Phone Information Saint Louis University — Madrid Campus

We imagine that you would be interested in obtaining local cell phone accessibility. However, because students visiting Spain are non-residents, you can run into limitations when trying to contract cell phone services. The following is a summary of what is available and will give you an idea of what you can get depending on your individual needs and situations. This is general information. Saint Louis University Madrid Campus is not related nor has any interests in any of the providers listed in this document.

For students who arrive with unlocked cellular phones from their own country, you can purchase a Spanish SIM card for your phone. Proceed to any of the companies that are listed below and request a SIM card or you may prefer to purchase a Spanish phone, here are some tips:

**How do I purchase a pre-paid phone or SIM Card?**

You can purchase a phone or SIM card at Spain’s main department store, El Corte Inglés, where various phone operators like Movistar, Vodafone or Orange market phones and calls and data packages.

Please note that you will need a copy of your passport, as well as the original in order to purchase a SIM card or a phone with calls and data services. You will find these 3 operators within the department stores cellular phone section and they will all have various call and data packages on sale.

**How do I recharge my phone with money?**

If you have a prepaid SIM or phone, when you run out of money (or “saldo”) on your phone, you can recharge it at most through ATM machines.

**How do I purchase a phone with a long-term contract?**

You can sign up for a phone with a yearly contract at El Corte Inglés with the same companies mentioned above. You will need to provide the same documentation, and in addition, you must have a Spanish Bank Account to pay monthly bills (not recommended for students without a Spanish residence card (TIE). Please note that some contracts require a commitment of a designated number of months. This is called “permanencia.” If you break your contract before this minimum time is up, you maybe be required to pay an extra fee.
How much does it cost to use a cell phone?

Rates vary between operators, so be sure to ask for the rates prior to your purchase. It is quite expensive to make international calls from a cell phone, in some cases costing over a euro a minute!

Using your personal phone

Contact your US provider to get it unlocked if it’s not already, so it can be used with other SIM cards or ask for an international calling package. Find out if using your Smartphone with other SIM cards may affect your Apps, contacts or other settings on the phone, such as iMessaging, Whatsapp etc... If these Apps will work the same regardless of what kind of SIM you use in your phone and we would recommend this option. If you are thinking about just using your US mobile service while abroad, consider you will pay high roaming rates to your US provider, may have connectivity issues and you’ll still have to dial internationally when texting and calling locally. It’s not practical to use your US number while in Spain in case of an emergency.