



# Hispanic Studies

## Year Abroad

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### SPAIN AND SPANISH AMERICA

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Swansea University  
Prifysgol Abertawe

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

*¡Bienvenidos a Swansea!* All our modern languages degrees combine both language and cultural learning in the first and second years before our students embark on a year abroad either studying or working in a country of their chosen language. We work closely with our European partner universities if you choose to study in Spain, or if you would like to join the British Council English Language Assistants programme and work at a Spanish or Latin American school teaching English as a foreign language then there is also opportunities available for you. We also work alongside our students wishing to do a work placement in a Spanish speaking country in order to offer the right support and guidance.

### 1. Objectives for period of residence in Spain/Spanish America:

- to provide opportunities for and to stimulate contact with native speakers;
- to optimize the opportunities for linguistic progress, for the development of cultural insight, and for academic and personal development resulting from extended contact with the target language environment;
- to enable students to reflect on and develop their own language-learning skills and techniques;
- to develop intercultural awareness and understanding;
- where appropriate to the programme, to acquire vocationally oriented experience.

### 2. Learning outcomes of year in Spain/Spanish America

On completion of your period of residence in Spain or Spanish America you should have:

- developed your language skills (and language-learning skills) to near fluency;
- where appropriate to the programme, acquired or developed language skills/cultural knowledge through university study;
- where appropriate to the programme, acquired vocationally-oriented experience;
- developed your general understanding of Spanish/Spanish American society and culture as well as your intercultural awareness;
- where appropriate to the programme, developed an understanding of the Spanish/Spanish American business/working environment;
- developed your personal and/or professional skills

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Broadly speaking the Learning Objectives for the Year Abroad may be considered under three headings:

### 1. Linguistic Learning Objectives

The most obvious reason for a linguist to visit the country where the language which s/he is studying is spoken is clearly **to improve competence in language skills**.

Providing you make an effort to meet and get to know plenty of native Spanish-speakers there should be no problem about practising and improving **listening** and **speaking**

skills. It is a mistake, however, to think that this improvement will take place without any effort on your part. You have to work at it! Try to develop an awareness of the language that you hear around you. Listen to the radio or television whenever you can.

- note regional varieties of accent, vocabulary and structure;
- try to spot nuances of tone and register, for example when people are joking or angry;
- keep notes of your observations, including new or unusual items of vocabulary, or structures which interest you.

Remember also that you should use this opportunity to improve your **reading** and **writing** skills too. You need, at the very least, to read newspapers (a local one is likely to be fairly easy linguistically and will tell you what is going on in the local community) and magazine regularly. Practise writing Spanish: you might like to consider keeping a diary in Spanish or writing letters to Spanish-speaking friends, who might correct them in return for your doing the same in their English letters to you.

Above all, you should take every opportunity you can to practise your linguistic skills!



## 2. Cultural Learning Objectives

One of the obvious benefits of spending a prolonged period in a foreign country is being able to appreciate it in much greater depth than is possible during a brief summer holiday. Intercultural awareness is a skill many international employers are looking for and you have a unique chance to develop your sensitivity to another culture during your year abroad. As with your language skills, however, you must not be passive in this respect; you need to develop a kind of journalistic inquisitiveness about what is going on around you.

Start by trying to find out all you can about the place where you are: its size, what there is to see and do there, what local political issues are making the news. Make sure that you know what is going on in the national news too; and note any differences in the way international stories are reported in comparison to the UK.

On a broader level, use your experiences to reflect on the way Spanish/Spanish American society is organized and functions. Try, for example, to answer questions like these:

- What is the attitude of locals to outsiders - to immigrants and to you, as someone from the UK?
- What is the attitude towards Europe/Latin America?
- How does bureaucracy operate in Spain/Latin America? How do people react to it?
- Are you aware of class differences between the people you meet?
- What is the attitude of Spanish/Spanish Americans to authority, e.g. politicians, the police, bosses, landlords, university teachers?

- How do young people see themselves in society?

Remember, once again, that you are in a unique position to assess issues like these by comparing your new experiences with life in the UK. Your attitude towards British society will probably change too - and remember also that future employers will respond well to someone who has developed an open-minded attitude to other cultures in this way.

### 3. Personal Learning Objectives

The Year Abroad gives you the opportunity to become almost entirely independent. The department, your parents and friends, and contacts you already have in Spain/South America will do all they can to help you. However, you have to make all the practical decisions and live with the consequences, in a way that you probably have not had to do up to now. This may be daunting in prospect, but it is a challenge that most students cope with very well, and the result is a growth of self-confidence and maturity.

You will also find that the Year Abroad offers you a chance to break new ground, to meet new people, make new friends, develop new interests or pursue familiar interests in new surroundings. Make sure that you take maximum advantage of everything that is on offer in this respect. You might even surprise yourself and discover some hidden talent!



## SKILLS ANALYSIS AND EMPLOYABILITY

During your year abroad you will have the opportunity to use and develop a number of skills and qualities that employers look for in a graduate employee. These include:

### *Key Skills*

Improving your own learning and performance  
Communication  
Information Technology  
Working with others  
Problem solving

### *Personal Qualities*

Self-reliance  
Adaptability  
Drive  
Common sense

Self-confidence  
Creativity

### *Knowledge of Different Organizations*

Academic institutions in Spain/Spanish America  
School in Spain/Spanish America  
Businesses in Spain/Spanish America

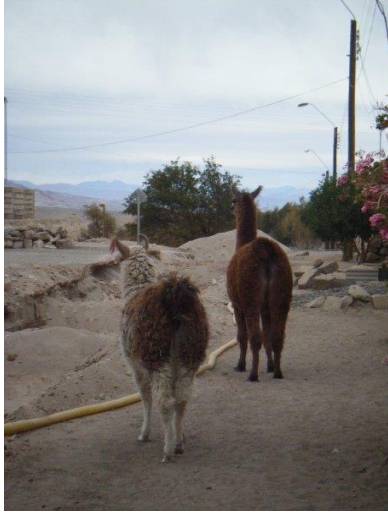
## **IMPROVING YOUR OWN LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE**

While it is relatively clear what is meant by having good communication or IT skills, the skill of 'improving your own learning and performance' is less obvious; it is, however, a crucial aspect of your Year Abroad as far as employability is concerned. The clearest definition is that it is the skill of understanding and using any learning experience to help to improve what you do. A learning experience is not just restricted to academic situations like your degree scheme, but can include any situation in which you are involved (by design or by chance!). The problems you confront registering in a Spanish university, teaching in a classroom for the first time, or adapting to work in an office environment can all be regarded as learning.

It is also important to remember that this might also be the first prolonged period in which you have employed your knowledge of Spain/Spanish America and your linguistic skills in Spanish outside your degree programme. Many students find that having to apply their knowledge in practical situations helps them to develop a greater understanding of their academic programme. When you return to Swansea you will find that lecture material and language work makes more sense to you because you can relate it to situations encountered during your year abroad.

There are four stages that you need to go through to develop your own learning and performance:

- Stage One:** you need to reflect on the skills you have been using up to now and gauge your competence in them.
- Stage Two:** you need to think about what you want to achieve from your Year Abroad and set yourself some goals.
- Stage Three:** you need to record and reflect on your experiences.
- Stage Four:** you need to analyze your skills and qualities after you have completed your Year Abroad compared to your starting point.



## DETAILS OF HOST UNIVERSITIES

**Universidad de Alcalá (Madrid).** The University of Alcalá offers degrees in: Arts and Humanities, Law and Social Sciences, Sciences, Health Sciences, and Engineering and Architecture. Its students are spread across three campuses. It has a wide-ranging programme of cultural activities, and as well as a Film Club, and Theatre, Dance, Fine Arts, Music and Flamenco workshops, an orchestra, a Tuna group and university choir.

**Contact:** Bruno Echaury Galván  
**Website:** <https://www.uah.es/es/>

**Universidad de Comillas (Madrid).** Situated in Madrid, Comillas' mission is based on a combination of educational experience built up on its history and constant evolution in response to social change. Its website offers a wide range of information: its education model and history, structure, current range of courses, research projects, activities and services, and much more. Each program offered is founded on academic rigor, individual student support combined with comprehensive training and a heightened level of social awareness, excellent preparation for professional activity, internationalization and an idea of research based on innovation and social impact.

**Contact:** Patricia Velázquez  
**Website:** <http://www.comillas.edu/es/>

**Universidad de Deusto (Bilbao).** The most prestigious of Spain's private Universities. Run by the Jesuit order (barely noticeable now), it is set on the riverbank in the middle of Bilbao, near the shopping centre but with shipyards nearby. Some new and many old buildings, all recently refurbished. Has an excellent International Office which coordinates accommodation, registration, etc. The Basque regional government provides an 'induction course' and two civic receptions. Full range of courses available.

**Contact:** Mariela Linares Bandres  
**Website:** <http://www.deusto.es/>

### **Facultat de Traducció i d'Interpretació, Autonomous University of Barcelona.**

Our Erasmus exchange with this school of interpreters and translators is principally intended for students interested in Catalan. Students take courses in Catalan language, and translation (Catalan and Castilian). Courses in post-war Catalan and Castilian Literature are also available, and students may also take translation classes (into and from Catalan) in French and German. It is also possible for students who do not study Catalan to be considered for this University. Spanish language, literature and translation classes are given.

**Contact:** Roland Pearson

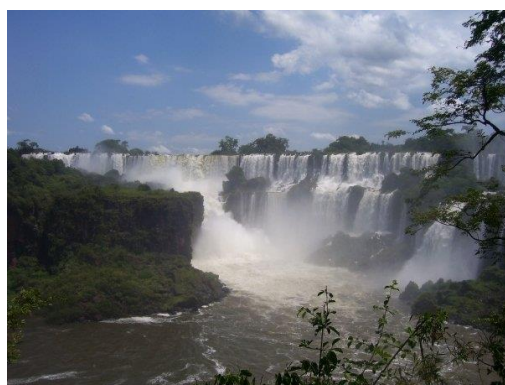
**Website:** <http://www.aub.es/>

### **Universidad de Valencia**

Divided into three campuses (Tarongers, Blasco Ibáñez and Burjassot-Paterna) and two extensions (Ontinyent and Gandia) Valencia offers the largest range of graduate degrees in the region, covering basic and experimental sciences, engineering, health sciences, humanities, education, social, economic and legal sciences. It is an open and international university and its three campuses are well linked by underground and tram.

**Contact:** José Santaemilia

**Website:** <http://www.uv.es/>



### **Universidad de Sevilla**

The University of Seville is an institution that provides the public service of superior education by means of studies, teaching, and research, as well as the generation, development and diffusion of knowledge to serve citizens and society. One of the oldest universities in Spain, and the main public university in Andalusia with the highest number of students. It has adapted its studies to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and its campus has been awarded a distinction as Campus of International Excellence. Closely linked to the history of Seville and Andalusia, the US combines the values of tradition with being an innovative institution of quality and excellence. It is a university as cutting edge and cosmopolitan as the city of Seville itself.

**Contact:** Gabriela Fernández

**Website:** <http://www.us.es/eng>

Con paciencia todo se logra  
Mit Geduld und Fleiß kommt man weit

**For further information please contact YA Coordinator:**

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