

EUROPEAN STUDIES REPORT 2016

Why you chose to study on the European Studies programme?

After studying Spanish A level and volunteering in Peru during my gap year I was really keen to keep up with Spanish. I found the Spanish classes quite difficult to fit into my hospital schedule and for that reason I found doing the classes a bit stressful but they were totally worth it to have the opportunity to go to Spain for 4 months. I also have an interest in global health and would like to work in developing countries in the future hence I thought being able to speak another language would be useful!

An overview of your experience of living in Granada

After hearing of the different exotic places my friends were all going for their electives I was initially a bit disappointed that we could only possibly go to two cities in Spain and we couldn't go explore South America or anywhere! However now I wouldn't pick anywhere else to go! Having the opportunity to spend 4 months in Spain gave me a much greater grasp of the Spanish language that will be certainly be invaluable in future. Granada was always my top choice because I had already visited Madrid and I wanted to experience a different city.

The City, Mountains & Coast

The city is absolutely amazing and I would recommend anyone to visit it. It has the lively, buzzing city life whilst also being small and friendly so it's easy to quickly familiarize yourself with the city and make friends. The city is a great mix of interesting Spanish and Islamic culture as well as having a very studenty/ international vibe. The Alpujarra mountains and Sierra Nevada reserve overlook the city of Granada, creating some impressive scenery! The Sierra Nevada ski resort is about about 30-40 minutes drive away so I tried skiing for the first time ever! The university organised a ski trip that you could sign up to that cost approx. £200 including all ski hire, transport, food, accommodation and 3 hours ski tuition a day. This was so much fun and pretty cheap! More experienced skiers in the group were able to go for day trips to the resort as well.

Granada is also only about 30 minutes away from the coast so if you fancy getting out of the city to see some sea then it is very do-able as a day trip.

Eating & Drinking

Eating and drinking out in Granada is a lot cheaper than England. Possibly one of the best things about Granada is the free tapas with almost every drink you buy! The tapas can range from a little nibble to basically a full lunch, all for the cost of one drink (usually around 2 Euros!), however you don't get free tapas with coffee. The coffee is great though and super cheap! Being a veggie I often find it difficult to get interesting food in Spain but I was shocked to find specialised vegetarian restaurants. My top picks are...:

- **Hicuri**
This place was located just near my flat and does amazing veggie/vegan food that even the carnivores will love! I couldn't actually tell you how many times I ate here, it was a lot! My dad, a proud carnivore who claims a meal isn't a meal without meat in it, even insisted we eat there for a second time. The menu del dia only cost 13.50 euros, which includes starter, main meal, dessert, drink and bread and it's all delicious! The place is also filled with loads of cool street art on the walls by the same artist who decorates many of the streets and shop fronts in Granada, in particular the realejo district.

El Piano

Paprika

Babel

Nido de Bujo

Boegas Castenadas

Sideria

The Cider here is inspired by Asturias....

Accommodation

I really wanted to sort my accommodation before going out to Granada so that when I arrived I could unpack and get settled straight away. Most of the others booked an airbnb for a couple of weeks and then sorted accommodation when they got to Granada, this is easy enough to do because there are posters pinned up across the city advertising flats to rent but being a very organised person the idea of doing this sounded stressful! Most of the accommodation websites are fairly rubbish and initially I found flat-hunting frustrating! Eventually I came across the website: <http://www.aluni.net/en/> I would highly recommend this website! The staff were really helpful and responded to my queries really quickly. Also their process of renting the accommodation, paying the deposit etc was really simple and easy. Accommodation is typically a lot cheaper than Manchester so I could afford a really nice one bedroom flat in the Realejo district. I loved the accommodation I booked via aluni and my landlord & landlady were really friendly and were there to welcome me as soon as I arrived.

If you are wanting to sort accommodation before going out to Granada then look for flats close to Plaza Nueva as that's the centre of the city and where we'd always arrange to meet. I wouldn't recommend living near the hospitals as they are a little bit far out of town and not much going on in that area. Granada has a few distinctive districts.

- Albaicin- The beautiful oldly worldly national heritage site part of Granada. Stunning but not very practical to live in on a day to day basis as it involves walking up a lot of hills.
- Realejo- Cool, studenty area with lots of veggie/vegan cafés. It's a bit further
- City centre-
- Near the hospitals- I don't know if this area has a name but don't bother looking for flats near this part of town.

Transport

Manchester to Malaga

It tends to be cheaper to fly from Manchester to Malaga and then get a bus from Malaga airport to Granada bus station. Granada bus station is a short distance out of town so from there you can either get a taxi or a bus to the centre of town.

The most direct bus between the centre of town and the bus station is the SN1, which you can catch just outside the bus station or on Gran Via.

The buses you get between Malaga airport and Granada bus station can be booked via the alsa website: <https://www.alsa.es/en>

Getting around Granada

Most places in Granada are easily accessible by foot and I enjoyed the opportunity to walk most places as I don't often get the chance to in Manchester. The bus network is really good in Granada too and only costs 1.20euros per trip. You can buy a bus top up card which makes each journey only 80 cents, you can buy a card on most of the buses or at the ticket machine at the LAC bus stops.

Getting around Spain

The ALSA buses are great and can take you to loads of locations in Spain if you fancy doing a bit more exploring. The buses are really comfortable and you can also get a discount on them using your ESN card. During my time in Spain I was able to take day trips to Cordoba and Sevilla and weekend trips to Madrid and Lisbon. All these buses go from the main Granada estacion de autobuses.

Weather & Clothes

The weather in Granada is very variable. It was quite chilly and similar to England when I arrived in February so you definitely need to take a coat and warm clothes (and also ski clothes if you're planning a ski trip!). But then the temperature suddenly shoots up at the end of April/ beginning of May so you really need to take a mixture of clothes for all temperatures! Despite the sudden increase in temperature, reaching around 35 degrees in the final week, the Spanish people still continue to wear the same clothes including jumpers and scarves!

'Clinical dress' doesn't really exist in Spain and most doctors just wear jeans and a t-shirt so don't bother bringing any 'clinical' clothes. They do still wear white coats ('bata') however so it is useful to take your own white coat.

Also take a pair of comfortable shoes as you will be doing a lot of walking around the city.

An overview of working in Granada

The placements in the Spanish hospitals were a lot more relaxed than the usual English placements. I had 1 month in Internal Medicine at Hospital Virgen de las Nieves and then 3 months in A&E at San Cecillio.

Medicina Interna placement, Hospital Virgen de las Nieves

My supervisor was friendly and also spoke very good English, which was useful for my first few weeks in Granada. However, internal medicine mainly consisted of paperwork rather than seeing patients, taking histories and examining patients. The ward did have a few interesting cases and because the patients were there for a while I was able to get a detailed overview of each individual case. But in all honesty there is a limited amount of patients and there wasn't a huge amount for medical students to do on the ward as the doctors spent most of their time doing paperwork and adjusting the patient's medications, which was rather boring to observe! The placement did include seeing patients in the drug dependency unit though and these consultations were really interesting. By chance they had an English patient in the drug dependency unit and I was asked to act as a translator, which was a great experience! Another downside of the placement was the lack of opportunity to practice skills. A lot of the skills are seen as typically 'nurses' jobs' and so the doctors find it difficult to understand why you would want to practice them.

Urgencias placement, Hospital San Cecillio

A&E in Spain isn't quite like A&E in England. There is the more emergency section to it but a lot of it functions like a glorified GP practice, this is

actually more beneficial for medical students. Although I spent the whole time sat in on consultations, the patients and conditions were varied and interesting and there seemed to be more time to chat to patients and doctors. My supervisor was great and really took the time to speak to me directly to ensure I understood the nature of the consultation. Again there wasn't much chance to practice skills but there was more of an opportunity to do skills than in Internal Medicine if you really made an effort.

What you have learnt on the placement with regard to any differences to UK hospitals and practice, the medical training programme, the contrasting medical cultures.

There are stark difference between UK and Spanish hospitals which were interesting to observe. The first thing I noted was the difference in approach to ensuring confidentiality and patient dignity. Coming from a background in a health service that sees confidentiality as of the utmost importance, I was shocked to observe that the culture of confidentiality is not considered vital in the Spanish healthcare. It was quite normal for doctors to have loud conversations about patients quite openly in the corridors or on the wards or for consultations to take place with the door wide open and people wandering in and out of the room. Family members were occasionally asked to leave the bay or room but this was the only evidence for respect for confidentiality that I observed. In both my placements in A&E and Internal Medicine if someone came in to ask about that state of a patient, information was given freely and without question. The most common place to talk to family members about their loved ones condition was in the corridor. This seemed to be the case regardless of the severity of the information being given and no thought was given to who was in earshot. It is clear that 'Breaking Bad News' is unlikely to feature in the Spanish curriculum, not only was the location for such conversations from my point of view inappropriate but I also found the direct and blunt nature of delivery surprising! This is clearly more in line with the Spanish communication style, upon first arriving in Granada I interpreted this way of conversing rude and confrontational but after further observing the Spanish culture I realized that they do not intend to be impolite they are just simply saying exacting what they mean. You wouldn't hear a Spaniard telling someone that they are 'chubby' or 'a little bit overweight', they would say quite matter-of-factly that they are 'fat' because that's exactly what they are. This way of communicating could be beneficial on one hand as it is more direct

and efficient, there is no room for misinterpretation. On the other hand, coming from a completely different cultural frame of reference I would worry about causing offence using such a direct manner with patients. It would seem that worrying about causing offence and taking offence at something being said are very British concepts. I often wondered if the patients preferred and expected this direct approach from their doctors or whether they would've preferred "the English way" of ensuring bad news was broken gently in the right environment. On occasion I have seen doctors roll their eyes and exasperate when a patient has started to cry after receiving a diagnosis or been in pain and at times like this I definitely thought a more understanding and empathetic approach was required!

One aspect that often made me feel uncomfortable was the doctors approach to patient dignity. Often intimate examinations were performed with doors open, curtains not drawn, lacking a chaperone or with other members of staff wandering in and out of the room. There were multiple occasions when doctors or nurses would leave patients semi-naked after or during a procedure clearly in sight of others on the wards. I saw this most often with very ill elderly patients on the internal medicine ward.

A similar approach is taken to gaining consent. Having been taught to always ask for patients consent no matter how seemingly trivial the subject it was another shock to be somewhere with a completely different approach to such things. I have not had a rotation in an interventional department, for example endoscopy or surgery, so I am unaware of how the consent forms work in those circumstances, however, certainly with regards to procedures that would normal necessitate verbal consent, such as catheterisation and cannulation, I did not see much evidence of its use. This is in keeping with what I view as still a very paternalistic approach to healthcare. Spanish doctors rarely presented the options for patients and they had little say in what investigations and medications were available to them. Once I even saw an English patient ask the doctor 'what am I taking this medication for?', which received a response of 'don't you bother yourself with that, just take it every morning'. Patients were never asked if it was ok that a student was present nor was consent gained for bedside examinations.

In medical practice in England I do sometimes think we tend towards over investigating patients, however, in Spain I would say this tendency is even more pronounced. Patients are subjected to a long list of investigations which I often failed to see the relevance of. It seemed that these investigations were a

substitute for taking a detailed medical history and doing thorough clinical examinations. Whilst in English hospitals I have observed shortened and more focused examinations and history taking, the basic vital questions are always asked. In Spain, however, little emphasis is put on taking a complete history and examination. For example a man came into A&E with depression and the doctor failed to ask how long the patient had had feelings of low mood, whether there were any triggers or if he had had any thoughts of self-harm and instead ordered an ECG and a chest X-ray and took some blood, this to me just seemed completely illogical and a waste of resources!

Whilst I don't think I will be adopting the way in which the Spanish practice medicine, I do think their healthcare system has one thing right- the working hours! Doctors seem to have a much better work-life balance, a breakfast break is built into their working schedule and allows all the department to gather together at the beginning of the day in a relaxed atmosphere, which I can imagine builds better working relationships. The typical working days are much shorter, allowing doctors more time to pursue hobbies and spend time with family and friends. For this reason the doctors seem happier and less stressed.

How you have gained from this experience in terms of

i) linguistic development

Although I am still not as fluent as I would like to be, my time in Granada definitely improved my linguistic ability. In the first couple of weeks I found the Andalusian accent very difficult to understand. I found it difficult to understand the doctors when they spoke together in a big group because would speak faster and use colloquial language. What I found improved my Spanish the most was socialising with Spanish or other international people, this meant that even when I was tired in the evening I was forced to speak Spanish but it was in a more relaxed environment. The university will also reimburse you up to 250euros for Spanish classes.

ii) inter-cultural understanding, and iii) in terms of your ideas and future plans.

Any practical issues that future students on this placement should know about.

Any addresses, phone numbers and contacts that might be useful for future students.

Raul Lugo: medori@ugr.es

Guy who works in the mobility office who will help you with all your paperwork in Granada.

People

The University of Manchester: Mirka Tandyrak / Emma Hamilton (European Studies Coordinators)- med.europeanstudies@manchester.ac.uk

Universidad de Granada: Raúl Lugo (Oficina de Movilidad, Facultad de Medicina) medori@ugr.es

Melanie O'Brien (Study Abroad Coordinator)- erasmus@manchester.ac.uk

Hospital Addresses

Hospital Virgen de las Nieves

Av. de las Fuerzas Armadas, 2, 18014 Granada, Spain Tel: +34 958 02 00 00

<http://www.hvn.es/>

Dr. Juan Jimenez Alonso - Jefe de Servicio, Medicina Interna, 9a planta

jjimenezalonso@gmail.com

Hospital San Cecilio

Calle Doctor Olóriz, 16, 18012 Granada, Spain +34 958 02 30 00

<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es>

Oficina de Movilidad Address: Avda. De Madrid s/n, 18071 Email: medori@ugr.es

Oficina de Relaciones Internacionales Address: Campus Universitario de La Cartuja, Granada Email: intloffice@ugr.es

University Website: <http://www.ugr.es>

Faculty Website: <http://www.ugr.es/~facmed/>

Other

Bus station (for buses to other Spanish towns)

There are ticket machines immediately on entering the bus station, where you must buy tickets prior to travelling. It is necessary to show these to the bus driver before getting on the bus.

Calle Minerva 18014 Granada

ALSA Bus Company Website: www.alsa.es

Tourist Information: the tourist office is located at the back of Plaza Nueva. They have maps of Granada which are useful to get around with in the first few weeks. They also have maps of other cities that you may want to visit.

(<http://www.turgranada.es/pdf/espanyol/callejero.pdf>)

Granada Language School Av. de la Constitución, 42, 18012.

Websites for accommodation:

- www.aluni.net
- <http://erasmusu.com/en/erasmus-granada/student-housing>
- <http://www.room-granada.com/en/> <http://estudiantes.ugr.es/alojamientos3/>
- <http://studentmundial.com/student-accommodation-granada>
- www.idealista.com
- www.pisocompartido.com
- www.pisos.com

STUFF TO SORT WHEN ARRIVING IN GRANADA

- Register for placement:

Oficina de Movilidad
Parque Tecnológico de las Ciencias de la Salud
Avenida de la Investigación 11
Torre B, 2º floor. 18016

Opening hours 12:30-2:30

You will need to register for your placement, hand in your learning agreement and get the certificate of arrival signed. Other students in previous reports have said this is done at the Faculty of Medicine near the centre of Granada, however this building is now closed so you need to go to the new faculty which is located in the new science park that is further out of town. The University of Granada suggested that you go to the Oficina de Movilidad to sort out this paperwork a week before starting but then the erasmus/european studies people in Manchester wouldn't accept the certificate of arrival form if it was submitted too early so just go and get this sorted a couple of days before starting placement.

- Register with the University of Granada & get student card?:
Oficina Central de Relaciones Internacionales (Complejo Administrativo Triunfo - Avenida del Hospicio)
Opening hours: 9am-3pm

I went to this office to register with the uni and to get my student card but were told we couldn't get our student card here and instead had to attend an Erasmus Welcome session to get more information, which told us to apply for our cards online. I didn't end up getting a student card and didn't feel like I ever needed one. Our matriculation certificates along with a valid form of ID could be used instead if we ever needed. Also our ESN (erasmus student network) cards worked as student ID in most places. Unfortunately the welcome day, which provided a lot of useful information, occurred after we had already started in hospital so we already needed to be matriculated. I explained this to the guy at the Oficina Central de Relaciones Internacionales so he processed most of my matriculation for me and directed me to the website where I needed to complete my matriculation.

- Get Residente Comunitario Card?:

We were also told to go to the 'Registro Central de Extranjeros' to get our Residente cards, which is required if you are staying in Spain for longer than 3 months.

It is apparently a requirement by the government that you notify them and apply for a NIE number. This also allows you to open a bank account in Spain. This involved paying a tax bill in a bank which needs to be done before 11 am. You need to get this from the Registro Central de Extranjeros and prior to going you have to fill out a form. You also have to show proof of how you are funding yourself whilst in Spain i.e proof of your erasmus grant going in your bank account. However the erasmus grant took so long to come through that by the time it did I felt it wasn't worth the time and effort to sort out so I didn't end up getting this card.

The form is available from:

http://extranjeros.empleo.gob.es/es/ModelosSolicitudes/Mod_solicitud es2/18-Certificado_Residencia_comunitaria.pdf.

Here is an instruction sheet on how to fill it in:

<http://internacional.ugr.es/pages/movilidad/estudiantes/entrantes/how>

[to fill in the application form](#)

The above mentioned documents should be handed into the Central Register of Foreign Citizens (Registro Central de Extranjeros) at the Main Office for Foreign Residents (**Oficina de Extranjeros**) located at C/ **San Agapito, 2** (Granada). Opening hours: **from Monday to Thursday from 9.00 to 17.30 and Fridays from 9.00 to 14.00.**

- Get Erasmus Student Network (ESN)?:
<http://www.esngranada.org/>

This is the main Erasmus group and they have a card for 6€. The easiest way to get hold of a card is to take money to the welcome day and there will be ESN reps directing you to a room where you can register and buy a card. ESN organise excursions and trips and the card gets you certain discounts, which can be found online.

- Sign up to spanish clases

The University of Manchester will reimburse you up to 250 euros worth of spanish clase whilst abroad on placement. We signed up with classes at the Granada Language School and they were real fun and flexible. As there were only 4 of us in the class we could request topics we wanted to cover and have máximum amount of time practicing speaking. A lot of other students studied at the Centro de Lenguas Modernas in Realejo, which although was closer to the centre of town it only offered a more intensive and expensive course.

TOP THINGS TO DO IN GRANADA

1. Visit the Alhambra

Take a full day to soak up the culture and islamic art at the Alhambra. There are parts of the Alhambra that you can visit for free but I would highly recommend buying tickets online for entrance to the Nazarid Palaces as these are the most impressive bits.

<http://www.ticketmaster.es/en/tickets-family/alhambra-general/2/>

2. Visit the Hamman Baths

There are a few arabic baths around the city. We visited the Hamman Al Andalus baths, which were beautiful! I went at 10pm and it was lovely and quite and relaxing. So if you feel like having a bit of a pamper I would definitely recommend this place. They are located just near plaza nueva and offer a decent student discount!

<http://granada.ammamandalus.com>

3. See a Flamenco Show

Flamenco is pretty big in Granada and there are shows can be found daily. I visited a couple of flamenco places and my favourite was Jardines de Zoraya. It was a bit pricey but totally worth it!

<http://www.jardinesdezoraya.com/en/>

4. Visit the Mirador de San Nicholas

This is one of the most impressive view points in Granada and is situated in the Albaicin district. The view of the Alhambra and the Sierra Nevada mountains is simply incredible!! The Mirador de San Nicholas is a cool, bustling square full of street sellers and guitarists by day and a quite, enchanting spot by night. There is a great café at the mirador where you can sit on comfy seats and admire the fantastic views.

5. Eat tapas!!

6. Go Skiing in the Sierra Nevada

As I mentioned previously the university organised a ski trip while we happened to be over there. The trip was really good value for money and a great fun.