

Experience Report

Universidad Pontificia Comillas ICADE WS 2024/25



STAP – Studies Abroad Program Bachelor of Economics

5th Semester



The university

I spent my semester abroad at the Universidad Pontificia Comillas (ICADE) in Madrid. I am a business student, so I was on the ICADE campus, which is very close to the city center. Comillas is a private catholic university and even has a church inside the building, but you are not confronted with religious elements if you don't want to be. The building reminded me of a high school, as there were many rooms that resembled classrooms. At the entrance, there is even a reception where you can ask anything for anything you need, for example directions to a classroom.

Comillas offers various voluntary workshops. I participated in the choir ("Voces creativas"). It was a rather small choir and at the end of the semester we held a Christmas concert. It was open to all skill levels, so you could join as a complete beginner or as an advanced singer.

Many exchange students were from the U.S., while the rest was very diverse, which made it fun to meet people with different backgrounds.

In general, the professors were very kind. Unlike to the classes at the University of Cologne, the classes at Comillas were interactive, attendance was mandatory and there were only around 25-40 students per class.

My courses

1. Negotiation Techniques (6 ECTS)
2. Organizational Behavior (6 ECTS)
3. Business, Society & Purpose (3 ECTS)
4. Paid Media y Marketing de Buscadores (3 ECTS)
5. Business Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility (6 ECTS)

Negotiation Techniques 6 ECTS, Antonio Ramirez del Rio

Negotiation Techniques was a practical course. Most of the time we read cases and then negotiated them in groups with our classmates. Sometimes, we had to prepare group presentations. The professor was the most relaxed professor I've ever had - super nice and fun. We had to read a book and take a test in the middle of the semester, but the test was very easy. Everything in this class is "negotiable", so we didn't have a final exam (only a short personal reflection). The grading system was also negotiated with the professor. However, he was strict about attendance and punctuality, although participation was not graded. The class took place on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8 a.m, but we "negotiated" with him to start at 8:15 a.m.:) All in all, it was the course with the least workload.

Organizational Behavior 6 ECTS, Oscar Pérez Zapata

The professor was the funniest professor I've ever had. It was also the most interactive class of all. We received participation grades, had a group project in the end of the class,

which was enjoyable. For the project, we had to write a report and give a short presentation. There was a midterm and a final exam, but you didn't have to study too much for them. The most important thing in this course was to take notes, listen and participate, as the slides weren't very helpful for the exam.

Business, Society & Purpose, 3 ECTS, Carlos Ballesteros García

In this class we worked on a group project, which was very interesting and practical. We collaborated with a real company, start-up or similar organization to help them create a media plan. There was no final exam – just a personal reflection about the course.

Paid Media y Marketing de Buscadores, 3 ECTS, Blanca Torres Antiñolo

In this class, the professor primarily gave presentations. At the end, there was a final exam and a group project, where we had to develop a new product for an already existing company and create a media plan. Additionally, we had to complete two Google Ads certificates at home and follow the course online. It was quite a heavy workload, but I still enjoyed it. The professor was very thorough about checking attendance.

Business Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility, 6 ECTS, Santiago Ojeda Couchoud

I expected this class to be super boring, but I really enjoyed it. The professor was super kind and enthusiastic. The class was interactive, and participation was graded. Attendance was monitored, but if you had a valid for being absent it wasn't an issue. We did a lot of Kahoot-Quizzes, which made a significant part of our grades. The final exam is open-book and very easy 😊

Preparation

The whole process before my semester abroad was in general easy. The important thing is to check the deadlines of your university. You can always text the Erasmus coordinator from the university, and they respond quickly and kindly.

When selecting your classes, I recommend choosing more than you need during the initial registration phase. Many popular courses fill up quickly. You can still change your classes after the first week, but by then, most options are already taken.

Accommodation

Try to find an apartment as early as possible. It can be tricky to get a good and reasonably priced place. I lived with six other people and paid 850€ per month. I booked

my apartment through Spotahome. My landlord also charged an extra fee, so be cautious when choosing your accommodation. I recommend living with other people, as it is a great way to get to know new people and also cultures. You also have to be careful that you choose valid agencies when booking an apartment. A lot of people got scammed, so their place didn't exist or was a total mess.

Life in Madrid

Madrid is the most beautiful city in my eyes. I was there from August until the end of December and it only rained twice during that time ☺. If you enjoy nightlife, Madrid is perfect for you - there are parties every day and the city literally never sleeps.

Citylife Madrid is an organization that offers many events, like parties and trips. I recommend getting in touch with them, as they can provide information about almost anything. You can also become a member to receive discounts for parties and the Fitup-Gym.

The metro system in Madrid is the best I've ever experienced. For some relaxation, you should visit Retiro Parque and the Parque del Oeste. These parks are amazing and you won't feel as if you were in a big city. Spain also has high-speed trains (which are very punctual), making it easy to visit other cities. It only takes about three hours to get to Barcelona, Valencia or Sevilla. During my time there, I visited Valencia, Sevilla, Toledo, Salamanca and Segovia.

Conclusion

Would I choose Madrid and the university again for my semester abroad? Absolutely!

It was one of the best times of my life. The workload of the university was lighter than in Cologne since you only had to pass. The city has my heart - It never gets boring. I met many amazing people and tried new things, like Bachata dance classes, which I highly recommend. I went there with my friends and it was always super fun! (I had never danced before in my life)