

SPANISH STUDIES ABROAD

The Center for Cross-Cultural Study



Student Handbook

FOR STUDENTS STUDYING IN
ALICANTE

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Mission Statement

The mission of SSA is to promote in-depth understanding of Spanish-speaking countries for our students, through specifically designed academically rigorous university-level and cultural travel programs. We consider all of our students to be willing to cross cultural boundaries, to live as members of another culture, and to thus learn about others as they learn about themselves.

In accordance with our mission, SSA promotes equal opportunities within our programs and does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, age, physical ability, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristics. We believe in educating students on cultural tolerance and sensitivity, acceptance of differences and inclusiveness.

Travel Information

BOOKING YOUR FLIGHT

In order to allow flexibility to our students in making their flight arrangements, we do not offer a group flight option. Please note that **when booking your flight, you should always refer to your program calendar** which is located in your acceptance packet link which was sent to you in your acceptance email.

***Note:** Most flights to Spain are overnight. Students should plan to depart from the U.S. the day before the program start date indicated in your program calendar. Students should make their flight arrangements from their departure city to the city of Alicante and must be sure to check their baggage the whole way through to Alicante. For return flights, students should plan to depart from their host homes or the student residence no later than noon on the last day of the program.*

Once you have your flight itinerary, you must submit the information via your online account. If you have any delays or last-minute changes in your flight itinerary, please inform our U.S. and Spain office at info@spanishstudies.org and your parents or guardians. **If you are en route to Alicante, you will need to also inform the Alicante Resident Director, Pepa Vives: pepa.vives@spanishstudies.org.**

ARRIVAL

SSA staff will be waiting for you at the Arrivals Gate of the airport on the program start date typically from 10 am to 2 pm*to assist you in getting a taxi to your homestay. If you arrive earlier, please wait at the Arrivals Gate for the SSA Staff for assistance and instructions on how to get to your host family. If you arrive later than 2 pm, you should go directly to your host family using the detailed instructions given to you in your Departure Newsletter. You will be responsible for making transportation arrangements on your own and for all costs involved.

****Please note that the time the staff will be at the airport is subject to change and will be confirmed in the Departure Newsletter that will be sent to you a few weeks before the start date of the program.***

A taxi from the airport to the center of Alicante should cost around 30 Euros, and we recommend that you ask the taxi driver for a receipt. There is also a bus ([C6](#)) you can take every 20 minutes from the airport to the center of Alicante, which costs approximately 4 Euros. If you are not a seasoned traveler, SSA does not recommend you take the bus on your first day. We advise students to exchange at least \$100 USD to Euros before departing for Spain, or upon arrival at the airport.

On the day of arrival, the SSA group will meet at 8:30 pm at a centrally located hotel to have a brief Welcome Meeting and to enjoy "tapas" together. In the case you arrived later than 2 pm and were not greeted by SSA staff at the airport, go directly to your homestay or to the student residence and follow the instructions in the newsletter. Your family will also have instructions on how to join the group for this first meeting.

If you lose your luggage, you must file a claim at the “lost luggage,” or “*equipajes perdidos*” desk in the luggage area of the airport. In the case of luggage delay, you are responsible for claiming your own luggage. You can either have them send it to your homestay address in Spain. **Please inform the SSA staff if your luggage is lost.**

ORIENTATION

The day after you arrive in Alicante, you will have a concise orientation to get acquainted with one another and take care of some of the important introductory meetings before settling into the program.

Everyone will meet at a centrally located building in Alicante to give you important information about the program. After that, you will take a bus tour around the main sites of the city. The group will also visit the university campus following the same itinerary the public bus does every single day, to help familiarize yourself with the bus schedule. After the tour, you will return to your homestay and join your host family for lunch. **Orientation is mandatory for all students.**

Note: Orientation is a busy time, and you may not get a chance to call home immediately upon arrival. If your family would like confirmation of your arrival, they should contact our U.S. office where we will have information on the safe arrival of our students.

Getting Ready to Go to Alicante

Before you depart, there are a few things you need to take care of. Please read carefully!

ONLINE ACCOUNT

All students studying with SSA have an online account. To access your account, go to www.spanishstudies.org and click the “Login” link at the top of the page. You will then be prompted to enter your username and password. If you have forgotten your password, you may request a new one on the login page.

ITEMS YOU MUST UPLOAD TO YOUR ACCOUNT

In order to finalize your acceptance in a SSA program, you must submit the following items via your online account as soon as possible. All pre-departure items will be due within two weeks of the application deadline.

- Passport Information and Copy
- Vaccination Information
- Online Language Placement Exam Results
- Course Selection
- Housing Questionnaire
- Health Statement Form
- Academic Pledge and Program Conditions & Release Statements
- Program Deposit (due within 10 days of acceptance if your school does not cover this)
- Arrival Information
- Speaking Partners Form
- Digital Photo
- SSA Website/Online Application Survey (optional)

PASSPORT

To travel to Spain you need a valid passport. For U.S. citizens, the most convenient place to apply for a passport is at your local post office. **If you do not yet have a passport, apply for one immediately!** It can take up to 4-6 weeks to receive your passport. If the start of your program is less than 90 days away and you have not yet applied for your Spanish visa (see below), you will have to pay for expedited service of your passport. Expedited service still takes about 2-3 weeks. The U.S. State Department’s website provides details on passports and current processing times [here](#). You may also inquire via telephone at (877) 487-2778. Students who are not U.S. citizens should contact the appropriate government agency in their home country for passport information.

Students who already have a passport should verify that it will be valid through the program dates and for at least 6 months after the SSA program concludes. To ensure that the passport is valid, it must also be signed on the page that is beside the page with your picture and personal information.

You should NOT be carrying your passport around with you in Alicante. We recommend that you bring a photocopy of your passport which you can keep in your wallet just in case you need it.

STUDENT VISA

The visa is an endorsement on the passport allowing residence in Spain for six months or a year. Citizens of the U.S. and various other nations may enter Spain for up to 90 days as tourists without a visa. If you are not a citizen of the U.S., you should check immediately with the appropriate Spanish embassy for your home country to learn about what requirements you must complete for a student visa.

U.S. citizens participating in short-term programs (January, May, or summer) do not need a student visa since these programs last less than 90 days. **Semester or academic-year students are required by Spanish law to obtain a student visa.** You must apply for your visa at the Spanish consulate holding jurisdiction over your home or school address. Check the Visa Handbook that you received in your online acceptance packet to see which consulate you should use.

If you are going to Spain for a semester or academic-year program, you should contact the Spanish consulate immediately; the visa process can be lengthy. Keep in mind that if the Spanish Consulate nearest you may require an appointment, if so, you must make one now.*

** Note: Consulates typically will not accept an application submitted more than 3 months before the program departure date. Please check with your consulate for individual rules and restrictions.*

If you have not yet provided your passport information to SSA, please contact our U.S. office right away. This information must be included in the letter to the Visa Officer of the Spanish Consulate, which will be provided to you by SSA and which must accompany your application for a student visa.

NOTE:

1. Each consulate has different requirements for the visa application process. Students should always follow the instructions given to them by their specific consulate over anything they are told by another person or even by SSA. While we are familiar with the student visa application process, we may not be aware of all the different requirements of each consulate or any changes to their policies. If you notice conflicting information, you should do what the consulate tells you.

2. At most consulates, you can still make an appointment even if you don't have your passport yet! However, you need a passport in order to apply for your visa, so make sure you have plenty of time if you need to apply for both.

SEMESTER STUDENTS

The most recent information from the Spanish Consulates indicates that it typically takes 4-8 weeks to issue a semester student visa once your application has been submitted. Please check with your individual consulate to confirm, and be sure to follow your consulate's specific instructions for what materials to bring to your appointment in addition to the visa application.

ACADEMIC YEAR STUDENTS

The Academic Year visa process can take up to and sometimes more than 20 weeks.

All Spanish consulates now require a background check with Spanish translations and apostilles and a medical certificate for students staying in Spain longer than 6 months. Police Criminal Record clearance must be verified by fingerprints. It cannot be older than 3 months from the application date. Appointments are different at each consulate, so read the website for the consulate in your jurisdiction carefully.

You must get a police record from the countries you have lived in during the past 5 years. A U.S. Criminal Record must be either from:

a) The Department of Justice of the State where you have lived in the past 5 years. It must be legalized with the Apostille of the Hague Convention from the corresponding Secretary of the State. **(*Please note that local police background checks will not be accepted!)**

- OR -

b) FBI Records for International purposes issued by the U.S. Department of Justice – Federal Bureau of Investigation and must be legalized with the Apostille of the Hague Convention from the U.S. Department of State (in this case the Apostille must be from the Department of State and **not** from the Secretary of State).

- Check out this FBI [webpage](#) for the most current instructions for obtaining a background check. These background checks can take up to 12 weeks to be processed, so please apply early!
- The U.S. Department of State issues apostilles. Apostille Certificates are issued for documents destined for use in countries that are parties to the Hague Apostille Convention. The most current instructions for obtaining an apostille can be found on the U.S. Department of State [website](#).

***NOTE:** For documents issued by a state authority, it must be done by the Secretary of State of your State. If the document has been issued by a federal authority, the Apostille must be from the U.S. Department of State.

SHORT TERM STUDENTS

U.S. citizens attending a January, May, or Summer Term program do not need a visa. Non-U.S. citizens may be required to apply for a visa, even for short term programs in Spain. Consult the Spanish consulate in your home country about visa requirements well in advance of the program start date.

BUDGETING FOR YOUR TRIP

Below you will find a detailed estimate, which explains how to budget for personal expenses and other costs not covered by your SSA program fees.

	<u>Semester</u>	<u>Semester</u> (integrated)	<u>Short-Term</u> (per term)	<u>Short-Term</u> (both terms)
Books*	\$375	\$375	\$105	\$105
Bus transportation	320	400	80	160
Every-day & going out expenses	2,500	3,000	600	1,100
Theater/concert evenings	115	115	n/a	n/a
Weekend trips on your own	1,300	1,300	525	950
Flight	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300
<u>Miscellaneous</u>	<u>915</u>	<u>915</u>	<u>295</u>	<u>395</u>
Total	\$6,825	\$7,405	\$2,905	\$4,100

*You will not need to purchase books prior to your arrival in Spain. Your professors will inform you of the materials you will need and where to purchase them.

These figures are general guidelines and may be different for each person's budget and lifestyle in Alicante. We figure the average student will spend about \$75 per week while in Alicante. Of course, some will spend more and others will spend less. Think about your lifestyle and budget accordingly. For a weekend of independent travel (remember- SSA sponsored study trips are included in the program fees), you should plan to spend approximately \$425. A drink and *tapa* at a café cost approximately \$3. A two page airmail letter to North America costs about \$1. You should plan on spending about \$80 per month for bus transportation. If you stay out late at night, you should plan to take a taxi home. The cost is about \$8-10 per ride, depending on the distance.

In total, we recommend that students budget **a minimum of about \$500 per month** for expenses in Alicante. Although lodging, all meals, laundry, and study tours are included in the program fees, students will also want to have extra spending money for going out with friends, making weekend trips on their own, or buying gifts to take back home.

Note: The costs given above are estimates and daily fluctuations in the official rate of exchange between the U.S. dollar and the Euro will affect the purchasing power of U.S. dollars in Spain. You can check the latest exchange rates at www.xe.com/ucc.

INCOME TAXES

U.S. residents who are abroad during the spring semester will need to make arrangements for filing federal and state income taxes. Individuals who are temporarily living abroad can request an extension on the deadline for filing their federal income tax return. This extension is generally until June 15. Please note that if money is owed to the government and an extension is filed, interest will be charged on the amount if it is not received by April 15. For more information on federal income tax laws and regulations, please consult the IRS official web page www.irs.gov or call (800) 829-1040. Individuals should contact their state government for information on extending state taxes.

POWER OF ATTORNEY

If your signature will be needed for any official or legal document while in Spain, you should make the necessary arrangements for a “power of attorney” to be held by parents, guardians, or another appropriate person to act on your behalf. This can be done by writing out in detail the specific duties that this person will have, (i.e. signing a check; corresponding with the school or university about financial or academic matters; or obtaining medical records and information, in case of an emergency). This letter should then be notarized so that it is legal and official. Public notaries are available at many banks, post offices, public libraries, and town halls.

ABSENTEE VOTING

If you are a U.S. citizen and will be abroad during an election, you may vote via absentee ballot. **You should apply to do this at least 2 weeks before you leave home.** U.S. citizens can get more information, as well as the forms needed to apply for the absentee ballot, by visiting the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at www.fvap.gov. Be sure to also call the local city clerk’s office of the city where you are registered to vote.

SOCIAL MEDIA

While you may have already followed us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#), students should also plan to join the location-specific page for [SSA Alicante](#). This page is for alumni, current students, and prospective students, so it will be a great resource to you as you begin to prepare for your program and meet fellow Alicante students. For all program-related questions for SSA staff, please email info@spanishstudies.org.

PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION

Students accepted into the program will be invited to participate in an Accepted Students’ Orientation before their departure. During this video call, students will be able to meet with SSA staff, and sometimes alumni, to get a run-down on how to prepare for your trip and what you can expect when studying abroad in Alicante. These meetings usually take place around 2-3 weeks before the program start date and will be confirmed by your Student Services Advisor.

PRE-DEPARTURE NEWSLETTER

SSA students receive a Pre-Departure Newsletter by email several weeks prior to the program start date. The newsletter contains important travel and arrival information, emergency contact information (also included in this handbook), the address for SSA in Alicante, taxi and baggage tips, and contact information for fellow participants. Make sure to read it thoroughly before departing to Alicante!

Emergencies and Emergency Contact Information

In the U.S.

SSA

433 West Street, Suite 8

Amherst, Massachusetts 01002-2314

tel: (413) 256-0011

After-hours emergency line: (413) 687-7069

info@spanishstudies.org

In Alicante, Spain

SSA

Universidad de Alicante

Edificio Germán Bernácer PS013

San Vicente del Raspeig

03690 Alicante, Spain

tel: (011-34) 965-903-730

After-hours emergency line: (011-34) 690-774-830

pepa.vives@spanishstudies.org

Note: For the Alicante numbers given above, the (011-34) code at the beginning of the number is only necessary to add for making an international call from the U.S. to Spain. If calling within Spain, you can skip the code and just dial the nine-digit phone number. If calling to the U.S. from Spain, add the code "001" before dialing the normal U.S. ten-digit number.

Should an emergency arise, U.S. family members may call the Resident Director, Pepa Vives, on her cell phone at (011-34) 690-774-830 in Alicante, or at our U.S. office telephone at (413) 256-0011. When the U.S. office is closed, there is an answering machine connected to these numbers, which will record your message and give you additional emergency contact numbers. During the regular semester, the Alicante office is open Monday through Thursday from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm and Fridays from 9 am to 2 pm, local time. During the Intensive Terms (e.g. summer) the Alicante office is open Monday through Thursday from 9 am to 3 pm, and Fridays from 9 am to 2 pm, local time. The U.S. office is open Monday through Friday from 9 am - 5 pm EST.

Before leaving to go abroad, be sure to [register online](#) with the government's Smart Traveller Enrollment Program (STEP). It is a free service for U.S. citizens to enroll in their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad, so that you can receive information about safety conditions and emergencies, and help the Embassy get in touch with you in case of an emergency.

In the unlikely event of an emergency, please be sure to check these webpages. Up-to-date information on Emergency Procedures and Security can be found on our website at www.spanishstudies.org/safety or at the Department of State website <http://studentsabroad.state.gov>.

Health and Wellness

If you are ill and need medical attention, please contact our Alicante office (965-903-730) and a staff member will help to make an appointment with a physician.

HEALTH INFORMATION FOR TRAVELERS TO SPAIN

Please check the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website for up-to-date information on required vaccinations and tips on staying healthy in Spain: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/spain>.

The CDC website also has health information available for other countries to which you may choose to travel during your time abroad. A list of countries with available health information can be found [here](#).

HEALTH INSURANCE

All students attending SSA programs are provided with health insurance for the duration of the program through CISI Worldwide Insurance. **All SSA students are required to participate in the SSA medical insurance program, whether you have insurance at home or not. Always carry your CISI insurance card with you.**

A couple of weeks before the start of the program, you will be enrolled in the CISI insurance. Once enrolled, you will receive an email from CISI letting you know of your enrollment as well as providing you with login information so that you may access your account and print your insurance card. It will be in your best interest to print the card before your travels so that you will have this documentation on hand.

Although SSA provides medical insurance while in Spain, if you have medical insurance at home, it is a good idea to take along one or two claims forms. These would be used if you need treatment for a pre-existing medical or psychological condition, medical attention while traveling outside of Spain, or if you encounter health issues while traveling outside of the SSA program dates. **Please note that you are only covered through SSA for the dates of the program and within Spain**, so you should also plan to bring claims forms if you are traveling before or after the program, or to any other country. If you have dental insurance at home, you should also bring some dental insurance claims forms with you, in case you need dental treatment while you are abroad.

If you are under medical or psychological treatment at home, you should speak with your doctor about the possible effects of study abroad and cultural change on your condition. If you have any pre-existing medical or psychological conditions, you should bring a copy of your medical records, in case you need treatment in Spain.

It is important to note that eating disorders are considered medical conditions and must be reported on your health statement. **Withholding medical information could result in your dismissal from the program.**

EMERGENCY MEDICAL HELP

If you are ill, you should notify us in person or call your Resident Director at 965-903-730 or 690-774-830.

You have several choices if you become ill:

- Call a doctor and make an appointment, preferably calling one of the doctors on the list below, and go to the appointment
- Go directly to see the doctor, preferably one of the doctors listed below
- Call us and we will help you make the appointment or take you directly to the doctor

In any case, you should take your CISI card, your passport, and money with you. Keep all receipts and paperwork, which will be needed to file a claim and to be refunded.

In the case of a minor injury or illness

CISI is willing to pay doctors directly, but many doctors want to be paid when the services are rendered. Take your CISI card and your passport. You should be prepared to pay for doctor visits for minor illnesses such as a sore throat or a sinus infection. Then fill out a claim form and send with copies of the itemized paid bill(s) to claimhelp@culturalinsurance.com.

In the case of emergencies or major illness

You can visit any doctor and let us and CISI know so they can arrange payment. Below is a table of **pre-approved hospitals, doctors, and clinics:**

<p>Hospital Medimar Internacional: 24 horas Av de Denia, 78, 03016 Alicante Tel: 965-162-200</p>	<p>Hospital General Universitario de Alicante: 24 horas Pintor Baeza, 11, 03010 Alicante Tel: 965-933-000</p>
<p>Clínica UME Plaza de Calvo Sotelo, 1, 03001 Alicante Tel: 965-218-484 Monday to Friday, General Medicine Hours: 8 am - 2 pm and 4 - 8 pm</p>	<p>Centro Médico Estación Calle Pintor Cabrera, 8 Bajo, 03005 Alicante Tel: 965-125-500 Monday to Friday, General Medicine Hours: 10 am - 1:30 pm, and 4 - 8 pm Saturdays, General Medicine Hours: 9 am - 1 pm</p>

Note: There are other hospitals and doctors that students can see, especially in the event of a medical emergency, but since they may not be pre-approved students will have to pay for the doctor visit and file a claim to be reimbursed afterward. More information on this will be provided at the arrival orientation in Alicante.

PRESCRIPTIONS

If you take any prescription medication, be sure to bring enough for your entire stay. Contact your health professional and insurance company several weeks before leaving; some medication requests require several weeks to be fully processed. These should be in their original containers, that is, labeled with your name and the name of the prescription drug. In the case that you are unable to acquire enough for the entire stay, or just in case your medication is lost, you should bring a written prescription for replacement of the drugs. The prescription should bear the generic name (chemical composition) of the drug, NOT the brand name, since medicines purchased in other countries usually have different brand names; though this prescription may not be enough at pharmacies, it will help a Spanish doctor make a valid prescription.

If you wear contacts you should bring enough for the entire stay plus extras, and if you wear glasses you should bring an extra pair.

INJECTIONS

If you require regular medical injections, you should bring syringes with you from home; needles in Spain are usually a larger gauge. The cost of having injections administered by a healthcare professional is not covered by your SSA insurance, so be prepared for that expense. In order to get your injections at a clinic in Alicante, your doctor at home must write you a letter with the following information:

- Directions on how to administer the injection
- How often the medication is administered
- Generic name of the medication
- Components of the medication
- Exact dosage of medication needed and any other relevant information for administering the injection
- Any possible side effects
- Any other relevant information for administering the injection

Send a copy of this letter to the U.S. office of SSA, and take another copy to Alicante. **Again, you must have a written prescription and/or letter from your doctor to get through airport security with your injection materials.**

FITNESS

There are sports facilities at the [University of Alicante](#). You can check out their [website](#) for more information about the facilities that will be available for you to use.

In order to use the facilities, students need to purchase a Sports Card. The University Sports Card allows you to use the gym, athletics track, [climbing wall](#) (with a federation license), squash court, tatami area, tennis court, padel court, table tennis, and changing rooms for a year from the issuing date. For students on short-term programs, we do not recommend purchasing a Sports Card. Instead, you can purchase the "Daily Use Pass," which allows you to use the facilities 15 times and costs 10 euros.

The University of Alicante also offers other physical activities and group classes. These are run monthly or for 3 months at a time (the 3-month option is more economic). Prices and classes can be seen [here](#). SSA students are a part of the UA community so they benefit from the discounts offered.

Some students prefer to join a gym in the city center. These gyms may be more conveniently located, but are usually much more expensive (40-50 euros per month). Some of the gyms previous students have recommended are:

- Cosmopolitan Spa and Fitness Club: <https://www.cosmopolitanalicante.es/>
- Costa Blanca Gym: <https://www.cdcostablanca.es/gimnasio-costablanca-alicante/>
- Synergym: <https://synergym.es/alicante/>

Many students also love running on the beach or going up the castle to exercise (the views up there are amazing).

Academics with SSA and Universidad de Alicante

Short-Term Students

January, May, and Summer students are enrolled in classes alongside other international students at University of Alicante.

Semester & Academic Year Students

INTENSIVE PERIOD

SSA offers programs in Alicante in cooperation with the University of Alicante (UA) through the *Centro Superior de Idiomas* (CSI), which is responsible for all international students at UA. All semester and academic year students will begin their semester in Alicante with an initial period of intensive study, called the **Intensive Period**, according to the selected program. This initial focus is aimed to help them with their language skills and cultural immersion.

CONTINUATION PERIOD

Following the Intensive Period, students in the Spanish Studies Program will take their classes with international students during the **Continuation Period**. Students in the Integrated Studies Program and International Studies Program attend regular UA classes alongside local students and can choose from classes with international students during their Continuation Period. Students partaking in the Internship or Service Learning Options will go on to begin their fieldwork at this time.

SSA Programming is Academically Rigorous

You can expect one to two hours of study at home for each hour of class time. This is probably comparable to the amount of work you have at your home institution. What will be especially challenging, at first, is that all classes are taught in Spanish. The first week or so of class will probably be the most frustrating in that respect; just stick with it and remember that all the other students in your class feel the same way you do. Before you know it, you will be following your classes without any trouble at all.

LIVING THE CULTURE

In addition to the core academic courses offered in the Alicante programs, you have the opportunity to take "Living the Culture" courses and activities. These courses typically carry one credit and, depending on the term, may include Spanish cooking, dance courses, windsurfing, theater, poetry, and scuba diving. These courses are reported as Pass/Fail. Please note that Living the Culture courses include additional fees.

CULTURAL VISITS AND STUDY TRIPS

Student attendance is absolutely mandatory. Depending on the program, visits may include trips to Valencia or Guadales, and Granada. Please check your individual program calendar for dates for all scheduled cultural visits and study trips. Your program calendar can also be found in your acceptance packet.

Note: SSA does not grant refunds for any missed portion of the study trips and/or cultural visits.

SPANISH-ONLY POLICY

When you submit your Pre-Departure materials, you sign a Spanish-only contract, promising to speak only Spanish while you are on the program. We take our Spanish-Only Policy very seriously and you should, too. Let's be perfectly honest: it's a waste of time and money if you go to Spain and speak English with your friends on the program. Make an effort, not just in class, but in the street, in your home, in bars and clubs—everywhere you go in Spain. It's the only way to make your SSA program the experience you want it to be. **Incidents of breaching the Spanish-Only Policy may be reported to the student's home campus and may reflect negatively on the student's grades.** To reference the Spanish-Only Policy as well as the Academic Pledge and the Program Conditions & Release Statement that you signed please refer to the last few pages in this handbook.

Note: Spanish is the official language used in all orientations, classes, PowerPoints, discussions, trips and excursions, etc.

ALICANTE PLACEMENT EXAM

Students attending programs in Alicante must complete the online Spanish Language Placement Exam, as required by the University of Alicante. **You may take the exam a total of 2 times.** If you take the exam twice, the University will place you in a language class based on the higher of your two scores. The link to the Spanish Language Placement Exam is available in the Pre-Departure section of your student portal.

Please complete the test on your own, without any help, as indicated in the instructions. **Note that the placement exam will determine whether you qualify for the language course you have pre-registered for, so take the test seriously!**

When you finish the exam, you must submit your results online. We must receive your placement exam score well in advance of the start of your program in order to enroll you in courses.

Note: Your teacher will also further assess your language level during the first 2 days of classes.

COURSE REGISTRATION

The preliminary Course Selection form you submit with your Pre-Departure materials will be the first step in selecting your classes for the program. A few factors may change your original course selection:

- If you have not met the prerequisites for a class you have chosen
- If the class you want is already full
- If you have too many or too few credits and need to alter your schedule accordingly
- If a particular course is canceled due to low enrollment
- If your performance on the placement exam in Alicante indicates a need for a change

Any changes that you would like to make to your course registration, once your Course Selection form has been received, must be sent via email to info@spanishstudies.org after you consult with your home institution academic advisor. Once in Alicante, there will be a short Add/Drop period during which you may change your schedule on a space-available basis.

The additional course fee for the Living the Culture courses will not be reimbursed in case of a withdrawal.

COURSE WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Students may add or drop Integrated Studies Program or International Studies Program courses without penalty (course does not show up on the transcript) during the Add/Drop period only. The Add/Drop period lasts for 10 days after the start of the university calendar.

Students that drop a course after the Add/Drop period will receive a "W" for "Withdrawal" on their SSA transcript, which will appear as "No presentado" on the UA transcript. Any student who is not present for the final examination and has not previously withdrawn from the course will receive a grade of "No presentado" on the UA transcript. In this case, "No presentado" translates to the grade of "F."

Note: The Add/Drop period for non-integrated courses only lasts the first two days of class.

PROGRAM TRANSFER POLICY

Please be aware that students who transfer programs for any reason, must follow the calendar of their new program.

Regardless of the original program that a student chose, housing through SSA expires on the date of the new program. Students will be responsible for adjusting travel arrangements and paying any associated fees that may arise due to the program transfer. This policy applies to students transferring programs either before or after their departure date.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

SSA holds students to the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating. Any student who is academically dishonest will face disciplinary sanctions, which may range from a failing grade on the assignment to dismissal from the program. **Incidents of academic dishonesty may be reported to the student's home institution.**

TRANSCRIPTS

The U.S. office of SSA issues academic transcripts at the end of each program. Your official transcript will be mailed/emailed to the address provided in your Home School Approval Form.

Notes: *Transcripts for integrated courses will be delayed due to the University of Alicante academic schedule. If you have an outstanding balance on your account, your transcript will be held until the balance is paid.*

SSA transcripts show course numbers and titles, the number of contact hours and credits, and the grades for all coursework undertaken on the program, including internships completed through SSA, Independent Research Projects (IRPs), and course work completed at the University of Alicante. Grades and credits are reported according to the semester-hour system.

Living the Culture (LTC) courses are the only courses that may be taken on a pass/fail basis. Petitions to change a course from traditional grading to pass/fail must be addressed to the Registrar of the student's home institution.

If your school requires that your grades be reported on a transcript from a U.S. degree-granting institution, you may receive a transcript from our School of Record, Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio. Additional fees are charged by Heidelberg University for this service. Please contact SSA for more information about this transcript option.

As a general rule, students should have all courses, internships, and outside studies approved for transfer credit by their home institution before the start of a program. This can normally be arranged through your study abroad advisor or registrar at your home institution.

Additional Transcript Requests

Once the program ends, you will receive an official transcript sent to the designated recipient on your Home School Approval Form and you will be emailed a student copy. If you need an official transcript in the future, there is a fee of \$10. If you would like to order multiple transcripts at once, each additional transcript in the batch will cost an additional \$5. You may either choose to pay by check made payable to The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, Inc. or complete a credit card authorization form that is available [here](#). If the receiving institution requires a copy of the University of Alicante transcript from Spain, the student is responsible for international postage. You should submit the SSA Transcript Request Form to SSA with the following information:

- Your name and the program you attended
- Your birth date
- Your current contact information, including email address and phone number
- The name and address of the person/institution to whom/where you would like the transcript sent

Note: *If you received a transcript from a U.S. degree-granting institution (Heidelberg University), you will need to contact Heidelberg University to request an additional transcript. Please visit the university's [website](#) for information on how to request a transcript and for information about associated fees.*

Experiential Learning Opportunities

SSA semester or academic year students with an advanced level of Spanish are strongly encouraged to pursue one of our Experiential Learning opportunities. These include completing an internship, a service learning project, volunteering, or conducting an independent research study. In some cases, students who are participating in both summer terms may also have time to take advantage of one of these opportunities, such as volunteering. If you have any questions, you may contact the SSA office in the U.S.

INTERNSHIP OR SERVICE LEARNING COURSE OPTION

Qualified students enrolled in Summer, Semester, or Academic-Year Programs have the opportunity to pursue an unpaid internship or service learning experience in Alicante. Internships and service learning are available in local businesses, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations. Depending on the organization, a high level of Spanish may be required. However, there also may be Internship or Service Learning Course Options in English.

For students under 18 years old, a background check may be required.

An internship or service learning involving 135 contact hours (112.5 clock hours) over the course of a semester is awarded 3 semester credits, while one of 180 contact hours (150 clock hours) receives 4 credits.

Your performance will be evaluated in the following ways:

- Regular meetings with the Internship Supervisor (the Resident Director or appointed faculty), in which students discuss progress and brainstorm solutions to issues encountered in the field
- Workplace supervisor observation and evaluation
- Anthropological tools, such as blogging, dialog, and memoir, which enhance understanding of the process of integration and the local culture
- A written report submitted at the end of the internship/service learning experience
- Additional criteria for evaluation, grading, and granting of credit may be established by your academic advisor on your home campus.

INTERNSHIP OR SERVICE LEARNING DEADLINES

If you would like to be considered for an Internship or Service Learning Course Option in Alicante, you will need to submit the corresponding application to SSA in advance of the deadlines listed below. Please reach out to your Student Services Advisor to inquire about internship and service learning opportunities.

Deadlines for submission of Internship Course Option and Service Learning Applications:

- Fall Semester – May 15
- Spring Semester – October 15
- Summer term – April 15

Please note that Internships and Service Learning projects are not guaranteed. Students must select an alternate course or an Independent Research Project in the event that the requested course option is not available.

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Independent Research Project (IRP) gives you the opportunity to study a topic of particular interest to you that may not be covered in another class. Your proposal must be approved by SSA and by your home institution before you go to Spain. Once your project is approved, the SSA staff and university professors in Alicante will assist you in completing it. Home institution faculty may be involved with your IRP by helping to create your proposal and/or evaluating your completed project. Interested students can reach out to their Student Services Advisor for more information.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer opportunities give students a chance to get to know the local community and improve their Spanish in the process. Past volunteer projects have been available in schools and nonprofit organizations. While a volunteer opportunity is more flexible than an Internship or Service Learning Project since it is not for credit, students are still expected to make a solid commitment and to maintain a set schedule. Interested students may inquire about this opportunity during their first week of the program.

GROUP MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

The Alicante SSA staff periodically holds group meetings with students. These meetings give you the opportunity to discuss any questions you may have, as well as to share experiences and information. Meetings are also held before all SSA-sponsored trips for pre-trip orientation.

In addition to group meetings, SSA and CSI sponsor a number of activities throughout the program, including the Speaking Partners Program with Spanish Students (more information in the next section) , participation in sports at the UA facilities, international festivals, round tables, and various workshops. There are also opportunities for cultural visits in Alicante, excursions to other Spanish cities, and courses in cooking, salsa, flamenco, and more!

SSA sponsors a number of mandatory activities, some of which may include:

- Weekly cultural site visits to museums, monuments, etc.
- A day trip to Valencia or Guadalest

- Overnight stay in Granada (semester programs only)

For more information, please visit <http://www.csidiomas.ua.es/en/activities>. Some activities may entail an additional cost. More information will be available upon arrival.

Note: Due to insurance regulations, it is not possible to bring guests, including visiting family members and friends, on official SSA program excursions and visits.

SPEAKING PARTNERS PROGRAM

To provide a deeper immersion experience and connect students with locals, SSA has developed the Speaking Partners Program. This is a mandatory conversation exchange program, where students learn and practice Spanish with a native speaker, in turn helping him or her to learn and practice English. Our goal is to encourage cultural exchange and promote long-lasting friendly and cordial relations between the Speaking Partners.

Speaking Partners should plan to meet at least once a week (more for short-term programs) and speak one of the languages (Spanish or English) alternately at each meeting. In addition to these regular meetings, which students and Speaking Partners are responsible for coordinating independently, SSA will also host group activities throughout the program.

SSA staff will be available for students whenever they need advice and, if requested, will assign new or multiple Speaking Partners.

Travel and Visits from Family and Friends

Since the January, May, and Summer Terms are intensive programs, classes are held Monday through Friday. Cultural visits in the afternoons and weekend travel will provide plenty of opportunities to get to know Spain outside the classroom. There are plenty of coastal towns near Alicante that make great day trips during the weekend.

During the Continuation Period of semester programs, most classes are held Monday through Thursday. Sometimes you may also have classes on Friday depending on the courses you choose. You should have plenty of time to plan trips and weekend outings and will not need to miss any of your scheduled classes, which could affect your final grade.

You received a program calendar in your acceptance packet to which you can refer for academic dates, holidays, and vacation dates. Though most of these dates are firm, some of the holiday dates are subject to change by the Spanish civil authorities, which may force SSA to change some of the vacation dates. Therefore, you and your family should make only tentative plans for independent travel until you arrive in Alicante. At the beginning of the program, you will be given a more definitive calendar. Please do not plan trips with your family when classes are in session. Also, be aware that **if you transfer programs (e.g. Integrated Studies Program to Spanish Studies Program) for any reason, you must follow the calendar of the new program, adjusting travel arrangements accordingly.**

Note: Travel and excursions that are included in the program are mandatory for all students.

VACATIONS AND LONG WEEKENDS

Vacations and long weekends are a great chance to travel to places that may be hard to get to on a weekend. You may want to take this opportunity to travel around Spain and become acquainted with other regions of the country, or you may prefer to travel to other countries if time permits. Refer to the program calendar in your acceptance packet for vacation dates. If you, or your family, plan to purchase a Eurail Pass for travel between semesters or programs, be sure to purchase it before leaving home. Certain passes can be purchased at some European train stations, but will be much more expensive.

Packing Suggestions

The most important advice we can give is to pack half of what you had originally planned to bring. If you find that you need something you didn't bring, nearly everything can be found in Spain.

FASHION

The fashion in many Spanish cities, including Alicante, is very similar to that in the United States. Running sneakers and exercise clothes (including sweatpants, yoga pants, and leggings) are usually only worn when exercising and pajamas are not worn at school. In general, Spanish students dress very stylish when going to class and oftentimes women will be dressed up. When going out at night, the dress is often more formal at clubs or *discotecas*, while smaller bars may be more casual.

CLOTHING

- Several shirts, long- and short-sleeved
- Casual pants (jeans are okay)
- Shorts, capri pants, and/or skirts
- Plenty of underwear and socks
- Slippers to wear around the house
- Lightweight pajamas for warm weather
- Warm pajamas for cool weather
- Comfortable shoes for walking
- One pair of sneakers
- One nicer pair of shoes, for dressing up
- One or two dressy outfits
- Lightweight jacket
- A couple of sweaters for the winter
- Heavy winter coat
- Gloves, hat, and scarf
- Bathing suit

Keep in mind that if you are going for the spring semester, it will be very hot. Pack as lightly as possible, since you'll have to carry everything through the airport. Keep in mind that you'll probably buy some clothing in Alicante, and laundry should be done once a week.

OTHER ITEMS

- Beach towel
- Washcloths, if desired
- Backpack (or bookbag)
- Any cosmetics/products you use
- Medicines for cold and upset stomach
- Vitamins
- **Prescription medications**, if needed*
- Sunscreen (SPF 25 and higher - It's SUNNY.)
- Umbrella

*** If you take any prescription medication or wear contacts, be sure to bring enough for your entire stay. Refer to "Prescriptions" under the "Health Insurance and Medical Care" section of this handbook.**

SECURITY AND PERSONAL CARE

We suggest taking a suitcase that locks so you can keep valuable items secure at all times. This would be the place to keep your passport*, airline tickets, traveler's checks, extra cash, and anything else of value that you don't want to leave lying around. You should also know that your things might get moved around if your room is cleaned by your host family.

*** You should not be carrying your passport around with you in Alicante. We recommend that you bring a photocopy of your passport which you can keep in your wallet just in case you need it.**

You will be able to find a lot of the everyday products you need in Alicante, so there is no need to stock up on shampoo or feminine hygiene products. Take just enough for the first part of the trip so you'll be able to get settled in, but don't over pack these things. You may want to pack your favorite cold and upset stomach medicines, just to be prepared. You can get medicines at pharmacies in Alicante, but they'll be different from what you're used to and when you're sick, you may feel better using what you know works for you.

PLUG-IN APPLIANCES

The general rule is: don't bring them. The electrical current in Spain, 220V, is not the same as the current in North America. That means that appliances like hair dryers, curling irons, or electric shavers will be ruined if you plug them in without a

converter. We highly recommend that if you can fit it in your budget and absolutely need your hair styling tools, purchase them in Spain to avoid any issues with electricity. If you need a hair dryer, you'd be better off using an inexpensive one in Alicante rather than risking destroying your U.S. hair dryer when you plug it into a converter or adapter- these are not always effective. If you do buy a converter or adapter, make sure it is the appropriate voltage for all of the products you are bringing.

This rule may or may not apply to electronic devices like laptops. Some have built-in converters, in which case you would only need the adapter for the plug. Be sure to check the manufacturer's instructions to see that your device will operate at 220V. If the company makes special plug adapters (i.e. as Apple does for its Macbooks) we recommend that you purchase and use those instead of plugging into a separate converter or adapter. In the case of a power surge you may risk the destruction of your laptop. Voltage in Spain is generally 220V, while it is 110V in the U.S. If using a converter, the wattage of the converter must match the wattage of the appliance. Please make sure that your laptop's voltage range, found on your power cord, will be compatible with Spain's electrical current.

Housing

The best advice we can give you in order to make the most out of your housing situations is to communicate.

Working with the Alicante SSA staff, CSI chooses housing placements very carefully. Please note, in the interest of meeting your goal of cultural immersion, it is the policy of SSA not to pair students from the same school in the same homestay during our semester and academic year programs. Also, it is the policy of SSA that visiting friends and family members cannot stay with the host family.

Note to all students: SSA does not offer housing in the homestays or the student residences during the days prior to the start of the program or days beyond the end dates of the program. If you are arriving early in Alicante or plan on staying later, you should book your own hotel or hostel.

Note to academic-year students and students participating in multiple programs: Students participating in an academic year or other programs combining two or more terms of study may choose to travel between terms or stay with their host family. Housing between terms for students in homestays is included in the program costs. However, SSA does not offer housing between terms for students at the student residence.



HOMESTAY OPTION

The Homestay option is available to students on all SSA programs. You will live with a Spanish family and perhaps with another student, but you will have your own room. Families usually live in *pisos*, or apartments, instead of large independent residences. Therefore, you may be living in a space that is smaller than what you are used to.

In your home, you will have a bed, bed linens, blankets, towels, and a place to hang or store your clothes. You will also have a desk with a chair and lamps for studying.

Spanish homes do not usually have central heating or air conditioning, which might come as a surprise to you in the months when you want it most. You just have to dress for the seasons and see how your host family deals with the different temperatures. You will be provided with a space heater or fan in the

event that you need one.

Your family will give you a set of keys to your house, so you will be able to go out and experience Spanish life on your own schedule. With that comes the responsibility of keeping your family informed of your plans; let them know if you will be home late or if you plan to miss a meal.

We encourage students to bring gifts for their host families. You should know that we, in the U.S. office of SSA, do not receive any specific details about families, just your host family's name, address, and telephone number. If you want to bring a gift, we suggest something that represents where you live, what you enjoy, your hobbies—basically something that will give your host family some insight into you as a person.

If you ever have a problem with your housing assignment, **tell the Resident Director right away.** The close cooperation between SSA and CSI will help to resolve the difficulty. Your Resident Director will help you work out whatever problems come up and, if things don't get resolved, help you to decide if you would like to move to another home.

Housing assignment information is generally provided about a week or two before the start of the program. Please note that **housing assignments may be subject to last-minute changes.**

HOUSING NORMS FOR STUDENTS AND HOST FAMILIES

To ensure a correct and cordial relationship between the host families, students, and SSA, a series of norms and recommendations have been established. There are minimum conditions designed for all homes in general; it is normal for personality differences to exist between host family and student; there will be certain differences also between one home and another. If you have any concerns, don't understand a certain norm or would like to make a comment regarding housing, be sure to consult with the Alicante Resident Director.

YOUR BEDROOM WILL HAVE:

1. A comfortable bed with a mattress, sheets, blankets, pillow and pillowcase
2. A nightstand
3. A table or desk, large enough to study or write on comfortably (minimum 40" x 20")
4. A lamp to provide adequate lighting
5. A shelf or similar storage space for books
6. A chair
7. A closet or wardrobe with drawers and hangers for clothing
8. A heater in winter and a fan in summer. The student must not leave the heater on at night, but may use the fan at night in warmer weather, as long as he or she gains prior approval from the host family. If you need either a heater or a fan, please ask your host family.

THE BATHROOM WILL HAVE:

- A clean toilet
- A clean towel to be used only by the student
- The student will have the right to shower once a day with hot water. The student should be allowed to shower whenever he/she wants to do so (between 7 am and 10 pm), limiting his/her time in the bathroom and not using hot water for more than 8 minutes.

LAUNDRY:

- The host family will replace bed linens and the towel once a week. They will wash each student's laundry at least once a week (one load of white clothes and one load of colored clothes).
- The clothes will be folded.
- It is not the host family's obligation to iron the student's clothing.
- If the student has more laundry than stipulated, he/she will have to wait until the following week to have it laundered.
- If the student has delicate clothing, he or she should notify the family or take it upon him- or herself to launder it.

MEALS:

- The student will eat with the family. In the event that the host family cannot be present for a meal, prepared food will be left for the student.
- The student should respect the eating hours in the home; a day when he/she will not eat or sleep at home he/she should communicate this to the host family in a timely fashion.
- Bottled water, milk with meals, between-meal snacks, fruit juices, beer and wine are not included in the housing fee.
- The meals that the host family will prepare for the student are:
 - Breakfast: Toast with butter or something similar and coffee, tea, hot chocolate or milk

- Lunch: Two dishes and a dessert. One of the dishes should include fish or meat; the other should be salad or vegetables. It is preferable that the dessert be fresh fruit.
- Dinner: Two dishes and a dessert. One of these dishes may be soup, and at least one of the two must be a hot meal and include meat, fish, egg or cheese.
- Eggs should not be served more than three times a week.
- The menu must be flexible and varied, taking the student's preferences into account.
- If a student does not consume certain foods due to religious reasons, the host family will respect his/her preferences.
- The student may request, 24 hours in advance, that a cold lunch be prepared for him/her to take on field trips or if they plan on staying at the university for the day.

TELEPHONE:

- The student may not receive or make calls between 11 pm and 8:30 am.

DOCTOR:

- If a student doesn't feel well, needs a doctor or medication, he/she should call the Resident Director to make an appointment, or the student may go directly to the medical clinic: Hospital Medimar Internacional (24 horas) - Av. de Denia, 78, 03016 Alicante; Tel: 965-162-200
- The host family will not give medicine to the student.
- If a student misses class due to medical reasons, he/she or the host family should contact the Resident Director, who in turn, will inform the student's professors.

HOUSING CHANGES:

- If unresolvable differences should arise between the student and the host family, the Resident Director will work very closely with every student to find the best solution for him/her. In the case that a student moves his/her homestay, the Resident Director will let the host family know 10 days in advance. Once the host family is informed of the change, the host family will not discuss this subject with the student as this could cause discomfort.
- If the host family desires that the student be moved, the Resident Director will be notified 10 days in advance.
- In the event that the Resident Director must move the student because some or any housing requirements have not been fulfilled, SSA maintains the right to move the student without previous notice to the household.
- In case of any indication of sexual harassment or inappropriate behavior on the part of the host family members, the Resident Director will move the student(s) to a different home immediately and with no previous warning. SSA will also stop working with a host family where an issue like this arises.
- Should there be any case of sexual harassment or inappropriate behavior on the part of the student, SSA will deal with such issues on a case-by-case basis, moving the student to a different home immediately and terminating enrollment in the program, as necessary.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- The student's room may not be rented out during weekends or any school break, even if the student is not present in Alicante during these times.
- The host family will not discuss financial matters related to housing, as this is very uncomfortable for everyone and causes uneasiness.
- If it is necessary for the host family to be absent overnight for any reason the host family must inform the Resident Director. Both the Resident Director and the student must agree to this.
- There should be a pleasant environment in the house, where the student feels comfortable and welcome.
- More than two U.S. students will not be allowed to live in the same home, whether they are from SSA or a different U.S. study center. Housing three or more students in the same home will be considered a failure to abide by the norms outlined above.
- The student may not have guests staying overnight.
- Should the student not leave the home on the program's end date, SSA is not responsible for paying the host family for extra day(s).
- The student may not take his/her friends to the home without previous permission from the host family.
- If the student's house keys get lost or stolen, for fear that the missing keys may be used to rob the home, the host family may ask the student to pay for a new lock. A new lock costs between € 30 and € 300.
- The house may not have a charcoal, coal-dust, gas, or similar type of heater.

STUDENT RESIDENCES (*RESIDENCIAS*)

Please note that the student residences are not owned by the university or on university property. They are privately owned and operated dormitories.

SSA students on our Alicante programs also have the option of living in a student *residencia* alongside Spanish university students. This is a unique opportunity for U.S. students to live and make friends with Spanish-speakers their own age.

Residencias are private companies unaffiliated with any school or university. The university in Alicante does not have dorms available for their students. The students in the *residencias* are a mixture of SSA students, Spanish students from the surrounding area, and international students from Latin America and Europe. This makes for a global atmosphere that's conducive to language learning and cultural exchange.

Students stay in a single room that, generally, but not always, receives natural light and has a private bathroom, high-speed internet, TV connection, individual air conditioner, and thermostat. Students are provided with a bed, a desk, a lamp, and a place to put their clothes. Bedding and bath towels will also be provided. The room will be cleaned and linens changed every 1 or 2 weeks, depending on the residence.

Residences have free WiFi and common areas which may include a restaurant, sports facilities and gym, swimming pool and terrace, study and computer room, and self-service laundry facility (a fully equipped room with washing machines and dryers).

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner may be served daily or Monday to Friday, depending on the residence. A menu with several options is offered so that you can choose according to your preferences. The residence may be able to accommodate dietary requirements and schedules but there may be an additional fee.

Access to the *residencia* is controlled to maintain a safe environment for the students.

There is a staff member available 24 hours a day to monitor movement in and out. This person is also available to answer questions and to provide the students with whatever they might need. There is no curfew for the residents, however no overnight guests are allowed.

Note: *There are a limited number of spaces at the student residence so placement cannot be guaranteed.*

Special Dietary Needs

There are very few vegetarians in Spain. As you will notice from the descriptions of Spanish food in the *SSA Know Before You Go* guide, Spanish culture is not particularly vegetarian-friendly. It is possible, however, to be a vegetarian in Spain. Along with the variety of salads available at most restaurants, Spain offers some delicious breads and cheeses (like the famous *manchego*-sheep's milk cheese), and a number of great vegetable dishes. You should be very careful in restaurants and make sure that the bean dish you are ordering doesn't have ham in it anywhere. Many vegetarians will opt to eat fish while in Spain; this will give you more options and probably allow you to eat more healthfully while abroad.

If you plan to change your diet and begin eating fish, meat, or even dairy, you should start incorporating these foods into your diet before you leave so that you will not be sick at the start of your program in Alicante. While there are a couple of specific restaurants, vegans will be hard pressed to eat very well in Alicante. While most food is cooked in olive oil rather than butter, you will have to make sure you are getting the nutrients you need.

Students requiring a gluten-free diet should let us know right away, so that our Resident Director may find an appropriate homestay that can provide such meals.

You must let SSA know about any dietary restrictions or food allergies including this information on your housing and health forms, emailing info@spanishstudies.org, or calling (413) 256-0011.

Please send us a list/description of what you can eat so that we can meet with the host family and prepare for your arrival.

Note: Some dietary accommodations may require an additional fee.

Public Transportation

Like your Spanish friends, you will be taking the bus or TRAM often while you are in Alicante to reach the University (approximately a 30-minute ride), and to explore the attractions of the city. The location of UA makes it very accessible by public transportation from the city. During orientation at the start of the program, you will learn the details of the buses and trams available at various times. This will help you organize your route and any transfers you might wish to make. The cost of an individual ticket is about 1,50 Euros, but significant discounts are available if you purchase Bono Bus Cards, which cost about 9 Euros for ten trips, or about 27 Euros for 30 trips. The cost of the Bono Bus Card, which you can replenish at any time, also comes with a one-time fee of about 2 Euros.

Keeping in Touch with Family and Friends

MAIL

Your mailing address will be that of your home. You will receive your home address one to two weeks prior to the start of the program.

Mail service is generally reliable in Spain. Be sure that friends and family send letters by airmail, since surface mail can take up to three months. One can expect airmail letters to take between seven and fifteen days to be delivered. For urgent letters, it is best to use Express Mail or Global Priority services (3-7 working days), or a delivery service such as UPS, DHL, or Federal Express (3-5 working days).

INFORMATION ON PACKAGES

If you or your parents plan to send a package to Spain, you should know that the Spanish customs office will levy an import tax before you can collect it, and that the custom process time is unpredictable. Thus, we strongly recommend not to send any package unless it is completely necessary. In Alicante there are a few shops where many U.S. products can be bought.

Any package sent from the U.S. to Spain via USPS will be checked in Madrid and is subject to the following charges:

- 3% on the value of the package contents if the content exceeds 150€ worth of products.
- 16% tax on the value of the package contents.
- 4.41€ for a customs fee.
- 20.18€ for SPEEDTRANS (mailing from customs in Madrid to final destination).

We strongly recommend that if you must receive medication via mail in Spain that it be sent via private mailing companies (UPS, DHL, etc.) for the following reasons:

- Medicine sent via private mailing companies is not subject to the charges specified above.
- **All medicine sent via regular mail needs to be sent with a letter from the student's doctor back home.** Medicine sent via regular mail needs to have a letter from a Spanish doctor stating that the medicine in the package cannot be found in Spain. This is extremely difficult to obtain.
- All medicine (including makeup and cosmetics) need to go through a customs process that may last at least for 2 months.

Note: Please check with the private company for the specific conditions.

* **Note:** Packages sent via private mailing companies (UPS, DHL, etc.) are usually not subject to the charges or rules specified in number 1 above. Please make sure that they are not sent through CORREOS in Spain.

To ensure that your package delivery is not delayed, please plan to be as specific as possible in your customs declaration. For example, write "used cotton shirts" instead of "used personal items." Make sure to mark when an item is "used", as it may pass customs more quickly and incur less value taxes than new items.

If in doubt, contact the nearest Spanish consulate.

CELL PHONES

There are a few cell phone options available:

Bring your own and buy a Spanish SIM card

One convenient and easy option that is popular with students is the option to buy a Spanish SIM card. The SIM card is inserted in your U.S. cell phone, but you must make sure that the phone is unlocked and can accept the SIM card. Contact your service provider at least a week before departing for Spain to ensure that your phone will be unlocked.

Bring your own with an international plan

Another way of staying in touch is to bring your cell phone with an international plan from your current provider with you to Spain. You can use it when connected to WiFi in your residence or in cafés (though make sure to keep it on airplane mode so you don't incur expensive international data fees). WhatsApp is a great app for messaging. It allows you to text people anywhere in the world for free and allows free voice calls when connected to WiFi. It has group chat features and is widely-used in Spain and Europe. If you are planning on bringing an iPhone, iMessage will usually continue to work over WiFi.

Purchase a prepaid

Another option is to purchase a prepaid cell phone in Alicante, which you can do for as little as \$75 or \$100. These phones work just like a prepaid calling card; when your *saldo* (balance) runs out, you can purchase more. The great thing about cell phones in Spain is that you won't be charged for calls you receive while in Spain, only for calls you make. This means that your family can call you and you will not be charged for the call (within Spain). People who wish to call you frequently might want to ask their telephone company about any special international rates that might help make those calls less expensive, or explore phone card options with international rates. Internet phone connections, such as Vonage, are affordable options as well for calling from the U.S. to a Spanish cell phone.

Your home will have a phone too, but that will only be available for you to receive very short phone calls. You can only call someone from your home phone if there is an emergency.

EMAIL AND COMPUTERS

SSA guarantees internet access in all homestays.

Since you will be a part of the UA community, you will have access to the computer facilities just as any other student. UA also has WiFi. Access to the UA's WiFi system is arranged by the *Servicio de Informática* at UA. During the orientation in Alicante, students will receive instructions on how to use the Internet on campus along with the necessary information for connection: a personalized username and password. There are people available to assist in case of any problem. A web page with information on the WiFi at UA can be found [here](#).

You must be a student enrolled at UA in order to use UA's computers. As a student on the SSA program you will have the identification required for access, either a University identification card called TIU, *Tarjeta Inteligente Universitaria*, or a CSI card, depending on your program.

If you have a laptop, SSA recommends that you bring it with you to Alicante. It will give you the ability to write papers on the weekends, when UA is closed.

Billing Details

SSA is affiliated with over 100 institutions in the U.S. For most affiliated schools, payment is made to SSA directly by the school. However, billing arrangements vary between universities, so we ask that you pay close attention to the information received with your acceptance email and in the View/Pay Bill section of your online account.

PAYMENT OF FEES

The non-refundable deposit is due within 10 days of your acceptance to the program. In cases where the school is sending payment directly to SSA, you should ask your college or university to discuss this with SSA directly.

Note: *The due date for the non-refundable deposit may not be deferred.*

Payment must be received by the U.S. office of SSA no later than the due dates listed in your online account. Any payment submitted after its due date will be subject to late fees. You will not be admitted to SSA housing or classes until all payments have been received. Special arrangements are made only in exceptional cases and may include interest rates and service charges. Your transcript will not be released until all financial obligations you incurred during the school term have been satisfied, including payment for unreturned library books.

If you anticipate that you will have financial aid to use toward your program payment, please contact the U.S. office of SSA regarding the necessary paperwork to defer your final program payment due date.

Note: *All checks should be made payable to The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, Inc.*

FINANCIAL AID

You must speak with the financial aid office at your home university regarding the school's policies for the transfer of financial aid for study abroad. If financial aid will transfer, there are some forms that must be completed in order to coordinate the transfer of funds and the deferment of the final payment due date if aid will be disbursed after that time. The non-refundable deposit due date may not be deferred, even if the amount will be covered by financial aid.

The SSA Financial Aid Deferment Form, included in your online acceptance packet, should be submitted to your home university's financial aid office to be completed and returned to the U.S. office of SSA before your program final payment due date. You will also need to make sure that the financial office is able to coordinate with SSA regarding any forms that they need completed by SSA to transfer financial aid, such as a Consortium Agreement.

Scholarships

SSA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The SSA Scholarship Program is open to all students enrolled in all of our programs. We offer scholarships for \$1,500 for semester programs, and scholarships for \$500 for short-term programs. Students may apply for only one of the two scholarship options: The SSA Merit-Based Scholarship or the SSA Diversity Scholarship.

Award recipients are chosen based on the submission of one original essay in English. For more information about the scholarship program and to download the application, visit www.spanishstudies.org/scholarships.

While all eligible students are encouraged to apply, the SSA Scholarship Program is very competitive and only a handful of awards are made per term. Students will be notified of scholarship awards before leaving for their programs abroad. A check is sent to the student's permanent home address after arrival in Alicante and is not used toward payment of program fees at SSA.

GO AGAIN ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The SSA Alumni Scholar Fund was developed in 2004 and designed to benefit returning students wishing to embark on an additional cross-cultural adventure with SSA. SSA now offers all alumni students a stipend to apply towards another SSA program. Please note that **all SSA Alumni who choose to attend an additional program with SSA will automatically receive the Alumni Scholarship**. Alumni who receive an Alumni Scholarship are also eligible to apply for the SSA Scholarship Program. Alumni scholarships are as follows:

- Semester/Academic Year: \$1,500
- Short-Term: \$500

OUTSIDE SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

For a list of other study abroad scholarship opportunities not offered through SSA, please refer to our [Scholarships Page](#).

Possible Additional Fees

TRANSCRIPT FEES

Students whose home institution requires a transcript from a U.S. degree-granting institution may obtain academic institutional credit and a transcript from our School of Record, Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio; an additional fee is charged by Heidelberg for this service. If the student has requested this transcript service due to a home institution requirement, a request form is included with the SSA acceptance packet and must be returned to SSA before the start of the program. In order to facilitate the issuing of the transcript the student may be billed by SSA on behalf of Heidelberg University for the additional fee. SSA will then pay Heidelberg University for issuing the transcript.

Note: *This fee can be paid through the student's portal.*

Refunds

If you decide not to attend a SSA program after you have been accepted, please send us a written notification immediately. You can inform us of your decision via email at info@spanishstudies.org

Withdrawal from the program between the final payment due date and 30 days before the start of the program has a penalty of 25% of the program fee. Withdrawal from the program within 1-29 days before the start of the program has a penalty of 25% of the room and board fee and 100% of the tuition, study tours, orientation, and general education fees. There is no refund for any portion of the program fees on or after the program start date. **Please note that these penalties are in addition to the deposit, which is non-refundable.**

There is no withdrawal from room and board arrangements with SSA during the course of a program. SSA will change unsatisfactory lodgings but will not refund any portion of room and board fees after a student's arrival at a home. If the student finds his or her housing to be unsatisfactory, he or she should contact the SSA staff immediately; SSA will determine if a housing change is warranted.

If you decide to switch programs once in the host country, you are responsible for paying the difference in program costs. There will be no reimbursement for any portion of the program (tuition, housing), if your new program is less expensive.

Places to Stay in Alicante

B&B La Milagrosa

Calle Villavieja, 8
<http://www.lamilagrosa.eu/>

Hotel Eurostars Centrum

Calle Pintor Lorenzo Casanova, 33
[Hotel Eurostars](#)

Guesthouse Alicante

Calle Segura, 20
<http://guesthousealicante.com/>

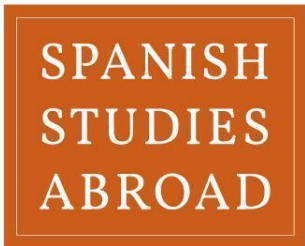
Air BnB

www.airbnb.com/s/Alicante--Spain

Alicante Placement Exam Information

Here you will find the equivalencies table between the Common European Frame of Reference for language courses at the Universidad de Alicante and SSA courses:

	CSI Course Titles		SSA Course Titles
A1	INICIAL 1	SPAN 100 UA	BEGINNING SPANISH
A1+	INICIAL 2	SPAN 203 UA	INTERMEDIATE SPANISH I
A2	INTERMEDIO 1	SPAN 204 UA	INTERMEDIATE SPANISH II
A2+	INTERMEDIO 2	SPAN 300 UA	ADVANCED SPANISH I
B1	INTERMEDIO ALTO 1	SPAN 309 UA	ADVANCED SPANISH II
B1+	INTERMEDIO ALTO 2	SPAN 310 UA	ADVANCED SPANISH III
B2	AVANZADO 1	SPAN 311 UA	HIGH ADVANCED SPANISH I
B2+	AVANZADO 2	SPAN 313 UA	HIGH ADVANCED SPANISH II
C1	AVANZADO ALTO 1	SPAN 403 UA	SPECIAL TOPICS IN ADVANCED LANGUAGE STUDY I
C1+	AVANZADO ALTO 2	SPAN 405 UA	SPECIAL TOPICS IN ADVANCED LANGUAGE STUDY II
C2	SUPERIOR 1	SPAN 451 UA	SPANISH LANGUAGE SUPERIOR LEVEL 1
C2+	SUPERIOR 2	SPAN 452 UA	SPANISH STUDY SUPERIOR LEVEL 2



The Center for Cross-Cultural Study

Program Conditions and Release Statement

I hereby release and discharge Spanish Studies Abroad/The Center for Cross-Cultural Study Inc. and The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, S.L. (CC-CS) and its agents, employees, and representatives from all suits, claims, or liability of any nature arising out of or related to my participation in an SSA/CC-CS program including, without limitation, claims for personal injury or property damage.

As a program participant, I authorize SSA/CC-CS to share details of my program with my family, my home school, and my host school, as needed. I also authorize SSA/CC-CS to share details of my academic record, such as my home school transcript, with my host school abroad. Furthermore, I authorize SSA/CC-CS to provide my home school with a transcript of the coursework I complete as an SSA/CC-CS participant. I understand that if I am rendered ineligible for a program after my initial acceptance, I am not entitled to any refund from SSA/CC-CS. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to maintain the minimum eligibility requirements from the point of my acceptance until the commencement of my program.

I release all materials from my experience abroad to be used by SSA/CC-CS and its affiliates exclusively for promotional reasons. This includes, but is not limited to, photo, print, video, digital mediums and social media posts or pictures. I understand that I can be removed or dismissed from the SSA/CC-CS programs at any time, either prior to or after departure, for violating the Academic Pledge and other published SSA/CC-CS policies.

In the event that program participants become incompetent for any reason, including (but not limited to) injury, accident, mental illness, disease, or loss of consciousness, they appoint SSA/CC-CS as their guardian, and authorize SSA/CC-CS to take any action which it deems appropriate under the circumstances, including (but not limited to) arranging for medical or psychiatric treatment, administering prescription drugs, or transporting them to their home country.

Student's Name: _____

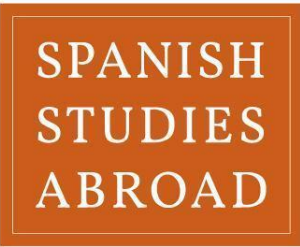
Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

[Note: If applicant is under 18 years of age, a parent or legal guardian must sign the following declaration and release]

I, the undersigned [father] [mother] [guardian] of _____
_____, a minor, do hereby consent to their participation in the SSA/CC-CS program and do forever release, acquit, discharge, and covenant to hold harmless Spanish Studies Abroad/The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, Inc. and The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, S.L. and its officers, agents and employees from any and all actions, causes of action, and claims on account of, or in any way growing out of, directly or indirectly, all known and unknown personal injuries or property damage which I may now or hereafter have as the parent or guardian of said minor, and also all claims or right of action for damages which said minor has or hereafter may acquire, either before or after they have reached their majority resulting from participation in any SSA/CC-CS programs.

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _ Date: _____



The Center for Cross-Cultural Study

Academic Pledge

SSA Code of Conduct

Studying abroad requires a significant commitment to personal responsibility. While on an SSA program, you are, in effect, a cultural ambassador for your home country, a representative of your home institution, and a member of your adoptive community.

In addition to the Program Conditions and Release Statement that all students sign as part of the application process to SSA, you also agree to apply the same standards of conduct and academic integrity while abroad as you would at your home institution. These standards include, but are not limited to:

1. Following honest academic standards and maintaining your commitment to academic growth.
2. Strict adherence to host country laws and customs.
3. Respect for your host families and fellow program participants.
4. Respect for SSA property, professors and staff.
5. General personal and academic practices in line with those outlined by your home institution.

Spanish-Only Language Policy (Applicable to students in the Spanish Studies Program and the Integrated Studies Program only)

The Spanish-Only Language Policy is fundamental to the educational philosophy of SSA. It is a tool that promotes cultural integration and active learning, where students put into practice what they are learning. This is the best way to develop both fluency in Spanish and a deeper understanding of Spanish culture. The benefits of adhering to the Spanish-Only Language Policy, no matter your initial language level, are great:

- You will improve your ability to understand and express yourself in Spanish.
- As fluency increases, you will gain a greater awareness of the local culture as you develop relationships with your host family, professors, and friends.
- You will experience a greater feeling of accomplishment in your integration, while demonstrating a higher level of respect towards the local culture.

Living abroad provides an opportunity for total immersion in the language and culture – but only if each and every student actively seeks out this experience. The immersion experience begins NOW, as you get to know your fellow students on the SSA program. You may find that speaking only in Spanish is awkward and even somewhat isolating at first, but years of experience have proven that it is the best way to improve your language ability. While each student makes an individual commitment to using

only Spanish, this is also a collective effort that contributes to the progress of every student. To help you get the most out of your experience, you and all of your fellow students attending programs with SSA are required to adhere to the Spanish-Only Language Policy.

Students are expected to use Spanish in all written and verbal communications while abroad. Students are NOT expected to speak in Spanish when they are faced with an emergency, when speaking with family members, and on occasions when it is absolutely necessary to use English. However, speaking English in the presence of other SSA students is considered a violation of the policy and must be avoided at all times.

Academic Pledge

1. In signing this Language Pledge, I agree to use Spanish as my sole language of communication while participating in SSA programs. I understand that failure to comply with this Pledge will result in a five-point deduction from the final grade of the mandatory course required of that program and may also result in expulsion from the program without receiving a refund or academic credit.
2. I have read and understood the Academic Pledge and agree to the conditions.

Student's name: _____

Student's signature: _____ Date: _____