

## HOST FAMILY HOUSING NORMS

### IMPORTANT

These norms apply to all the students who freely choose to live with a host family arranged by the University and apply for SLU-Madrid housing.

These norms also apply to those Study Abroad students whose home Universities require host family arranged by the University as the ONLY housing option for their students. These Study Abroad students must talk with their home institutions' about their housing requirements. These requirements may include, but are not limited to: mandatory host family accommodation, not being assigned with more than one student from the same University, no Kitchen Privileges meal plan, etc.

SLU-Madrid does not assign families to the students. Students are allowed to select their own host family from our Host Family Database.

Students must select homestays according to their legal gender as specified by the students themselves on their admissions application. Should a student have any concern with this, please contact the Director of Housing (email) upon completion of this application.

Any students may request a change of host families (read the Reassignments section). **However, once they are within the host family system; they cannot opt out of the host family living situation.**

Students are expected to leave the host family home during the Christmas and Holy Week breaks and are responsible for their own lodging and meals during these times.

### I. EXPECTATIONS AND INFORMATION FOR THE HOST FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

For the benefit of both students and host families, the information which follows describes "expectations" for host-family living. While the home stay experience is potentially very enriching, it also requires effort, maturity, responsibility and flexibility.

**SLU Madrid has a limited number of host families available.**

**SLU Madrid housing should receive most housing applications before the following deadlines:**

Housing applications for the Fall: **before Mid-June**

Housing applications for the Spring: **before Mid-November**

\*Note that host families located in certain areas (nearby SLU, city center) and host families for students with dietary restrictions/intolerances **are very limited**.

SLU-Madrid Campus has [Student Responsibilities & Community Standards](#), students who fail to behave accordingly to these expectations maybe subject to disciplinary action which can go as far as housing suspension or expulsion.

(See the SLU Madrid Housing Refund Policy: <https://www.slu.edu/madrid/campus-life/housing/housing-options-for-study-abroad-transfer-and-upper-classmen/host-family-application-and-payment-information.php>)

### II. COMMUNICATION

The University encourages direct communication between the family and the student wherever possible. Remember that many problems can be solved by having a polite, open and honest discussion with the host family. However, if there are any problems between the student and

family which cannot be resolved in this manner, the student should contact the Housing Coordinator.

**Most host families do not speak English fluently. If the student does not speak Spanish, the relationship may be difficult to build.** Spanish host families do not have to speak English. Being in a different language environment will be an essential part of the student's international experience.

Relationships between the host family and the student cannot be "guaranteed". *The sense of feeling like I had a second family*, may or may not be achieved. We can only guarantee that the host family will be welcoming and will provide support and company.

### III. KITCHEN USE

There are two options to choose from:

**First Option: Room and half-board ONLY two meals** (Spanish breakfast and dinner)

**The host family is expected to**

- Allow the student moderate use of the kitchen to prepare his/her own drinks, snacks, etc. provided that the kitchen is kept clean at all times and the rules of the family are followed.
- Provide the student a small space in the kitchen to store a small amount of food/drink if the student is not allowed to store these in his/her room.

**The student is expected to**

- Not to cook, therefore he/she should refrain from using the kitchen to cook. The student may use the kitchen to prepare drinks or snacks, he/she must make sure to keep the area clean at all times. Failure to do so will result in the withdrawal of this facility.

**Second option: Kitchen privileges** (Students purchase food, cook their own food, clean up the kitchen after using it.)

**The host family is expected to**

- Establish a schedule for kitchen use which is convenient for both parties.

**The student is expected to**

- Follow the customs of the family, clean and wash dishes after him/herself and keep the kitchen clean at all times.

### IV. Meals (only for the students who have chosen the Room and Half Board option)

**Students are responsible for their mid-day meal.**

**Meals are not transferable and negotiating with the family in terms of meals is not permitted. Students are not allowed to take anything from the refrigerator or kitchen without permission.**

**The host family is expected to**

- Establish a meal schedule together with the student/s in the house. Once agreed upon, this should be followed by both parties. The host family should inform the student/s in advance if, for any reason, the meal schedule cannot be followed.
- Provide a typical Spanish breakfast which is usually a light breakfast which consists of coffee or hot chocolate with bread butter and jam. If the student desires to eat something else, he/she should discuss it with the family in advance or purchase it himself/herself.

- Provide a varied weekly dinner menu which should consist of a first course, main course and dessert (which in Spain is usually a piece of fruit or a yogurt). Spanish families cook Spanish food and in the mornings they clean the kitchen thoroughly and very rarely they cook in the evenings. Students in room and half board must expect that the meal to be cooked previously that day during the morning and to have it served to them in the evening.
- Listen to students' food preferences. However, the family is under no obligation to provide specific dietary needs that have not been prescribed by a doctor.

**The student is expected to**

- Advise the Housing Department of any special dietary requirements before arriving in Madrid. This request must be accompanied with a doctor's note about food allergies or dietary needs and the housing agreement signed by the student is the student's consent to release this specific dietary information to the prospective host family/ies. Upon arrival, the student should confirm with his/her host family that notification has been received and that the dietary needs can be accommodated.
- Inform his/her host family in advance if he/she is unable to eat at the home stay when expected as well as if the student will not be spending the night at home.
- If not satisfied with the Spanish breakfast, the student is responsible for buying his/her own breakfast.
- Students must adapt to Spanish food as part of the cultural experience. The student must not expect the food to be cooked or taste like the food at his/her home. They will be eating different dishes and tasting food with new cooking styles. If students are unable or unwilling to try new dishes, the host families will also be frustrated.
- It is important that students are prepared and open to trying different foods and cooking styles if they plan on living with a host family. Meal times and meal preparation might also differ from what they have grown accustomed to in the US.

**V. USE OF SPACE**

**All host families are expected to**

- Provide the student a room with a bed, desk, study lamp, chair and closet. If there are two students to a room, there should be one of each available to each student. There should not be any item in the student's room which is for family use.
- **Not to be co-ed accommodation.** They should host students with the same legal gender.
- Respect the students right to privacy in their bedroom and bathroom when they are inside.

**The student is expected to**

- Adapt to the fact that in Spain apartments are smaller than in USA. Sometimes very small. Buildings can be old and rooms distribution does not allow big spaces.
- Respect the family's right to privacy in their bedroom and bathroom.
- The student must inform his/her host family if he/she will not be spending the night at home by phone SMS, WhatsApp, etc.
- Maintain an acceptable level of tidiness and cleanliness in his/her room and of his/herself. **It is not acceptable to leave clothing on the floor.** Bathrooms should be kept neat and clean.
- **The student can use the family common areas,** but should respect the customs of the family. Refrain from inviting guests during the day to the home without the explicit permission of the family. The student should show courtesy in respecting the family's preferences in this matter and should not abuse the request by asking more than once a week. When permission is granted by the family to have a friend over during the day, **the visit should take place in common areas** (Bedrooms are off-limits). Visits by more than one friend at a time are strongly discouraged. No visitors are allowed in the garden area or the entrances of the apartment buildings.

- **Guests, including family members, are not allowed to stay overnight in the host family home.**
- **Sexual activity is not permitted in the host family home or in their building.**
- **Respect the quiet hours in the house** and not listen to music, watch television, use the telephone or any “Skype” type of **services between 11 pm and 8 am**. The student will be allowed to use his or her personal laptop at night, as long as the volume has been muted.
- Refrain from keeping or consuming food in his/her bedroom unless he/she has permission from the family to do otherwise.
- **Storing and consuming alcohol and/or drugs is strictly forbidden.**
- The student is only allowed to smoke cigarettes with the explicit consent of the host family. Furthermore, the student should respect the customs of the family with regard to where and when smoking is permitted.

#### VI. KEYS

- Students should not carry the host family’s address together with the house keys.
- Students are each issued one set of keys at the beginning of the semester.
- Keys issued at check-in are owned by the host family and are to be used only by the student assigned to that family during his/her stay. Students are responsible for their keys until they have officially checked-out of the housing assignment.
- Students should keep their keys with them at all times and always lock the front door.
- The family may request the student/s in their home to leave the keys in the home while the student/s is/are travelling.
- Host family-issued keys may not be duplicated, modified or loaned to another person.
- All lost, stolen or broken keys must be reported to the Office of Student Life.
- Students are responsible for the cost of replacement keys. And the locks if their keys have been lost or stolen.

#### VII. WAHISNG/LAUNDRY

##### The host family is expected to

- **Not to wash any clothes brought by the student from previous travel the student made have made before move-in day.**
- **Not to take care of delicate clothes nor dry cleaning clothes.**
- Wash, dry and iron two loads of clothes per week (one white, one color clothes).

##### The student is expected to

- Take all dirty clothes the student may have from previous travel prior to move-in day to a launderette.
- Take any delicate clothes and dry clean clothes to a dry cleaner themselves.
- Separate colors before handing in the clothes to be laundered.
- Student is expected to maintain him/herself neat and clean.

#### VIII. WIFI AND TELEPHONE ACCESS

##### The student is expected to

- Refrain from downloading movies and games. Coursework may get jeopardized if the line and WIFI access is used up for those two purposes.
- Refrain from using the landline except in the case of an emergency. The student is not permitted to make personal telephone calls without the permission of the family.

- Inform family and friends that he/she is not allowed to receive telephone or Skype calls between 11pm and 8am unless it is an emergency. The student should limit the noise, the number and the length of calls they receive to a minimum, especially if the family expresses concerns about the student talking loudly at night time.

#### **IX. Energy & Water Use**

**Electricity and water are VERY expensive in Spain.**

##### **The student is expected to**

- Make reasonable and responsible use of personal electronic devices (e.g. hairdryers, hair irons, computers etc.) in his/her room and/or bathroom. If the student is in doubt as to what constitutes reasonable use, please contact the Housing Coordinator. For large devices (e.g. heaters), permission must be sought from the family.
- Students must limit showers to one ten-minute shower per day and turn off the faucet whenever possible.
- Make every effort to turn off the lights and any electric devices if they are not being used.
- Students must be aware that most buildings in Spain are provided with central heating. That means, months and hours to turn on heating are approved by the community of landowners. Most apartments do not have air conditioning nor fans.

#### **X. FINANCES**

##### **The host family is expected to**

- Refrain from discussing financial/cost issues with the student. If this occurs, the student is asked to inform the Housing Coordinator. Since the student pays housing costs to the University he/she does not have the authority to negotiate payments.

#### **XI. DAMAGES**

The student will be held responsible for any damage resulting from the abuse or misuse of any item or equipment belonging to the family or abuses in the use of the telephone, electricity or water by the student. All such matters, including compensation which the student may be liable to pay must be handled through the University.

Host families must adhere to regular procedures to avoid bed bug, flees, etc. infestations in the house. As a result, any student who brings bed bugs, flees, etc. into the host family's home will be held responsible for any fumigation costs incurred.

#### **XII. CHECK IN**

**It is the student's responsibility to notify the host family of the time of his/her on Move-in day. The student must fill out the Arrival form which is on the Student Life webpage under Arrivals. He she/may call, e-mail or write a letter to the family as well. Unfortunately, we cannot provide e-mail address information for all the host families.**

#### **XIII. CHECK OUT**

When moving out from a homestay, the student must return the keys and leave his/her room swept clean and in its original condition.

#### XIV. REASSIGNMENTS

Reassignment requests that are made before check-in are considered by the Housing Coordinator. Approval, however, is dependent on the ability to make the change as this may affect other students and is often not in the best interest of the wider community.

**After check-in, any concerns with the Host family option, should be discussed immediately with the Housing Coordinator who will try to resolve the situation.**

Reassignments are not always possible, in circumstances such, as but not limited to:

- No vacant space is available
- Students affected with the change

Students are expected to stay and may not move to another host family until all means of resolving the situation have been reviewed and the change is approved by the housing coordinator.

Students who move without approval may be required to return to their original assignment and/or may be subject to disciplinary action.

SLU-Madrid will not pay for hotel stays or for alternative accommodation during the reassignment period. Except for documented extenuating circumstances, no more than one homestay change per semester will be allowed.

Students who are granted to move to a new assignment are responsible of making their own way into the new assignments

**The University reserves the right to change a housing assignment at any time should it become necessary for any reason.**

#### XV. MEDICAL CONDITIONS

If a student living with a host family were to be hospitalized, the University reserves the right to notify this to the student's host family for the host family to look after him/her during the hospitalization period and to take clothes, phone charger, computer, books and other personal belongings to him/her, etc.

Saint Louis University – Madrid Campus reserves the right to notify the student's home campus authorities and the student's family in case of a student's hospitalization.

#### XVI. MEDICAL PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

Students with any medical pre-existing conditions (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. Students may use their Sanitas Medical Insurance which is included in the tuition price. Students 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](mailto:dr.rvborras@gmail.com) and/or SLU-Madrid Counseling Center at [counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu](mailto:counselingcenter-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.

#### **XVII. VERY IMPORTANT**

**When signing/confirming the Student Housing Agreement you are confirming that you:**

- are aware of all the statements written above on this document;
- are aware of the host family living expectations and norms;
- will comply with everything mentioned and stated on this document;
- will comply with the [housing payments and the housing refund policies](#) .