

GRANADA

European Studies Year 5 Placement Report



Why I chose European Studies with Spanish

European Studies was the reason I chose to come to Manchester over anywhere else. I had studied Spanish to A-Level and thought it would be a shame to lose it by not carrying it on. With the option to spend a month in 3rd year for PEP and 4 months in 5th year for clinical placements, it was the only programme of its kind in the UK.

Why I chose Granada

In June/July of 3rd year, I went to Madrid to do my Lay PEP (a poster and report) in the ENT department of Hospital Clínico San Carlos. I had a really great time there and loved Madrid. I chose Granada in 5th year to try somewhere new and because it has the Sierra Nevada nearby, as well as Andalucían cities like Málaga, Sevilla, Córdoba and Cádiz. I had also heard that although the weather was cold in winter, it was lovely in springtime (see below... this was not the case for us!).

Things to think about and sort before leaving the UK

Administration – In March of Year 5, we were informed which university we would be going to, Granada or Madrid. In late May/early June of Year 4, we had to go to the Medical School reception in Stopford to sign a Learning Agreement to send to the University of Granada. Raúl Lugo at UGR was the administrator at the time. This Learning Agreement was used for the UGR side and later had to be changed, in early December. We had some lectures in November and December ran by the ERASMUS office in the University, not by European Studies. Attendance at these were compulsory for the MyPlacement website. We found out then that the LA we had done wasn't correct and had to redo it. Make sure you have all the ERASMUS codes correct, full addresses of UOM and UGR, names, addresses, emails and phone numbers of administrators at both universities. The rotations needed to be 4x4 week placements, but this changed also. There is a box where you will need to attach a link for the progression rules in Year 5 regarding attendance, which you should ask ES for in advance because they had given us the out-of-date one and this had to be changed as well. Make

sure you change your contact details on the MyManchester Student System to either your home address or accommodation in Granada (I kept mine as my family home address).

Insurance – I had travel insurance already, but you should get some anyway on top of the insurance UOM provide in case you go on trips away, within Spain or Europe. I also got winter sports insurance added for going skiing but you can buy ski insurance in Sierra Nevada on a single-day basis for €2.50. I used Compare the Market and got it for a reasonable price.

Accommodation – Three of the 6 students in our class came to Granada. We booked and Airbnb for the first 2 weeks of our stay as previous student reports had recommended this approach. We stayed in a 3-bedroom apartment in Calle Melchor Almagro which was a good place to start off. It was about a 20 minute walk to Hospital Universitario Virgen de las Nieves (where all 3 of us started on ENT) and very close to the Facultad de Ciencias where you can get your University student card and ESN card.

Things to do on arrival to Granada

We arrived on the Wednesday evening before the Monday we were due to start. Our exempting exam results came out on the Thursday afternoon (thankfully we all passed!) and we celebrated with drinks on the terrace of the Alhambra Palace Hotel overlooking the whole of Granada. On the Friday morning, we had to go to the Facultad de Medicina in the Parque Tecnológico de Salud (PTS) in the south of the city. You can get the SN4 bus from Gran Vía/Fuentenueva or the Metro (towards Armilla) to right outside the faculty. We went to the Secretaría to meet Raúl Lugo (who was on leave) and were seen to by his colleague. He took photocopies of our passports and sorted out our matriculation, gave us certificates and a pin number to access an online portal (r0medicina.ugr.es). We didn't really use this; but could see our rotations on it so it was useful when they changed. Afterwards, we met Blanca in her office and she gave us folders, welcome information, timetables and lanyards with swipe-cards for the hospital. Initially, the dates were wrong on the rotation timetables so she had to change these. She signed our certificates of arrival for MyPlacement (I brought printed copies of these), which we then took photos of and uploaded straight away. That afternoon we went to the Facultad de Ciencias to get our UGR student cards. You get them in the Santander bank office at one of the entrances. They just ask for your passport number, take a photo and print the card there and then. We didn't use it much but it was good to have. In February, they emailed us to say that the card could be activated as a bus-pass for the Granada buses, so we went back to the faculty there to do that.

After this, there were some issues with all of our Learning Agreements. We had all followed the instructions from European Studies, but the links for the subjects (which were not really relevant for us anyway) were from the previous year as they had not been updated when we uploaded our LA before leaving the UK. This involved emails back and forth to the ERASMUS administrators. Also, it is important to include the rule about 80% minimum attendance and the link to progression rules in the LA. Our ERASMUS grant was loaded onto our CashPassport near the end of the second week (€530).

Accommodation

We used Pisos en Granada, ERASMUS websites and Facebook pages. There were lots of people advertising places to live on WhatsApp groups as well that we were added to by ERASMUS groups Best Life Experience and Emycet.

We ended up signing a lease from the start of February until the end of May for a flat on Calle Trabuco, right in between the Cathedral and Gran Vía, with a roof terrace and a balcony. It was a brilliant location and the terrace was great. The landlord brought in a Belgian student as well who

was a bit strange and had pre-drinks in the kitchen until 3am... but we spoke to him in Spanish which was good for conversational skills. I would highly recommend getting bills included if you can just for ease. This included electric, gas, water and internet. Flats in Spain generally don't have central heating and are single-glazed. Try and get heating if you can! Hot water is powered by gas canisters (bombonas) and these need to be changed about one a month. Our landlord brought us full ones and took away the old ones which was really handy. We didn't have radiators or heating/air-conditioning units, just electric heaters. These didn't really work when it was freezing cold in February and March... and caused power-cuts when all 4 of us had one switched on in our rooms as the combined ampage of the heaters was too high for the building (20A was all we had as compared to 40A in the UK). Overall though the place was great and the location was ideal.

Places to eat

Tapas

La Posadilla – Calle Santa Paula. This was my favourite tapas place. It was just around the corner from our flat, run by one man who did everything himself with no help! Drinks were €1.50 with a tapa and extra tapas were only €1. He made grilled pork with quails' eggs with a garlic oil, garlic mushrooms, spicy beef stew or a really nice omelette with cheese and ham.

Bar Ávila II – Calle San Isidro. The jamón asado here was the best tapa I've ever had. Don't let the service put you off!

Bar Poë – Calle Veronica de La Magdalena 40. You can choose your tapa here and they do Brazilian stews, Thai chicken and rice, cod and potato dishes and veggie options. I didn't go here until quite late on and wish I had gone sooner!

Bar los Arcos – Calle San Jerónimo. The carne en salsa here was really good.

Bella Kurva – Calle San Jerónimo. This was a fusion tapas bar with sushi and Thai curries.

El Piano – vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free restaurant. The food here is really good, lots of aubergine and lentil-containing dishes.

Restaurants

El Pescaito de Carmela – Calle Marqués de Gerona. This was a fish restaurant with good tapas as well. The croquetas de bacalao were amazing.

Muerde la Pasta – Nevada Shopping. This was a buffet with a massive salad bar, pizza, pasta and lots of other options. They had nutella pizza, ice-cream machines, cakes and unlimited drinks (soft-drinks, beer and coffee/hot chocolate). Was really good.

La Cueva de 1900 – lots of them around Granada. I kept seeing this chain around and finally went near the end of my time in Granada. They do a good menu del día (3 courses and a drink) with a better choice of food generally than other places doing this deal. They also do amazing full rack of ribs with a honey glaze.

Cafés

Papas Elvira – Calle Elvira. This place did really good vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free food. The cakes here were really nice as well.

La Tarta de la Madre de Cris – Plaza Pescadería. The cheese tart here was delicious.

Café Alhambra – Plaza de Bib-Rambla. Churros y chocolate.

Café Sol – Avenida de la Constitución. We used to stop here on the way to hospital when we started after 9am.

El Rincón de Lorca – Calle Tablas. Really good chocolate caliente.

Groceries and shopping

For groceries, Mercadona, Día and SuperSol are the main big supermarkets. I found that Día was good for fruit and vegetables and the Hipercor supermarket in the Corte Inglés was actually reasonable enough for fruit and European brands (not UK/US). Carrefour Express is similarly priced to the bigger supermarkets, but I avoided Covirán as much as possible as the fruit was always off and everything was much more expensive.

There is a Dealz (Poundland's European sister) on Camino de Ronda beside YO10 gym. Everything is €1.50 and it's a good place to buy toiletries and long-life foodstuffs like pasta, packs of croissants, tea, coffee and sweets/biscuits.

The shopping in Granada is really good. They have all of the usual European shops but lots of independent shops with really nice stuff too. It was really hard not to go mad at the beginning with all of the sales! There is also a big shopping centre with a good food court and cinema near PTS called Nevada which is open Monday-Saturday until after 10pm (closed on Sundays). Almost every shop in Granada closes between 2 and 5pm and then opens again until 9pm. Almost everywhere is closed on a Sunday except most of Albaicín, shops in the Alcaicería and around Plaza Nueva/the Cathedral.

Trips to go on

Sevilla

We went to Seville with the Erasmus Best Life Experience group. It was €19 to get there and back on a private coach and the journey took 2.5 hours. This was much cheaper and quicker than going with the Alsa bus company from Granada bus station. With the group, we saw the Torre de Oro, La Giralda, Plaza de España and the river. We then went to the Real Alcázar de Sevilla (beautiful walled gardens) and to the Setas de Sevilla (a big wooden structure where you can see the skyline of Seville and the sunset). As we went on a Saturday, we did spend a lot of time queuing to get into these attractions, but they were worth it. It was also only €3 entry to each place with a student card and ID showing that you were 25 or under. We had lunch in a place opposite the Cathedral called Almiranta and the food there was great. We went back to Seville at the beginning of Semana Santa to see more of it. We rented bikes and cycled out to a big park where there was a hippie food market, visited the Cathedral and went back to the same tapas place. We stayed in ForYou hostel which was really central and a nice place to stay. The processions in Seville were very intense and impossible to get past as the streets are all quite narrow. I don't think I would recommend going during Semana Santa unless you are keen to watch hours of processions, but apart from that it is definitely my favourite city in Andalucía.



Sierra Nevada

We went to Sierra Nevada on the first weekend we arrived as the conditions were very good at that time. We got a €9 return bus from Granada Bus Station at 8am and left Sierra Nevada at 6.30pm. It's a direct bus right into the ski village and takes just over 45 minutes to get there and about 1.5 hours to get back with the traffic leaving the mountains. We rented out skis in Intersport and it cost €31 for skis, poles, boots and a helmet. The ski pass cost €48 for the day on a Saturday as it was considered peak time – but it was worth it! The skiing is brilliant in Sierra Nevada; but if you haven't been before, it might be worth having some lessons before you go. I brought a jacket, salapettes, gloves, thermals and a balaclava with me. I forgot my goggles but you can buy them for less than €10 in Decathlon or around €25 in the Sierra Nevada Intersport. There is a "Decathlon in the City" in the centre of Granada and all of the gear is quite reasonable and cheaper than the Intersport in the centre of Granada. I already had travel insurance with InsureaandGo from my summer holidays last year so I rang up and asked to add on Winter Sports cover which cost £16 for 24 days of skiing (which didn't have to be consecutive). I later found that you could buy insurance with your ski pass for €2.50.



Carnaval de Cádiz

The bus to Cádiz took about 5 hours from Granada. We arrived around 3pm and we stayed there until 5am. We watched the parades and saw a concert, and then there was a big botellón in all of the squares.

Toledo

Toledo is a beautiful ancient city near Madrid with historic walls and a mix of Arabic, Jewish and Christian cultures. The journey to Toledo took about 5 hours and we stopped in Molinos on the way to see the windmills there.

Ronda

Ronda is another old city, about 2 hours outside Málaga. It has a huge bridge you can walk under and water mines you can walk down.

Morocco

This was an amazing trip with Best Life Experience that lasted 3 days and cost €179 with accommodation and food included. We left Granada at 3am on the Friday morning, got the ferry from Algeciras at 8am and arrived in Ceuta, Morocco around 9am (an hour behind there). We crossed the Spanish-Moroccan border and then went to the beach at Martil but unfortunately it was raining. We then went to Tetúan and spent the day there. On the second day we visited Assilah and Tangier, which were much nicer than Tetúan. We went on a camel ride on the beach outside Tangier while the sun was setting. The final day was spent in the blue city of Chefchaouen which was beautiful. The food in Morocco was delicious – we had 3 course meals at lunch and dinner and a buffet breakfast. You could have got by without changing euros into Dirham, but I changed €20 to spend on souvenirs, drinks and snacks because they did rip you off a bit if you paid in euros for cheaper things. I would definitely recommend going on this trip if you can as it was very well organised and very fun.



Málaga

I went to Málaga twice and absolutely loved it. I'd never been before and was surprised at how beautiful it was. It's got a lovely marina and a beach right in the centre. We had really nice tapas in a place called Casa Lola.

Monachil

You can get the 183 bus here from Paseo de los Basiliros. It's a nice walk along a river and waterfalls with cliffs and rope bridges.

<http://siu.ctagr.es/horarios.php>

Salobreña

This was a nice beach town near Granada and we got a bus from the station with Alsa to it.

Madrid

I got the bus to Madrid with Alsa and it took 5 hours. I stayed in TOC hostel just off Plaza Sol.

The buses with Alsa are very reliable and every one I booked left on time and usually arrived a little early. They have an app which is handy to use and you can book online on their site as well. There is a Jóven ticket option which saves you some money during off-peak times.

Weather in Granada

In all honesty, although I hate to say it, the weather in Granada was quite terrible! I think it may have been something to do with the "Beast from the East" and the fact that the weather in most of Europe was bad this year, but I did not expect Spain to be as cold and wet as it was for the grand majority of my time there. During late January and early February, it was very cold but dry with minimal rain. However, from the middle of February until the middle of April (except for the week of Semana Santa) it absolutely poured rain almost every day. I have never experienced rain like some of the storms in Granada. So my advice would be: bring a raincoat, an umbrella, and some shoes which are waterproof! It was still cold up until mid-April and I needed to wear a heavy-ish coat in the morning and the evening. Some afternoons were sunny and warm in mid-April and it was nice to sit on the terrace we had. There were really bad thunderstorms in May as well, although it was warm. I would highly recommend getting a flat with central heating. I bought a fluffy dressing gown in Hipercor during the sales and was glad I had brought warm pyjamas and bed socks as it was extremely cold at night until mid-March! When the weather was good it was absolutely beautiful in Granada.

Placements

ENT – Hospital Universitario Virgen de las Nieves

All 3 of us were together on ENT for the first 5 weeks. Our supervisor was Dr José Manuel Amador and he was really nice. All of us were in the same consultation room with him for the whole time (which could get a bit cramped), except on a Tuesday when we went to surgery. We usually started about 9.15am and finished between 12.30 and 2pm. It wasn't possible to take histories or fully examine patients on this rotation, but I did get to examine neck lumps and use the laryngoscope. We saw a lot of laryngeal cancer, chronic pharyngitis, tracheostomies etc.

Internal Medicine – Hospital Universitario Virgen de las Nieves

I really enjoyed this placement. It lasted for 4 weeks and my supervisor was Dra Isa Martínez who was very friendly. She encouraged me to examine every patient and I did a U-CEX on a heart failure patient. I was on the ward for the whole 4 weeks and saw some interesting cases including TB, aspergillus, POEMS syndrome, and a lady with an enormous inguinal hernia that extended down past her right knee. During this placement, I was asked to translate for an elderly English patient (who had been transferred to the ward from ICU with a tracheostomy in-situ) and her daughter. This was a good experience and the patient's daughter told me she was very grateful for the help I was able to give. Internal medicine is a good speciality in that most of the patients have clinical signs

(ascites, murmurs, oedema etc.) which I think was good to keep on top of things after finals. There was a meeting every morning at 8.15am which students were expected to attend – however this was often cut short and turned into a discussion about beds and where each doctor was working that day, so we had to leave to have breakfast for over an hour before we started at about 9.45am. We started by reading the patients' notes and then went on the ward round, usually seeing between 6 and 9 patients each morning. The ward round finished between 11.30 and 1.30 depending on the amount and complexity of the patients. After this, the doctors adjusted medications and wrote in the notes. Sometimes I was told to go after the ward round finished and other times I stayed until just before 3pm.

Haematology – Hospital Universitario Virgen de las Nieves

This was a 2-week placement based mostly on the Haematology ward. My supervisor was Dra Elisa López and we saw mostly acute leukaemias and myeloma. I saw a bone marrow transplant, which involves defrosting bags of donated cells (this one was an autologous transplant) and transfusing them through a Hickmann line over about 15 minutes. On this placement I started at around 9.30am and finished between 12.30 and 2pm. I really enjoyed haematology as it wasn't something I had really had any exposure to before in Manchester. I learned a lot about chemotherapy regimens and side-effects as well as different types of bone marrow transplants and their potential complications.

Nephrology – Hospital Universitario Virgen de las Nieves

This was my least favourite placement in that I don't really have any interest in renal medicine. I spent the whole 2 weeks on the transplant unit –which was interesting to begin with, but got a bit repetitive. My supervisor was Dra Carmen Ruiz and she was really nice and keen to teach. The meetings here started at 8.30am and I was expected to stay until the handover at the end of the day, usually around 3pm.

A&E – Hospital Neuro-Traumatología

This placement was OK overall. I thought I would have seen more emergencies but most patients came in with back pain, knee pain and headaches. A lot of people in Spain just go to Urgencias instead of their GP to get things done quicker, so most of the patients I saw were not acutely unwell. I did see some patients with acute stroke and SAH in the resus area. I didn't have a designated supervisor for this placement so just asked different doctors who were around that day could I follow them. I did a mixture of general, trauma, observation and resus.



Language Classes

We organised B2 level language classes in the Granada Language School for a Thursday evening between 4 and 6pm. Our teacher was María and she was young and enthusiastic. We wanted to focus mainly on speaking rather than reading or writing and she adapted the lessons to suit this. She also asked us what we would prefer to study and we decided on mainly the past tense as that it the tense we found we were using most and had some problems with it and the subjunctive. We paid €90 each month and the Erasmus office said they would reimburse us €250 on completion of the course with evidence of attendance (certificate and receipts).

Gym/Sports

I joined VivaGym on Calle Arabial because it had a really good range of classes and good opening times. You can sign up for 3 months with a passport for €90 – otherwise you need a DNI (identity card that everyone in Spain has). YO10 on Camino de Ronda offered discounts with Best Life Experience cards but was more expensive overall. Both did a free trial day before signing up. The 25m pool on Calle Arabial is also good. It closes at weekends but is open 9:00-14:00 (€2.40) and 17:00-22:00 (€4.50) during the week. There is a nice area to walk behind the Alhambra, the Parque Periurbano Dehesa del Generalife.

European Studies and ERASMUS points

We filled out a Learning agreement in the June before we started final year, which was mainly for the Granada application process and was not specific enough for ERASMUS. We all uploaded this to MyPlacement and then got an email in December telling us it had lots of errors. Each of the 4 placements had to have 7.5 credits with a total of 30 credits. In Table B, it was important to include the progression rules for year 5 and attendance expectations. We all submitted this amended document to MyPlacement and then on the first week in Granada we were told that the course links we had included were out of date, even though we had used the one provided to us by European Studies (which was not really relevant for us anyway as we were doing clinical placements, not classes and exams). This took quite a while to sort out and finally we had to upload an amended learning agreement to MyPlacement. We got our ERASMUS grant at the end of the second week. My placements changed a few times during my time in Granada. Initially, the dates of the rotation changed and then my 3rd 4-week rotation (initially Cardiology in Hospital Universitario San Cecilio, which was in the process of closing down) was changed into two 2-week rotations in Haematology and Nephrology in Hospital Virgen de las Nieves. My last placement was originally in Vithas but changed to the Trauma hospital instead (which was much closer). There was a Certificate of Attendance form on MyPlacement, which we had seen on the site before leaving. We emailed Blanca and she arranged to sign them during the last week. This was needed for the rest of the ERASMUS funding and compulsory for MyPlacement. However, we didn't actually get reminded about this until the week after we all returned, so thankfully we had checked online before leaving! I would recommend arranging this in the second-last week as it can be difficult in Spain to tie people down.

Useful contacts

Prof^a. Blanca Gutiérrez (Vicedecana de Movilidad y Relaciones Internacionales)
vicemed.movyri@ugr.es

ERASMUS groups (to join Facebook groups)

- Best Life Experience

- Emycet