
Exchange Report

IE University (Madrid Campus)

Chan Wing Sum 2015 Fall Semester Exchange



The Madrid Campus of IE University

Monthly Activity Log

August

The fall semester of IE University started on 1st Sept, so I arrived Madrid a few days earlier, on the 24th of August. I immediately went to hypermarkets like Carrefour and the largest department store in Spain, El Corte Inglés, to grab some pillows, blanket, kettle, hangers etc. After 3 days of settling down, it's time to explore the country. I, together with 2 exchange students from Singapore and a exchange student from HK, went on a road trip to Valencia, a place with many beaches and it was where Paella was originated from. Renting a car in Spain was definitely the cheapest way for trips, so I suggest that you to get one first before going on exchange. The weather, the food and the beaches in Valencia were truly brilliant and it was lucky for us to catch hold of the tail end of summer.



September

On the first day of school, there was an orientation session organised by the international mobility of IE university for all the exchange students. In the session, they have covered some important matters like add/drop period, student ID card, important consideration regarding academics, ways to sign up for the student societies and sports clubs etc to clear all our enquiries.

Then I had my first marketing lecture. The size of the class was small, only around 20 people a class. The professor spoke perfect English and she paid a lot of effort in engaging all the students in class instead of one-way teaching. The thing I like the most about the professor in IE was that most of the lecturers in IE had rich experiences in working in the real business world and did achieve great success in their expertise. Through the sharing of their personal experience, you can learn a lot of practical stuff and know how to apply the knowledge in books to real life.

A few days later, a Tapas Night for all exchange students were held. It was a precious opportunity for me to meet and mingle my exchange colleagues as well as my Amigos. I made a lot of international friends that night and I highly recommend the exchange students in the future to join this event.



There were also a lot of orientation activities throughout the whole September such as City hopping, Paintball and Kayaking etc. Feel free to join those activities, that didn't clash with your classes, online. I joined the Paintball event. It was a perfect event for making new friends and breaking the ice among the exchange students and freshers.

October

In the first week of October, I went to Munich to join the Oktoberfest, the largest beer festival and funfair in the world. The beer there was cheap, like 10 euro per litre of beer. It was very normal for the locals to drink 7-8L of beer per day during the festival but I was already full after drinking 1L of beer. A German couple sat beside me taught me a German word "Prost". It means cheers. So we Prost and drank beers for the rest of the day!

October 12nd was the national day of Spain, they called it the Columbus Day. There was a Military parade in Madrid, at the Plaza de Colon with the Royal Family reviewing the troops. It was a very exciting moment that I can see the contingent from the Spanish Foreign Legion in their dark green uniforms. Other than travelling, I also got 3 mid terms and 2 essays to hand in late October. So I spent the second half of October studying.



November

I visited Switzerland in November. It was a road trip again as the swiss rail pass was very expensive so we chose to drive. The scenery was stunning even at a random place, not to mention the tourist spots. I tried paragliding at Interlaken and it was so awesome, beyond description.



Late november was the peak of all project deadlines. In my case, around 4-5 meetings were scheduled almost every week because most of the courses I took were marketing courses and every courses at least had one project or field trip. So I spent a lot of time in Madrid studying and exploring good tapas, good paella there. Food there were quite salty, especially the paella, so you have to tell the waiter to put less salt every time.

December

Before finals, I went to Turkey. I was pleasantly surprised with the hospitality of Turkish people. They served me apple tea while I was only a customer shopping in their shop. The things there were so cheap and I bought a lot of spices and scarfs.

Then I went back to Madrid for finals and due to my winter intern, I did not do any travel after finals but headed back to Hong Kong immediately.



General Exchange Information

Visa Procedures

I applied for a short-term study visa in Madrid as I will be staying in Spain for more than 30 days but less than 180 days. The cost for applying it was around \$500+ and it took 2-3 weeks for the process. To play safe, I applied it in early July. Below are the documents that you have to bring along when you go to the Spain Consulate General in Wan Chai

1. Passport
2. 2 Application forms duly filled
3. Recent photos
4. Confirm flight schedule
5. Financial Proof (If you would like to show your mother's bank balance to them, please also bring along your birth certificate)
6. Admission letter from IE university
7. A letter from your Home University confirming your leave (ask SBM staff for this letter in advance)

Orientation Activities

On the first day of school, there will be an orientation session to clear all your enquiries on the campus life such as add/drop period, student ID card, suggested number of credits to take etc. A mingling orientation activity, the Tapas Night, were organised a few days later for all Exchange Students to meet their Exchange colleagues as well as their Amigos.

International Services & Activities

There were also a lot of activities organised by the international mobility of IE university such as City hopping, Paintball and Kayaking etc. You can always join those activities, that did not clash with your classes. The school also organised a trip to Granada in early-October and a trip to Barcelona in mid-november for IE students to join.

Accommodations

There isn't any on-campus accommodation in Madrid (but yes, for Segovia campus). I shared a flat with some Singaporean exchange students. As I contacted the Associate director of IE, Isabell who is in charge of university recruitment at IE Center Singapore, covering South East Asia and Hong Kong She gave me the contacts of some Singaporean exchange students so that I can Skype them in advance. Actually most of the exchange students rent flats outside campus and it's very easy to find places even for short-term.

Courses Registration

Once officially admitted, you can access through the Campus Online of IE for the Online Enrollment. During the Enrollment Period you will be able to see the final offer of courses available for Exchange Students and the timetables. When making your selection, remember that attendance to at least 70% of the sessions is required so that you need to avoid clashes.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

The size of the class was small, only around 20 people a class. With such small class size, most of the time, you are required to speak up in class. And the assessment methods include projects, examinations, essay etc.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

The Madrid campus of IE was pretty small, so the sports club training of IE would be held the park or sport court nearby. There were 2-3 gym around IE and you can join them with discount if you show the gym store your IE student card.

Cost/Expenses

The expenses will depend on how much you travel during exchange. For the whole semester, I spent around 11 thousands Euros.

Activity	Cost (Euros)
Flight Ticket	1650 euros
Rent	1500 euros (375 euros / month)
Living expense	3000 euros
Transportation	100 euros (25 euros / month)
Travelling	4750 euros

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

There are lots of networking opportunities for exchange students. There were facebook and whatsapp groups open specially for exchange student. People called for dinner gatherings, football match watching gatherings, travelling buddy etc at the group frequently. So you won't feel lonely even you are away from home.

Health & Safety

There was a hospital around IE university, around 15 minutes walk. I didn't pay a visit to the hospital so I am not sure about the cost and effectiveness of it. But it is foreseeable that there will be a difficulty in communicating with the doctor, so you are recommended to bring enough medicine with you.

Food

I mostly bought ingredients from the supermarket and cooked with my flatmates. This would be a lot cheaper. If you dine out, the food they served were quite salty, especially the paella, so you have to tell the waiter to put less salt every time.

Transportation

To get around IE university, you can take metro which cost you 1.5 euro per trip. You can buy a 10-trip metro card which costs you 12.8 euro then it would be cheaper. On weekdays, I walked to school as the place I lived only took me 15 minutes walk.

Climate

As Madrid is located in the inland area of Spain, the climate there was hot and dry in August and September. You should bring lotion and cream to avoid chapping. It was quite cool afterwards, in December, it reached lower than 10 degrees, a thin down coat is recommended to bring.

Communication

It was fairly easy to communicate by using emails at the computers in the campus library. You can bring old mobiles there and buy sim card at some electronics stores for local calls and internet data. It costs you around 15 euro for 1GB per month.

Most of the local Spanish cannot speak english, so you can only use body language at your daily life. I suggest you to take a basic Spanish course before going there. There were also Spanish language courses offered by IE for exchange students for free.

Cautionary measures

The economy of Spain was not good so there were a lot of pickpockets. Bring a money belt with you and put it under your clothes to keep your valuables safe. Avoid going to the China Town at night or taking the public transport when it is crowded.

Items to Bring and Contacts

- 1) Passport and HKID card (hard copies for both documents as well)
- 2) Some cash (Euros)
- 3) Credit card or debit card
- 4) ATM card
- 5) Mobile + charger
- 6) Laptop + charger
- 7) Adaptors (and extension)
- 8) Medicine
- 9) Appropriate amount of clothes (you can always get cheap clothes in Spain)
- 10) Sunglasses
- 11) Camera
- 12) Calculator or even financial calculator if you take finance course

Please contact your landlord again one day before you arrive Madrid, to remind him for the check-in of the flat.