

# Study Abroad Experience Report: My Year at ESIC University, Valencia

*Academic Year 2025/2026*

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## 1. General Info about My Stay

- **Host University:** ESIC University (Valencia Campus), Spain
- **Home University:** Hochschule Trier, Germany
- **When I was there:** The whole academic year of 2025/2026
  - *First Semester:* September 2025 – January 2026
  - *Second Semester:* January 2026 – June 2026
- **What I studied:**
  - *First Semester:* International Business (4th Year)
  - *Second Semester:* Digital Business (3rd Year)

## 2. Preparation and Paperwork

The whole process started with filling out an application form at Hochschule Trier, where we listed our destination preferences. The university then allocated slots based on our priorities. Once I got assigned to ESIC University, I just had to fill out a straightforward form for the Spanish university to choose my modules. Honestly, the registration with them was pretty easy to understand and I didn't run into any issues.

### **A heads-up for anyone without an EU passport:**

*Since I don't hold a European passport, I had to deal with the visa application process, and it takes a lot of time and effort. If you are a non-EU citizen going for a full year like I did, definitely prepare for this in advance. You will also need to buy health insurance in Spain, as it's a mandatory requirement to get your visa.*

## 3. My Academic Experience

### The Courses I Took

- **International Business (Semester 1):** Emerging Markets, Global Entrepreneurship and Business Internationalization, Strategy and Strategic Management, International Marketing Plan, E-Commerce, International Politics in Business.
- **Digital Business (Semester 2):** Financial Management in Digital Environment, Digital Markets Research, Digital Communication, Digital Environment and Internationalization, Operations Management.

### My Recommendations and Highlights

Since I study International Business back in Germany, the first semester was right up my alley. I really loved all the lectures in the International Business program and would highly recommend them to anyone - it was exactly what I was interested in. I'm not a huge fan of Digital Business, so that semester wasn't as exciting for me, but it was still pretty good.

There were two courses from the Digital Business side that I actually really enjoyed:

- **Digital Communication:** This one was super interesting because we learned how to work with stakeholders, which is something I hadn't really studied before.
- **Digital Environment and Internationalization:** This was another good, practical course.

### How Classes Felt

The teaching style at ESIC is very practical. In almost all of our courses, we had to create or expand a business, make financial models, and write reports about it. It was a lot of work, but it was great because it gave me real, practical knowledge. Plus, it really helped me improve my skills in looking for information and writing big reports and business plans.

## 4. Daily Life and University Rules

Going to university at ESIC was a bit different compared to Trier:

- **The Schedule:** 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year classes are held in the evening, usually from 16:00 to 22:00, depending on the day. Coming home that late completely messed up my schedule. I wouldn't end up going to sleep until around 4:00, which made mornings kind of tough, though you do have the whole day free before classes start.
- **Attendance:** At Trier, we didn't have any attendance requirements at all, but ESIC is strict about this. You can only miss up to 25% of the classes (which is about 10-13 hours per semester). If you miss more than that, you can't pass the subject, so you definitely need to keep track of it.

- **Socializing:** ESIC does have some activities, but I didn't really hang out with people from my university. I made friends with students from other universities around Valencia, so I can't say much about the official ESIC events.

## 5. Housing and Cost of Living

### Finding a Place

ESIC doesn't have its own dormitories, so you have to find a place on your own. I didn't use any specific housing websites, instead, I just looked through Facebook groups where people post open rooms/apartments. I found a shared apartment, texted the landlord on WhatsApp, paid, and moved in.

- **My Setup:** The room itself was nice and my flatmates were great, so I was really happy with my living situation.
- **The Price:** I paid **€530 a month** including Wi-Fi and utilities. Looking back and comparing it to what others paid, my room was pretty expensive. You can definitely find cheaper options in Valencia if you look around.

### Expenses and Budgeting

- **Uni Fees:** You don't have to pay tuition fees in Spain, you just keep paying your normal semester fee to Hochschule Trier.
- **Living Costs:** Groceries in Spain are cheaper than in Germany. Eating out at cafes and restaurants costs about the same. Clubs and nightlife, however, are quite expensive - you can expect to pay around **€20–30** just for a club entry ticket.
- **Erasmus Funding:** I got some financial support from the Erasmus program, but they only gave us the money for the first semester, and it only covered my rent. You should definitely be prepared to have extra savings for your other daily expenses and your second semester.

## 6. Challenges and Personal Growth

### The Group Work Situation

One thing I didn't love at first is that you have to do group work for every single subject. At the start of the first semester, I got really unlucky with my group. It was made up entirely of Erasmus students who didn't do anything at all, so I ended up doing the work for the whole group by myself.

I eventually went and talked to my teachers about it. They were actually surprised because they told me usually international students work harder than the locals, but they were super understanding and let

me change groups. I switched into a group with Spanish students, we became great friends, and everything went smoothly after that. I didn't have any issues like that in the second semester.

## What I Took Away From It

Living abroad in Spain was an amazing experience. You meet so many people from different countries and get to see how different cultures live and work. It really forces you to become more independent and teaches you how to handle things on your own in a completely new environment.

## 7. My Tips for Future Students

- **Choose Your Destination Wisely:** Make sure you actually want to go to the country and university you pick so you can enjoy your time there and don't feel like you're just forcing yourself to do it.
- **Be Prepared for Differences:** Things are run differently abroad, from schedules to lifestyle, but that's not a bad thing. Just go with an open mind.
- **Sort Your Visa Early:** If you don't have an EU passport, start your visa paperwork and contact the migration office as early as possible. It takes time.
- **Talk to the International Office:** If you run into any major issues with your classes or anything else, don't hesitate to reach out to the international coordinators. They are there to help you out.

## 8. Contact Me

If you're planning to go to Valencia and have any questions about the visa, the classes, or just life there, feel free to drop me an email!

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