

ANTES DE VENIR

The Office of Student Life at the Madrid Campus wants to take the opportunity to welcome you to Spain. Over the years, we have seen many non-Spanish students come and go. Most students sign up for a program like this with similar goals in mind: experience a new culture, learn the language, make Spanish friends, and travel around Europe.

As educators in the Jesuit tradition –committed to the education of the “whole” person, mind, heart, body and spirit–the Student Life staff works to provide you with information and opportunities which will help you achieve your goals.

In what follows, we would like to pass along some suggestions about how to prepare for your time here in Madrid. If you have any questions after reading this, please feel free to e-mail us at studentlife-madrid@slu.edu.



I. Attitude

- Keep an open mind... For you to enjoy the distinct culture which is Spain, you need to be flexible with what you encounter. Don't be surprised if in the early days you feel a little disoriented with the differences between “home” and here. For example, you'll find that the tastes and textures of Spanish food are different. A typical Spanish diet is very healthy: fresh ingredients with well-known nutritional value, with lots of seafood, chicken, lean meats and vegetables.
- Expect to take your academics seriously... We understand that besides going to class, you will want to travel and go out, but remember that you are enrolled in an academic program in a real university. And your grades are real too. About 75% of the student body on the Madrid Campus is made up of permanent students pursuing their college degrees, and our courses conform to the same academic standards as those at the Saint Louis Campus. Often students that come from very competitive universities find our courses to be quite challenging.
- Be self-disciplined, in study habits and in social habits... Madrid social life is very attractive for American students. Be prepared to enjoy it in a responsible way. If you feel that you would like help in managing your time, our two on-campus licensed counselors can offer advice and support (and their services are always free to students).
- Commit yourself to meeting new people... Madrid Campus students represent over 60 countries. Try to interact with everyone, not just the people you already know. And, start off well. Year after year, we find that the students who most enjoy their study abroad experience are those who got off to a great start by participating in all of the Welcome activities and then follow it up by taking advantage of trips, activities and programs sponsored by Student Life.
- Realize that “stereotypes” may impact how Spaniards react to you... Especially in social situations, remember that there are cultural cues that you may not understand. You may also be communicating something unintentionally. Just be aware that there are differences and stereotypes that cause miscommunication. You represent more than just yourself: you represent your family, your country, and your culture. Some stereotypes: all US American girls are blonde, all US Americans travel in groups, wear baseball hats, wear spring summer clothes in winter, are partiers, are really loud, only eat hamburgers and pizza, etc.

II. Safety

Keep an eye on your slU.edu email. That is how you will get SLU-Madrid Safety updates.

- Provide parents/guardians/families with your contact information in Spain, and keep them informed on an on-going basis, especially when you make plans to travel outside of Madrid.
- Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concern to the Student Life staff or your host family.
- Remain sensible and vigilant about your surroundings. It is not a good idea to draw attention to yourself. (This usually only becomes a problem when someone consumes too much alcohol.)
- When going out at night, always have a mobile phone available and charged. Share a taxi when returning home late at night. Madrid can be dangerous in the wee hours of the morning, especially if tiredness or alcohol has dulled your level of alertness.
- Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- Follow policies and suggestions for keeping Student Life staff informed of your whereabouts and well-being.
- Stay away from large crowds, including at popular tourist destinations.
- Exercise heightened vigilance and caution when visiting public access areas, especially those heavily frequented by tourists.
- Stay away from political gatherings and rallies.
- Follow the instructions of local authorities in an emergency.
- Stay at hotels with identifiable security measures in place.
- Monitor local media.

III. Medical Information

- All SLU-Madrid Campus students who are registered for at least one credit are covered by the [Multi Sanitas Health Insurance](#), which provides doctors visits at no cost. The plan does not cover the cost of medicine.
- Always carry on you your Sanitas card, which will be given to you by the Student Life staff as soon as you arrive in Madrid. If you will be studying at SLU Madrid Campus for more than one semester, remember to pick up a new card at the Office of Student Life at the beginning of each session.

- If you become ill, the Student Life Staff can help you to find a general practitioner who speaks English, or you can check on our website: [Medical information](#)
- In Spain all medicine (prescription and over-the-counter) is sold only in pharmacies and is relatively inexpensive. Although the ingredients are generally the same, brand names are different. If you develop a persistent cough or cold, you should see a doctor rather than guess the appropriate medication yourself.
- If you take a prescription drug regularly, bring enough for the full semester with a letter from your doctor, in your carry-on luggage if possible. Do not plan to send or receive medicine through the mail.
- Students with any medical precondition (physical or mental) will be responsible for following the guidelines provided by their physicians in their home countries and for seeking the adequate resources to continue any treatment while they study in Madrid. You may use their Sanitas Medical Insurance which is included in the tuition price. You may contact Dr. Borrás, general practitioner in Sanitas, who will be able to refer you to any specialist within Sanitas at dr.rvborras@gmail.com and/or SLU-Madrid Counseling Center at conselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu.
- While SLU-Madrid will make every effort to support students with severe medical conditions so that they may be capable of successfully completing their academic work, at times, such medical conditions are so severe that they negatively affect both the student as well as other members of the campus community.
- Students with such conditions may continue to study at SLU-Madrid and access services such as Housing as long as the medical condition does not affect the coexistence of the student among the SLU-Madrid community members to the extent of being disturbing and disruptive. Examples of these disturbing/disruptive behaviors include, but are not limited to: poor social interaction with host family/roommates, or social interaction that is aggressive, hostile, threatening, or disturbing to others; behavior suggesting the presence of a medical and/or mental illness that is causing significant disruption/distress to the student's family/roommates, such as depression (e.g., self-injurious behavior, suicide threats/attempts, isolating oneself in the room while at home, etc.), anxiety disorders (e.g., becoming hostile or excessively anxious when family members/roommates do not follow rigid routines, etc.), eating disorders (e.g., excessive weight loss, binge eating, vomiting frequently, or unusual requests regarding food and menus, etc.), and substance abuse, among others.
- When the presence of such behaviors is detected, the Department of Student Life, in coordination with the University Counseling Center, and the Dean's Office, will make a determination regarding the appropriate action required, including, but not limited to: continuing academic studies, while receiving appropriate treatment for the medical condition; leaving the home stay; taking a leave of absence; or withdrawing from SLU-Madrid.

IV. [Housing \(and additional security\) Reminders](#)

- If you will be staying with a host family arranged by the University, bed linens, towels and a pillow will be provided.

- When not in use, leave all valuables (jewelry, cameras, money, etc.) locked in a suitcase. The University is not responsible for items that are lost or stolen.
- Pack smart. Travel light. You, your host family, the airlines and the University will be much happier. For a semester's stay you really don't need two or three big suitcases of clothes.
- Housing arranged by the University is closed during Winter Break and Holy Week Break. Please take a careful look at the [Academic calendar](#) to make sure you know these dates. During these periods, most students take the opportunity to travel; however, for those staying in Madrid alternative housing (at the student's expense) can be arranged in a [nearby hotel](#).

V. Passports

Most foreign citizens from outside the European Union are required to have a valid passport to travel to Spain and the rest of Europe. Check your own local regulations on how to obtain a passport in your country.

- U.S. citizens may apply for a passport at the nearest post office. Check out <http://www.travel.state.gov> for a complete guide on how to apply for US passport.
- International students from member countries inside the European Union or from Schengen member countries do not need a passport to enter Spain. However, you will still want to bring one with you in order to facilitate other travel, e.g. mandatory academic trips or optional trips organized by the University.
- Note to Fall Semester applicants: Because of the slow delivery of passports resulting from heavy travel in summer, you should apply early.
- NB: Upon arrival in Madrid make two copies of your passport. Always carry one in your wallet and leave the other in a suitcase at your Madrid home. You may also want to scan a copy and email it to yourself. Except when traveling, leave your original passport at your Madrid address.

VI. Student Visas

Once you have been accepted to Saint Louis University-Madrid Campus, you are responsible for obtaining your student visa. A visa is a stamp in your passport that allows you to study in Spain for a period of more than three consecutive months. Make sure you get a MULTIPLE ENTRIES Visa to be able to travel around and get back into Spain.

A long-stay visa, 90-days allows you to study in Spain longer than one semester. You will need to apply for a Spanish [Residency Card](#). The [Residency Card](#) allows you to remain in Spain all year. **All permanent students MUST** do the application for the [Residency Card](#) within 30 days of entering Spain. This deadline is a Spanish Law requirement. Therefore, you **MUST** bring your passport and boarding pass to Campus the first week to the SLU-Madrid Student Life Office.

- Contact the Embassy or Consulate General of Spain under whose jurisdiction your permanent or temporary (university) address falls to request a Student Visa Application Form, a list of all the documentation you need to present, and more detailed information about the application process. Follow your local embassy/consulate's instructions closely. Visa requirements, procedures, and processing times vary from one embassy/consulate to another.

- Following receipt of your confirmation materials and required payments, your admissions counselor on the Madrid Campus will send you an official University letter that you will need to present to the corresponding embassy/consulate. This document is critical. Without it, you will not be able to obtain your visa. You should begin the visa application process as soon as you receive this University document. Do not wait until the last minute! Consulates can take over two months to process student visas.
- **For visiting students:** If you are certain that you will be spending only ONE semester in Spain, then you should apply for a short-stay (180 days or *corta estancia*), non-renewable student visa. Keep in mind, though, that if you choose this option you will not be able to extend your stay another semester. **Therefore, if there is even a remote possibility that you will be staying for the entire academic year, you should apply for a long-stay (90 days *larga estancia*) visa.** After you arrive in Madrid, the Office of Student Life will help you obtain the [Residency Card](#). This will allow you to stay in Spain legally for the entire year. If you are a visiting student you should inform your admissions counselor at the time of confirmation that you plan to spend two semesters in Madrid. This way the University can prepare the correct documents for you. You will also have to do everything that has been explained on the second paragraph of this section.
- Address all your visa-related questions directly to your designated Spanish embassy or consulate. You may also visit the Embassy of Spain general web site at <http://spainemb.org> for more information. Although Madrid Campus admission counselors want to be helpful, they are not able to assist you in obtaining a visa.

VII. [Flying to Madrid](#)

Luggage restrictions vary with each airline and are subject to change. Check out your airline website for information. Most airlines allow only one checked bag and one carry-on on international flights, and they will charge you considerably if you have excess baggage. Keep in mind that there are many things that you can easily get in Spain such as shampoo, toothpaste, soap, hairdryer or alarm clock.

- Easily identifiable SLU-Madrid staff be at the International Arrival section of T4 of Madrid- Barajas airport from 8.00 am to 12:00 pm on Arrival Day to greet you and assist you in getting a taxi to take you to your housing assignment. Students should go directly to their housing on move-in day instead of going to campus. If you choose to pre-arrange your own transportation, you may want to check out these shuttle services that our students have used in the past: <http://www.mad-shuttle.com> or <http://www.aerocity.com>. It is recommended that you let the taxi driver know that you will need a receipt. (*Necesito un recibo, por favor.*) This will allow you to have the taxi driver's license number in case you leave anything in the vehicle or you wish to file a complaint.
- In any event, be sure to inform the Madrid Campus of your travel plans as soon as you know them so that your safe arrival can be verified. You may do this by visiting the SLU-Madrid Campus website and entering into [Arrival Information](#), clicking on the link to the Arrival Form. You will then be able to fill out an electronic form and send it directly to the Office of Student Life.
- You will be responsible for arranging your own transportation to your housing accommodation once you arrive at the airport. For those who are not very familiar with Madrid, we strongly recommend you use the taxi or shuttle service option, rather than using the metro. You should go directly to your housing assignment on move-in day instead of going to campus.

- There is a fixed rate for taxi service from the airport to the city should for 30 Euros. Taxis in Madrid are white with a diagonal red stripe. The taxi stand in the airport is just outside the waiting area. Make sure the meter is running when you get in the taxi. Also keep in mind that taxi drivers in Madrid are not allowed to apply a luggage surcharge. All fares should be published and in plain view inside the taxi cab. We do not recommend using the metro because the bulky luggage will make it very difficult for you going up and down electric scalators.

VIII. Mail & Packages

- We strongly recommend students bring all electronic items with their luggage to avoid duty charges. **Do not to have packages sent over unless it is absolutely necessary.** [Mail & Packages](#)
- Upon arrival in Spain, packages with declared values will be assessed customs fees which can be very expensive. Make sure to indicate “for personal use without commercial value” on the declaration form.
- **Do not ship medications. They will not clear customs.**
- All students are invited to have any packages – that is, anything that requires a signature, or anything larger than a letter – sent to yourself at that same University address. There is always someone to sign for it at the University, and we will call to let you know that a package has arrived for you.

ATT: [Student Name]
Saint Louis University
 Avenida del Valle, 34
 28003 Madrid
 Spain

- All other students should have mail sent to the address at which they reside in Madrid.
- If you are having packets or important documents sent to you from the U.S., we encourage you to use a courier service (e.g. UPS or FedEx), even though it is more expensive than the regular U.S. mail. Their services are faster and more reliable, and shipments can be tracked. U.S. Postal Service Express mail promises five to seven day delivery to Spain, but that doesn't mean to your door. It goes into the regular Spanish mail system and there is no way to track its progress. Some students have waited for months to receive packets sent by their families through regular mail. A full description of the contents must accompany the package. For information on how customs fees are assessed, please visit the English version of the Spanish Post's website, www.correos.es.

IX. Communicating from Spain

- Students usually purchase SIM cards and cell phones since they are cheaper to purchase than they think. We strongly recommend you purchase a SIM card while in Spain. There are cheap data rates you can purchase. You should not rely only on WIFI and not being able to phone out during your stay.
- Once in Spain, the easiest way to communicate with family and friends back home is through email or Skype. On campus each student has internet access through the University's computer labs, and wireless throughout the buildings. University host family assignments offer wireless internet access as well.
- Students staying with host families will only be able to receive incoming calls on the family's phone.

X. Laptop Computers

You are encouraged to bring your laptop to Spain. However, you need to keep a few things in mind:

- You will have to bring the laptop on the plane with you as a “carry-on” baggage, and you may have to open it and turn it on when you go through airport security.
- Please take time to read carefully the Computer Policies at [Lab & IT Resources](#) This link contains excellent detailed information regarding computer/laptop support, internet connectivity and useful computer/laptop advice.
- Notebook computers need to be equipped with an Ethernet Card (PCMCIA) 10/100 and a cable with a RJ45 adaptor. To use the internet connections, ensure that your computer has a free Ethernet connection with an RJ45 socket. This connection may differ on and off-campus though. If you have any hardware or software questions, please email support-madrid@slu.edu.

Voltage:

Most desktop and portable computers are able to support a voltage of 220V. This is the voltage in Spain. For confirmation of this, you should consult an approved vendor.

Don't forget to buy a plug adapter for your portable computer's battery charger before you come.

XI. Money

- Before you leave the U.S., exchange \$150-\$200 to Euros in order to have some cash on hand for your first few days in Madrid. Contact your local bank for details on how to exchange currency.
- Normally, banks will need two to three days to obtain the Euros for you. Upon arrival in Madrid, you will also be able to exchange your money in the airport, but the commission will probably be higher.
- Obtain a debit card or credit card with a PIN. Withdrawing money from ATMs in Spain is the easiest and cheapest way to get money from the US, and ATMs provide the best exchange on the day of the transaction. Be sure to call your bank before you leave the U.S. to authorize overseas withdrawals. Remember that this is the best way to obtain Euros once you are in Spain. Exchanging dollars in Spain has become increasingly difficult and expensive.
- Always keep your money and debit/credit cards in a safe place and do not share your PIN with anyone. Sadly, most of the fraud that takes place at the Madrid Campus is because students share their PIN with friends. Those students who are planning on staying in Madrid for a year or longer, may want to consider opening a bank account.
- Do not bring Traveler's Checks. They are not widely honored and can be very difficult to use.

XII. Academic and Cultural Trips

- University-sponsored trips must be paid for in Madrid. Trips can be paid for in U.S. dollars, euros, credit cards, or personal checks. Please note that trip fees are non-refundable.
- The University reserves the right to change the dates or destination of trips due to scheduling conflicts.

XIII. Important e-mail addresses:

IT:	Fairouz Medjahed	support-madrid@slu.edu
Housing:	Margarita Casado	housing-madrid@slu.edu
Registration:	Patricia Blockmon	registrar-madrid@slu.edu
Academic Advising:	Desislava Nikolova	desislava.nikolova@slu.edu
	Jaime Ortiz	jaime.ortiz@slu.edu
Counseling Services:	Eduardo Fernández-Cruz Sarrate	counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu
Other questions:	Student Life	studentlife-madrid@slu.edu

XIV. Madrid Campus Emergency Contacts:

- **During business hours (9:00 am – 6:00 pm Madrid time): (+34) 91 554 5858**
After-hours Health and Safety emergency number: (+34) 638 763 758
Counseling crisis number: (+34) 609 269 323

Health & safety emergencies are:

- * Sickness, injury, health crisis of a student that requires urgent medical treatment and/or hospitalization, or death.
 - * A criminal act, including sexual assault, involving one or more students.
 - * An act of terrorism that poses a safety threat to students.
 - * A natural disaster, civil unrest, act of war, or any other event which causes or threatens the health and safety of students.
- For life-threatening emergencies: 112
 - In case of a national emergency in Spain, you will be contacted via email.
 - U.S.A. Government Safety updates which will be linked to the Madrid Campus web page (www.slu.edu/madrid).

XV. Tips for packing

Madrid has the highest number of cloudless days of all European capitals. The weather between September and May is cool to brisk (30° to 50°F/0° to 10°C).

The rainy seasons are usually November/December and March/April. June through August tends to be hot and dry (70° to 105°F/22° to 40°C).

DO BRING:

- Clothing for evenings out (Young people dress up more in Madrid.)
- Good walking shoes
- Warm pajamas and slippers (Buildings turn off the heat at night... it can get chilly. Also walking barefoot in the house is not appropriate.)
- A full supply of any prescription medicine you will need during your stay in Madrid (along with a copy of the prescription)
- Spare pair of glasses or contacts
- Winter clothes (down coat, scarf, gloves, sweaters, jackets). Remember that it can be cool until May.
- Lighter clothes for warmer weather. It can be hot until mid-October.
- Swimsuit.
- Your friends' addresses and an address book to add new ones

YOU MIGHT WANT TO BRING:

- Umbrella (It does rain on occasion.)
- First-aid kit
- Fanny pack/money belt (much safer than carrying money in your backpack or bag)
- Sewing kit (scissors, thread, needles, safety pins, buttons)
- Small calculator (not graphing)
- Gift for host family or roommate (great ice-breaker)
- Customs information from your country to know what you are allowed to bring back
- International Student ID Card (ISIC)

DO NOT BRING:

- Expensive jewelry or other "tempting" valuables
- Pets (Believe it or not, a few students have tried!)
- More than what is necessary (Remember: you'll want to buy some things when you travel)