Preparing for Study Abroad

- To maximize the study abroad experience, students should prepare themselves by learning about their host country, its history, and culture. Students might want to begin with [http://www.britannica.com/](http://www.britannica.com/) for a summary.
- Students should know what is happening in the news in the host city by reading the local newspaper at: [http://www.allyoucanread.com/spanish-newspapers/#Madrid](http://www.allyoucanread.com/spanish-newspapers/#Madrid)
- Engaging with and adapting to a different culture is an inherent component of study abroad. Students may find the following websites useful to learn about intercultural communication before they leave home: [http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/educators/enrichment/culturematters/index.html](http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/educators/enrichment/culturematters/index.html)
- Customs and traditions in the host country are different from those at home. To learn a little about the local customs and traditions students may want to visit the following website: [www.hthstudents.com](http://www.hthstudents.com)
- Students and their parents should refer to the Office of International Programs website ([www.bc.edu/international](http://www.bc.edu/international)) and specifically to the Study Abroad Handbook for more information regarding the experience abroad.
- Prior to departure, students will meet with their International Study Advisor at an orientation to help them further prepare for their study-abroad experience.

On-Site Contact Information

- Ana Peláez, the Boston College On-Site Coordinator, is available in case of an emergency on a 24-hour-basis. Students should make a note of Ana’s contact information before they go abroad, and we encourage students to share this information with their family.
  
  **Dr. Ana Peláez, BC in Madrid Resident Director**
  
  **Office phone:** 34 91 544 89 77*
  
  **24 Hour Mobile phone:** 34 626 999 669*
  
  **Fax:** 34 91 544 89 77*
  
  **Email:** bcmadrid@bc.edu
  
  *When dialing from the U.S., students must dial 011 first (and there is a 6-hour time difference).

- **University Address:**
  
  Comillas
  
  C/ Alberto Aguilera, 23 - 28015 Madrid
  
  Despacho 406 (Ala Este)
  
  **Tel:** 34 91 542 28 00
  
  **Fax:** 34 91 559 65 69
• Housing Coordinator
  Paloma Landecho
  palandechobc@gmail.com
  Cell phone: 34 692 116 473

Travel Information
• Students are responsible for making their own travel arrangements. BC in Madrid Comillas students will be met at the airport and picked up the official arrival day, provided they supply the necessary travel information one month prior to departure to the on-site coordinator, Ana Peláez.
• Passport/Visa information:
  Students will need to obtain the following travel documents in order to study in Spain:
  A passport (valid at least six months beyond the estimated return date)
  A student visa (students should visit the Consulate of Spain’s website for information regarding student visa requirements and procedures). Their website is: http://www.maece.es/subwebs/Consulados/Boston/es/home/Paginas/Home.aspx
• Students will receive visa workshop and pre-departure orientation information via e-mail. All workshops and orientations are mandatory.

Academics
Program Dates and Academic Calendar:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Spring 2014</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>August 28th</strong>: Arrival date (leave on August 27th)</td>
<td><strong>January 8</strong>: Arrival date</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>August 29th - 30th</strong>: Orientation Comillas</td>
<td><strong>January 9-10</strong>: Comillas orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>September 2nd</strong>: Classes begin</td>
<td><strong>January 13</strong>: Classes begin</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>November 1st</strong>: Holiday</td>
<td><strong>April 11-21</strong>: Break</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>December 6th</strong>: Holiday</td>
<td><strong>April 28-May 23</strong>: Exams</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>December 9th – 20th</strong>: Final exam dates</td>
<td><strong>May 24</strong>: Departure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>December 21st</strong>: Departure date</td>
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* Students should not purchase airline tickets until dates are posted.
  • BC-sponsored activities:
    Welcome dinner
    Tapas with Spanish students
    Segovia, one-day trip
    Madrid bus tour
    Toledo, one-day trip
    La Caixa Museum
    Cooking lessons
    Thyssen Museum
    El Escorial, one-day trip
    Córdoba and Granada, three-day trip
    Prado Museum
    Play - Golden Age literature
    Bullfight
    Flamenco Show
BC students may also participate in volunteer activities, student associations, clubs and internships. Please contact the on-site coordinator, Ana Peláez, for details.

- For course selection information, please refer to OIP Program Description Course Catalog.
- Course approval information will be found at: http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/academics/courseapproval.html
- Information about Transcripts and grades is available at: http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/academics/transcripts.html
- As a BC student, you are required to take a full load of courses at your host institution abroad. BC program participants can refer to the course load requirement table.
- If you have a learning disability, you should discuss with your ISA whether your host university is able to make appropriate accommodations; if so, bring documentation from your doctor or the BC Disabilities Office to support any request for accommodations at your host university.

**Housing**

- Home stay and residence halls are the housing options available to students attending Comillas. Students are required to fill out housing forms included in the BC application package. BC in Madrid is responsible for housing assignments for Comillas students.
- Students will be billed by BC for housing. Additional information about the estimated cost of housing may be found at: http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/offices/international/financesawards.html
- Meals:
  - Home-stay: All meals included.
  - Residence halls: Most meals included, except weekends in some residences. Most of these will close for Easter and Christmas breaks.
- Local transportation: Students will be provided with a transportation pass that will cover their local travel during their semester in Madrid. ICADE courses are located in the Alberto Aguilera Campus in central Madrid. Sociales and International Relations courses take place in the suburban Cantoblanco campus and can be reached by “Cercanías” commuter rail.
- Cell phones are supplied at orientation. Costs are separate from the program.

**Wellness, Health and Safety**

- HTH Worldwide Insurance Services is an emergency health and emergency services provider. All registered BC students are covered by OIP’s blanket policy while living and traveling outside of the United States. For more information, visit the following website: http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/travel-health-safety.html. You are encouraged to consult HTH on-line services for health and safety information about all world destinations, travel illnesses, and as a resource for international medical providers.
- Make sure that you have had any required or recommended vaccinations for your travel destinations by consulting the Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov.
- Students are advised to visit the U.S. State Department website: http://www.state.gov/ for important travel information including travel advisories.
- Adjusting to a new culture and environment can be stressful. Students will have a smoother transition by making sure that they prepare to remain healthy. Following are some websites that provide important information and advice about how to have a healthy and safe experience abroad:
Be aware that the manner in which medical help is obtained, the way patients are treated, the conditions of medical facilities, and how health care is afforded may be quite different from U.S. practices. U.S. health care values, assumptions, and methods are not universally practiced; even notions regarding the onset of an illness or the timing of expert attention may be considered culturally based.

Refer to your Study Abroad Handbook for further information about health and safety issues including women, LGBT, disabled people and others.

In the event of a large-scale emergency, such as a natural disaster, you should first text your onsite coordinator; follow the emergency procedures discussed in the onsite orientation; and call or text your parents to let them know where you are and that you are safe.

The emergency number in Spain is 112.

Students are required to visit the OIP website for additional information about Health and Safety:
http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/travel-health-safety.html

BC emergency contact information:
OIP (617) 552-3827 (Monday to Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.)
BCPD (617) 552-4444 (outside of normal business hours)

Students are subject to the laws of their host country, so if students choose to drink alcohol abroad, they should always drink responsibly and be knowledgeable about their host country’s laws by visiting:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#drug_offenses

Finances

The OIP website provides information about estimated expenses for study abroad:
http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/offices/international/financesawards.html

Banking information: Students are encouraged to use ATM machines. Please contact onsite coordinator.

Scholarships and Financial Aid information can be found at:
http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/Scholarship_Opportunities.html

Returning to BC

Students should complete a Program Evaluation. Upon completion of their program, OIP will e-mail the link to the evaluation

Students may mentor an exchange student from the host university by contacting oipexchange@bc.edu

It is not uncommon when students return from studying abroad to experience “reverse” culture shock.

References

Suggested readings:
The New Spaniards by John Hooper
Spain is Different by Helen Wattley-Ames
Lonely Planet Spain or Let’s Go! Spain travel guidebooks
APUNE (Asociación de Programas Universitarios Norteamericanos en Espana): http://www.apune.org/
www.descubremadrid.org

• Student and parent guides at http://www.studyabroad.com/guides/index.html