flats that can be found only through facebook groups, with a help of real estate and Erasmus agencies or personally upon the arrival. The price differs depending on the district, size and condition of the room etc. The average in the popular student areas (Blasco Ibañez, Mestalla) is about 230-300 euros for a room. If you search for the accommodation through an agency you'll have to pay around 100 euros for the service. Many students also come several days in advance in order to search for the accommodation on the spot. Make sure you sign a proper contract and keep the copy of it till the end of your stay.

4. Study at the host university (Courses / Language Courses / Timetable)

There were no restrictions on the amount of credits from FAU, so it was my own decision how many subjects to take. Unfortunately, some of the subjects I had chosen were unavailable due to the lack of places or timetable overlapping. Eventually, I registered for 4 courses, all in Spanish language in order to have more practice and enrich my professional vocabulary. I took customer behavior, strategic management of human resources, business strategies and business Spanish. Thus, I had my classes from Tuesday to Thursday from 12.30 p.m. till the late afternoon (7-9 p.m.), all in the same building of the economic department.

5. Support service at the host university (International Office, Department)

The International Office was working only during the first part of the day till 1 p.m. The staff was really helpful and nice and most were able to speak English apart from Spanish. Due to a huge number of international students, the registration process took some time as well as other organizational issues. The economic department of UV is called Tarongers department and is pretty well located, having the bus, tram and city bicycle stops right nearby. Also several Erasmus agencies are allocated inside of the department and provide various services aimed for international students.

6. Facilities at the host university (library, computer pool, etc.)

The economic department of UV has a big library with computer pools and free Internet connection available for students. Also a variety of dictionaries is available. During the exams period the library reading and group spaces are pretty busy, but within the given timeframe the studying part is open during the night hours.

7. Spare time activities (sight seeking, bank, mobile phone, jobs)

Valencia is a very diverse city. In the old part of the center a lot of historical buildings and constructions can be found. There is huge park called Turia that stretches all through the city. The other part of center is covered with shopping malls and restaurants. On contrast, it also have an innovative and modernly designed City of Arts and Science which can be reached by bicycle or cab. They host different cultural

and technological exhibitions and events. There's also a world famous Aquarium right next to the city of Arts. The seashore has a lot of bars and local restaurants that totally represent Valencian food specialties. Another district worth visiting is called Cabañal, which is, however, quite turbulent and can be a bit dangerous at night due to the lifestyle locals, which mostly come from Latin America and part of them is staying illegally. In general, there is plenty of interesting stuff to explore in Valencia. Erasmus organizations also organize sightseeing tours and trips to the close surroundings as well as outside of Valencia. I traveled to Andalusia with Happy Erasmus and enjoyed it pretty much.

The most popular Bank in Valencia is called Santander and some of the foreign students had accounts there in order to receive the Erasmus scholarship on the local card. However, I have used the Deutsche Bank and Sparkasse card everywhere and worked perfectly.

Most of the students also buy local phone cards. There is a variety available at the Erasmus offices and small tobacco shops. You would generally spend around 12-15 euros per month for the phone with internet and some free minutes of calls.

There is an opportunity to get a part time job at one of Erasmus organizations, however I haven't checked on that. It basically makes more sense for people who stay for the whole year. The job offers are regularly published online in Erasmus Facebook groups and companies' websites.

8. Finances (cost of living, grant)

The cost of living pretty much depends on the person's lifestyle and the type of accommodation they prefer. However, on average, I would say that 600-700 euros per month would cover most of it. The biggest expenditures from my perspective refer to traveling, since students tend to spend a lot on local food and drinks, souvenirs, transportation and paid sightseeing destinations. The grant is about 330 euros but paid only for 4 months of staying (why? No idea). Basically that was the money covering the accommodation.

9. Conclusion (best and worse experience)

In general, I must admit that my Erasmus experience in Valencia was just awesome. It's an incredible opportunity to meet new people, discover new cultures, practice the language and change your lifetime views and perspectives. I especially liked: the city itself, the seashore, the people I met at the UV and occasionally on the streets, the food which is just amazing, the Erasmus spirit in the air and locals. BUT I was a bit confused about organizational issues; during February and March it was extremely cold in the apartments (most of them don't have central heating); it was pretty hard to write exams in Spanish, plus the approaches depend on each professor; I find it hard to come back to normal routine once Erasmus ends ☺

10. Important contact persons and links

Erasmus Groups: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/695203843908023/?fref=ts>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/928463993881008/?fref=ts>

Apartment Agency: <http://flats2enjoy.com/>

Erasmus Organisation (one of many) <http://www.erasmusvalencia.com/>