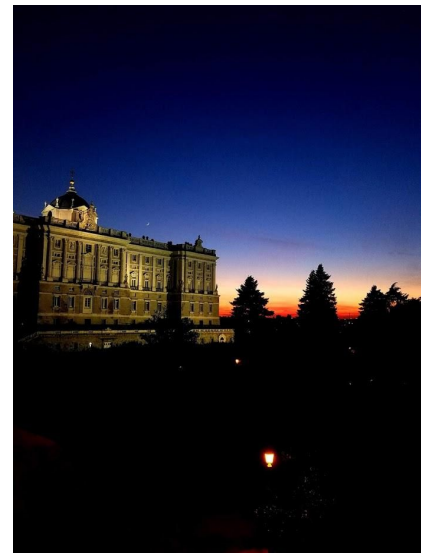


Exchange at Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
Masters of Architecture
WS18

My study abroad in Madrid was an experience I will never forget. I had the ability to study in a language I was still learning, meet tons of new people, and most importantly embrace a different way of life. As a mostly German person, the Spanish lifestyle is quite opposite to what I am used to and it left me often frustrated and confused. By the end of my stay, I have learned that that is just the way things work here and to just go with the flow.



The first struggle was to find a good place to live. Because I was only there for a short time, I wanted to live in the center but not pay too much for it. Rent in Madrid is extremely affordable, but only if you sign a year contract. So I ended up paying way more than I wanted, and in addition, I had to spend a week at a hostel until the place was ready for me to move in. Despite the initial struggle, I really enjoyed where I lived and do not regret choosing the place. I moved to Madrid a few weeks before Uni started so I could get my metro card, sightsee and meet people before the stress of Uni takes over.

Madrid has an extremely good program for young people, especially international young people. There is a group call Citylife, and they organize tons of events, trips and just meet ups between people with similar interests. I immediately started to go to meet and greets, language exchanges, parties, and even found a group that I can play football with and stay in shape during my exchange. These events is where I met most of my friends during my time in Madrid, mostly because I have found people with similar interests such as football.

After my initial introduction to Madrid, it was finally time to start Uni. There was only welcome day for the Uni, where they informed me that the information I have put on my learning agreement was irrelevant and now was the time to choose courses. The following day, the courses were set to begin. As exchange student, we were asked to choose Bachelor courses, but had the opportunity to choose Masters courses or even engineering courses from a different university. When I asked about the Masters courses, they told me they had no information about this and I need to ask someone else, but didn't tell me who to ask. They then told us that the office hours for the international office is 10-12 monday through wednesday. So the next day, I go to the international office at 10 am and there is a really long line. It took me almost 2 hours to talk to someone, and when I asked about the masters courses they still had no information. There was about 1 month of these situations until I finally had my courses set, and none I had listed on my learning agreement.



I ended up with 3 Bachelor courses and 1 Masters course. I did not learn much in the Bachelors courses because, well, I've already completed my Bachelor. The only advantage of these courses is that we would occasionally take trips to visit architecture in Madrid. My Masters course, on the other hand, was extremely intriguing. In fact, I wish Uni Liechtenstein would have courses at this level. It was a course on textile architecture, learning the physics behind it, to computer programs that can calculate the textiles, and to the details of how these textiles function. In the end, we had to complete a group project that asked us to design a textile structure. Our group decided to enter our project into a competition and ended up winning a 600 Euro prize in the category textile architecture. We will go to Frankfurt in May to officially accept our prize for our hard work.

As a summary, the exchange was very fruitful. I have met some lifetime friends and am returning to Madrid in April to visit them. I was able to take trips to Valencia, Zaragoza, Cordoba, Sevilla, Granada, Porto, Lisbon, Toledo and Segovia during my time in Spain at a pretty affordable cost. I was able to really get to know the city of Madrid and sightsee lots of beautiful sights during my time. Most notably, the group I played football with played in Retiro park, so every few days I would walk past beautiful monuments, crowds of people and the beautiful landscape of the park. Finally, as a huge football fan, I of course had to visit the stadiums of Madrid. The new Wanda stadium pictured below was most interesting because my textile professor designed the textile portion of this stadium. In the end, Madrid is definitely to be recommended, but you need to have some patience with the organization of the University.

