

Report of my semester abroad at ESIC University in Madrid

24/25 winter semester

Application process Trier University:

First you choose three Universities you would like to go to. It took around one month to get an answer from our university. I got my first choice which was the ESIC University in Madrid.

Application process ESIC University:

The university contacts you after a while, I needed to upload my ID, transcript of records, language certificate min. B2 (which Tim Mauger kindly issued), and put in my personal data (name, country, address etc.). Later on I received my confirmation letter as well as my student number and the E-Mail to register in Canvas (similar to Studo), where I was able to find everything I need (schedule, grades, access to Microsoft programs etc.) throughout my studies. In mid June I received another E-Mail where I was able to apply for my courses. You are only allowed to take courses from year 3 and year 4 and you need to submit four course preferences and decide whether or not you want to attend the spanish language course – I didn't.

Before going to Madrid I had a 90 min meeting in mid August with all the exchange students, where the incoming student manager was introducing useful information. For instance, date, time, transportation that can be taken to the uni campus and afterwards we were able to ask questions. This was helpful, but somehow they seemed very disorganized. Be prepared that they will sign your learning agreement mid September.

Arrival at Uni:

My first introduction day was on the 5th September. We all gathered in the Aula and were welcomed. Yasmine, our incoming student manager showed us the library, cafeteria and some classrooms. On the 8th September my studies should have started, but unfortunately I had to wait two weeks for my schedule, due to some „system issues“. In the end I had to go there three times to finally get my schedule... prior I wanted to take Marketing – unfortunately the class was already full, so I got my second choice „Digital Bsuiness“.

Study Experience:

Since, I started two weeks later, I had a harder time to make friends in class and also keep up with the material that they already covered (e.g. Unit 1+2). When I joined the first class „Information System“ I had to prepare an essay based on unit 1 and upload it to be graded, which made me anxious and stressed me very bad.

I had the following classes in Digital Business 3rd year:

- Information Systems (4.5)
- E-Commerce (6 cr)
- Sales management (6 cr)
- Project management (4.5)
- Digital Client (4.5)
- UX Design (Architecture & Usability)

I had to gather 30 cr and therefore do all of the classes.

Grading, Attendance and Exams:

Throughout the semester I had a lot of assignments, basically weekly, that needed to be presented the next week. Expect to have **2 partial exams (60%)**, if you pass them both and everything else like **group project (30%)** and **class participation (10%)** you don't have to take the final exams. **BUT** you need to pass both exams with at least the grade 5 or higher to not take the final exam.

When taking the exam you will have usually 4 to 5 questions that need to be answered worth 2 points in total 10 always. Based on how many points you will obtain the grade will be between 1-10 to pass you need 5 or higher.

Compared to Germany you are allowed to miss only 30% of classes in total or else you are not allowed to take the exams and you will need to take the final exams in January. The 30% equal around 12 times missing one class.

Class dynamic:

From my experience that I had, the majority of Spanish students lack the knowledge of English and speak it barely. Unfortunately, it was really loud in the beginning and mid class, they don't respect the teachers and I felt most of the time like in kindergarden due to their immaturity.

Most of the time Erasmus students were sitting in the front, while Spanish students sit in the back. It is really hard to become „friends“ with them, because they don't let you into their group, possibly also due to the language barrier.

The teachers on the other hand, are professionals that speak very good English and have a lot of knowledge from their experience. The teacher of project management has a very strong Spanish accent and is not the best in explaining content, sometimes hard to understand. Meanwhile the teachers of e-commerce and sales management brought a lot of value to the class and spoke very good English due to their working background. I really enjoyed their classes the most out of everything. Overall all teachers are nice and helpful. In case of personal matters you need to postpone the exam or you have any other issues they will help you out.

Typical University Week:

I had classes from 4pm to 9pm. With that said my rhythm of the day shifted dramatically. I woke up at 11am, ate breakfast, tried to study and went at 2.40pm out of the house to go to uni. I was staying in Palacio (Calle de Segovia). I took a bus to Principe Pio, took the Metro 6 to Moncloa and from there took 657A/658A to the university and walked 4-5min to the entrance. The uni ride took me around 40-50min to get there.

Majority of time you stay in one classroom the whole day. One class is 50min then you have a lil break of 10 min and so on.

The teachers always check your attendance in the beginning before starting with the class. Compared to Germany in ESIC I had a lot of assignments and presentations, as well as groupwork and on top of that final projects. Unfortunately, many of the assignments are done with the help of AI because they are too many in a short period of time. One of the positive aspects were that the teachers introduced CRM systems (like Hubspot), Figma (UX Design tool), Project Planner (Project Management tool) and showed how to work with them.

Apartment hunting:

It's hard to find a place to stay so be prepared to start early to look for a place to stay. Since, I didn't want to stay with other people (WG), I was searching for an apartment on idealista (be careful with scam), Spotahome and Uniplaces. I found my apartment 2 weeks prior to departure through spotahome. I was paying 1000€ per month, which is expensive but I had no other choice left. WG rooms cost from 650-900€, where you have a small room with a bed, not always windows and a lil table and wardrobe. I stayed in palacio, its a really nice district to stay in, I would also recommend La Latina, Chamberí (a bit further away, but wonderful area), Plaza Mayor/Sol, Latina, Tirso de molino, Retiro, Moncloa and Argüelles.

Also I would not recommend staying next to the university, because the university is in Pozuelo outside of Madrid and the majority of activities are happening in Madrid especially in the Center of the city.

Madrid:

The city is big and has a lot to offer. Every weekend there are some activities that can be done for free, for example attend public organized events such as „Dia de las Hispanidad“ (there was a huge event for a week and on the 12th. October fireworks), El Rastro (flee market on Sunday 9-16), Event on 22nd. November (Christmas lights and show) and 3 days of Opera in end of September, where you can watch the opera performance from the outside for free. There are a lot of cool foodspots and restaurants, as well as cafes. For instance check out La Casa Amande, La freseria, Sisi bagels, Burnout and many more.

If you would like to go to parks I would recommend „Retiro“ or „El Templo de Debod“. If you want to go to museums you can get in for free or with a discount with your student ID, I would really recommend Museo Cerralbo, Palacio Real, Disney Museum, Galeria de las Colecciones and Museo Thyssen Bornemiesza.

I would recommend to also go to as many rooftop bars as possible, because the view is breathtaking. I went to Gran via 18 and Riu rooftop bar which was incredible.

The People are helpful and pretty kind to a certain extend, but be careful that many Spanish people do not speak English, so having some knowledge of the language would be very helpful for your stay.

For my transportation card I was paying 10€ per month. You don't have to spend much more when you are under the age of 25.

Additionally, clubs are totally different to the ones in Germany. Usually, we met at 1:30am to go to the club and left at 5:30 to go back by metro, because sometimes night buses are not reliable, but if its walkable its very safe to walk home even by yourself during the night. In clubs they play reggaeton, but also pop or English songs. I would recommend Fitz, Shoko, Barcelo and Istar.

Expenses:

For food I was spending 50-60€ per week. For cafes and trying out new food I was spending on average maybe 10€ on top per week, but also not every week. For activities like museums I spend all together 50€ at max. For travelling to Valencia I spend altogether 150€ and for my solotrip to Sevilla and Cordoba I spend a maximum of 200€. Well then for rent as mentioned I was paying 1000€ per month, but you can also find something cheaper. The entry for woman to clubs are usually for free,

you can also download PATT to be able to put yourself on a guest list. Meanwhile alcohol and drinks overall in clubs are expensive.

Travelling:

The train tickets are affordable so you can do easily weekend or day trips (try to book in advance). I went to Valencia for two days. We went to the beach, to some museums, walked around in the city and I would really recommend going to the Oceanografic and hemesferic. We went in beginning of November it was 22 degree's, so it was warm and nice to be there, but it rained one evening.

A week after I decided to go spontaneous on a 2 day solotrip to Sevilla and Cordoba. The train tickets were affordable I paid altogether 84€. I stayed in a nice Hotel in the city Center. I went to the Las Setas, Real alcazar, Plaza de Espana and to a flamenco show. Unfortunately, I wasn't lucky with the weather but it was still incredible. The next day I went to Cordoba. I went to the Cathedral, La juderia quarter and to see the patios, in the evening I went back to Madrid. It was great, I can also say that it's very safe in Spain overall, especially in the city center but also at night. Both cities are walkable, my advice is not to buy any transport cards, but I would for Valencia.

Overall the city is great, you can always meet people from outside of uni at different occasions, especially if those are TikTok spots.

My advice: go out and explore the city by yourself, because this city has a lot to offer and you will never forget the time here.

If you might have further questions or want to see more pictures, you can check out my IG: d_4n.ii 😊

