



## Tips on Studying Abroad at Escuela de Alta Dirección y Administración in Spain

Want to know what it's like to study abroad? Want to know what your peers think? Your fellow Georgia Tech students who have previously gone on this exchange program gave their opinions so that future participants have the inside scoop on their host institution and host country.

### Preparation & Getting Started

- There was no difficulty in getting classes pre-approved in the MBA program at GT and logistically for credit transfers things went extremely smoothly.
- Course registration at the host school was simple as they had a set course schedule for all incoming students.

### Classes

- 36 students per class
- Student body is very diverse, 17 nationalities of 36 students; only 3 Americans; many were from South and Central America and Western Europe.
- A lot of busy work was required but the assignments were not difficult by themselves.
- Classes had a more international focus than most of the classes at Tech and were based on case studies with little core knowledge education.
- Very few exams, homework assignments were long and time consuming – some were challenging in nature but teachers would occasionally fail to make a concluding point for why they had assigned things or what you should learn from them.
- Classes met from 9am – 1pm daily.



### Housing

- I located housing on my own. This process was difficult as I was in a graduate program and the school did not have campus housing. Locating housing from abroad became very difficult and was semi-nerve wracking as it really required you to be present because the housing market availability moved very quickly.
- A good site was [www.loquo.com](http://www.loquo.com).
- I found a flat centrally located, paid more for the convenience but rooms in flats were available at all levels.
- I had 6 other roommates from 5 countries so it was an interesting dynamic in the flat that was good for learning lessons about other cultures.
- Not many of the facilities available were truly modern so water would get cold in the winter and occasionally things would break as can be expected in older flats.
- My cost was 450 euros/month.

### Cultural Differences

- I met some really great friends that I think I will stay in touch with for the rest of my life from all over the world. They were all very supportive and interested in learning about the US and where I had come from as I was in learning about where they were from.
- Working styles were much different, more relationship oriented than task oriented.
- I wasn't fully aware of the separatist movement from the rest of Spain, learning about that was really surprising. I found hearing different perspectives about goals in life to be interesting too, in America its mostly personal goals and a lot of people I met were interested in helping family or their country to improve.
- I was stereotyped but in a comical manner. Nothing harmful was ever said about me being American. I was actually surprised to hear that a lot of people from other countries really respect and appreciate what the US does for other nations. Many of these people came from countries that in the press are spun to not like America.
- Be open minded and try to learn as much as you can as quick as you can but stay true to yourself. Also, if you need it, take a deep breath and try to connect with something familiar, sports, fitness, etc that brings you an escape. You can't change your entire self just because you are in another country, just try to adapt where necessary to fit in without losing yourself.

\*These comments do not reflect the views of GT's Office of International Education. They are based on students' individual opinions and are, therefore, not necessarily representative of all student experiences.



## Transportation & Travel

- The shuttle bus leaving the airport is slightly more expensive but is a lot quicker to get to the center of the city.
- There are numerous local trains and subways to get you from A to B. Get a guide book before coming to familiarize yourself how they will help you get to where you need to go.
- The train will run until 2 am.
- Costa Brava was incredible. I recommend going there and specifically stopping into the Dali Museum in Figueres.
- Madrid also shows an interesting perspective counter to that of Barcelona. I really liked Parc Guell and the Gaudi buildings in the city as well...if you go to Parc Guell walk to the 'Pont de tres cruxes' – incredible city view.
- I had to fly to Miami for my visa which was a pain. I had a hard time getting an appointment but once I got in contact with the office everything was okay.



## Lifestyle

- It is easy to meet other students.
- I mostly socialized with international students: German, Guatemalan, French...
- Catalan is local language so it made it difficult at times in public to communicate.
- I enjoyed the walking tour of the gothic district as well and there are some wineries outside of the city that offer a reasonably cheap and fun excursion from the city.
- For a true experience in local indulgences go to Xampanyeria (really cheap cava and sandwiches).
- Chupitos is a chain that's fun and cheap.

## Finances

- I spent \$9,000 USD.
- Know what your goals are before you go... do you want to travel around a lot, do you want to just really indulge in the city you are at, etc. Allocate your money to what you want to get the most out of your trip from and stick to it...it goes fast, especially with the poor exchange rate.

## Packing

- Take:
  - camera
  - computer
  - clothes for all occasions
  - language & tour guides
  - mementos from home
- It gets cold in December, so take a coat, gloves, and scarf!

## Food

- Cooking at home is a good way to save money for other things. Grocery stores are prevalent.

## Communication

- I used skype.
- Be sure to live in a flat with good internet connection. This is a viable alternative.
- Calling cards and prepaid cell phones are both expensive to call the US. Some schools get special plans that offer reasonable rates from a mobile.
- Internet cafes are abundant but internet in flats is spotty.

## Participant Profiles

Please see information of contributing students below. If a blog or website is listed, feel free to take a look! Also, if an e-mail address is listed, you may contact that student if you have any questions about their study abroad experience.

Aaron Dube, MBA, Fall 2006  
aaron.dube@mba.gatech.edu