

**Saint-Petersburg State University**  
**International Relations Office**

**EXCHANGE STUDENTS' REPORT**

Please complete this form and send it to Scientific and Academic Cooperation/Students Exchange Dept.  
nechaeva@ir.pu.ru, fax +7 /812/ 3240788. Thank you.

**TO BE FILLED OUT ELECTRONICALLY**

The international experience you have gained while the exchange period at St.Petersburg University is the unique practice you will remember all your life. It can also help other students when they are planning for their exchange. To make sure that prospective students have a chance to learn from your experience you are required to submit the **Exchange Students' Report**.

Please complete the form and **return by email to [nechaeva@ir.pu.ru](mailto:nechaeva@ir.pu.ru)**.

When filling in the returned student report try to remember the sort of things that you wanted to know before you went on exchange, be honest in your responses and try to avoid simply giving yes/no answers.

Please do not hesitate to contact Scientific and Academic Cooperation/Students Exchange Dept. staff if there are any issues you would like to discuss regarding your exchange experience.

<b>Name:</b>	Valeria Ikhlova
<b>Home faculty at SPSU</b>	Faculty of Economy
<b>Exchange Study Period</b>	31.08.2009 – 28.02.2010
<b>Host Institution</b>	Deusto University, Spain

Do you give permission for prospective exchange students to contact you if they have questions? **Yes, I do**

If yes, please give your preferred email address: [ikhlova\\_valery@mail.ru](mailto:ikhlova_valery@mail.ru)

## ***The Host Institution***

What influenced your decision to select the host institution that you went to?

I found all necessary information, was interested in proposed program (subject field) and was interested in studying the Spanish language, culture and traditions.

Please describe the location of the host institution.

Deusto University is situated in Bilbao, which is in the far north of Spain. It is a small city not far from the ocean (40 minutes by metro and 20 minutes on foot). The main sighting is Guggenheim museum. There are a lot of Erasmus students in the city.

Please describe the courses that you took while on exchange. What were their pros and cons?

Actually I did not choose courses by myself. When I filed the application I defined courses of the program Economic and business administration. But when I received the grant I was informed that my program is European Master in Transnational Trade Law and Finance. As soon as it includes 30 credits for the 1<sup>st</sup> semester I cannot choose any other courses except Spanish.

So, proposed courses were:

1. Introduction to the Main Elements of International Trade and Commerce and International Organizations
2. Judicial Cooperation within the European Union.
3. Contracts and Law Applicable to Contractual Obligations.
4. Arbitration and Alternative Methods of Solving Conflicts in the European Union.
5. European Competition Law and Economic Regulation.
6. Spanish language.

The courses were different.

The 1<sup>st</sup> one was 10-days intensive program. In the first part of the day there were lectures of professors from different universities all over the world. Pros: possibility to know different ways of studying and obtain complex knowledge regarding subject. Cons: there were almost 100 students in the class with different backgrounds, English of professors was very different and it was difficult sometimes to understand everything. I think that partially it is because of my level of English. Second part of the day was devoted to the moot court. We were divided into 4 groups according to our background and had to write statement of claim and statement of defense. Pros: development of team work. Cons: in our group we saw supervisor very rarely because she spend more time with other group that had more issues due to the difficulties within their groups. I think I should have consulted more often. Almost all groups had issues with misunderstanding within the group due to the different backgrounds.

The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> ones were a little bit similar: around 8 professors with leadership of Deusto professors during 1 month (each module) read lectures regarding subject matter. After this there was an exam. Pros: a lot of new information. Cons: difficult for understanding evaluation system. Sometimes we were sure that our answers would be all right but lectures found them not up the mark though we had attended all the classes, had prepared for exams. It was so that perhaps the questions were incorrect or he lectures expected something quite different. Perhaps we should have studied something else about which we had not been warned.

4<sup>th</sup> course was lead by US professors. It was very intensive. We had activities during the whole day and had to read a lot to be prepared for the next day. It was very well organized. I think I had learned a lot from that course and not only knowledge but experience as well.

The Spanish class was quite good with the native speaker and different activities.

How did course content, class size, marking, etc compare with St. Petersburg State University?

Everything is different. There were a lot of required readings, class size was bigger than in master classes in SPbGU (28 persons). There was a wide range of different activities, working at groups. Marks included different part: some percent for attendance and activities in class, some for the exam, some for particular work (for example, moot court or essay).

The grades are from 0 to 10. 5 and up to 5 means passed.

Did you find the academic and international office staff helpful?

Yes, it is very helpful. But the staff related to the program itself (not international office) a little bit disorganized sometimes. Our schedule change all the time and sometimes very dramatically and at the very last moment.

Please describe the resources available to exchange students (i.e. computers, the library).

There are a lot of computers in the library. Free Wi-Fi everywhere in the University and in the library. There are not so many books in English but there are some electronic resources. There are some places to print. Prices are different. In the University – 0.07-0.08 cents per page. Outside the University you can find 0.04 cents per page. There is a book shop in the Uni.

Did you experience any language or cultural difficulties at the host institution?

I almost did not know Spanish. People in Spain do not know English well. But the staff is OK with English, even with pronunciation that is very difficult in English for Spanish-speakers. Sometimes I feel difficulties in understanding professors because of the pronunciation mostly. I think it was because of my level of English.

Do you think that going on exchange contributed to your academic and personal development? If so, how?

Yes it has contributed in both. I have learned a lot of things. I have compared them with the same ones in my country. I have started to understand more about other culture and people from different countries all over the world. I have met a lot of interesting people. I have studied a new way of life. I have seen a lot of new places.

This exchange has broadened my outlook much. I have found out that sometimes nationality is not important at all but personality plays a great role. In other situations nationality defines the behavior. Also I have realized that sometimes I do not know much about my country and nationality. I cannot separate what my personal opinion is and what the particularly Russian's point of view is. So, the experience was great in all senses.

## *Practical*

### *Accommodation*

Please describe the accommodation options available to exchange students.

The University of Deusto offers long stay lodgement in the Residence Hall, in private flats to share with more students or lodgement with a family.

Accommodation search is a free service for University of Deusto students.

#### -Residence Hall (Colegio Mayor):

1. Stays longer than one month: 951,23€ (only Full board)

- This includes a single room with a private bathroom, 3 meals a day (7 days a week), linens, free use of laundry machines, all utilities included, in-room internet.
- Residence hall facilities include a computer lab, gym, TV room, cafe, etc.

2. Stays of less than one month (price per person and day):

Bed and breakfast: 39,59€

Half board: 42,8€

Full board: 47,08€

#### -Shared flat:

The flats are of private origin. The University of Deusto manages its operation and registration through a firm commitment, with each of the owners.

The average price per person and per month in a shared flat is € 350 but it varies depending on the state or location, and our registered flats prices come from € 250 to € 500, and includes a single room and common areas like the bathroom, kitchen or living room.

The water and electricity bills are not included in this price. The cost of these bills is shared between all tenants of the apartment.

It is mandatory to hand over a deposit, which corresponds to 1 month's rent. The deposit is returned at the end of the stay, if the flat is in the same conditions as when it was delivered to students at the beginning of the stay in Bilbao.

The flats are shared by both men and women students.

The floors are made up mostly of the common areas and 2, 3 or 4 bedrooms, but most of them have 3 rooms.

Shall be paid the full monthly income if the student enters or exit the flat before the 15th of the month and half monthly rent, if entry or exit is after the 15th.

#### -Live with a family:

If you are interested in living in Bilbao with a local family, we do have a few families who are interested in receiving foreign students while their stay in Bilbao. Different prices depending on the board (average):

-Full board: aprox. 600€

-Half board: aprox. 450€

-Cooking facilities: aprox. 300€

The use of this service implies student acceptance of the assigned lodgment during the dates given in the accommodation application form.

(This programme works according to the 2009/10 official academic calendar:

1st semester: 9 September – 27 January

2º semester: 1 February – 5 June)

The monthly rent will be always paid within the 7 first days of each month.

The deposit can not be used as the last month rent.

The University of Deusto will exclusively arrange housing for University of Deusto students during their study period in UD. Will not arrange any letter of invitation to relatives or friends.

Good behavior: As regards the use of the flat and common spaces, the student commits to respect the rights of others to their respective flats and common spaces, according to codes of good neighbourly behaviour, and to take responsibility for any infractions that may be committed by other persons present in the flat, subject to the rules of the Community and in any case to Municipal bylaws. In case of non-fulfillment the students could be thrown out from the flat within 15 days and will not be able to use the UD Accommodation Programme anymore and academic measures will be imposed. Each case will be reported to home universities.

-In case of non-fulfillment:

The student will be required to pay 1 month's rent to the landlord, ie, failure would mean the loss of deposit.

Academic measures will be imposed if it fails to pay the deposit.

-Procedure:

- 1- Accommodation application form reception. Assignment is done in arrival order.
- 2- The University of Deusto Accommodation Service will send an e-mail explaining the details of the flat as features, price, distance and photos, if possible.
- 3- Each student has a maximum of 5 days to give us an answer.
- 4- In case of positive answer, the student will receive the e-mail address of the owner in order to him/her, introduce yourself and confirm the arrival day and flights details. Please do not forget to contact the owner of the flat.  
In case of a negative answer, we evaluate the reasons, but please note that we are lack of flats, so we can not assign several flats, but just one offer.
- 5- The payment of the deposit of the room is done on arrival, handle to the owner who will be waiting for you in the flat.
- 6- The monthly payment of the rent is always done within the 7 first days of each month. Please contact the owner to know the payment method.

How expensive were the accommodation options?

Look previous section. Be aware that the price for the flat depends not only on the distance (everything is close here) but on the hitting, number and size of rooms. Beds are very small here usually :) look pictures.

What type of accommodation would you recommend?

For persons who do not want to cook, clean after them and strongly prefer personal shower and toilet - Residence Hall. It is expensive.

I prefer shared flat where the price is not so high and I could cook what I like and eat when I want to eat.

## ***Food***

Did you have self-catering facilities or were meals provided with your accommodation?

Fits month I lived where meals is provided and then – self-catering.

Was food expensive?

If you cook by yourself it costs 200 euro per month.

Where is the best place to shop?

For meal – Erosky and “fruterias”.

For Shopping – outlets for example – in Baracaldo (15 minutes by metro from the center or by bus).

How much does it cost to eat out at a local restaurant/café?

If you do out: 6,5 euro for students in the library cafeteria per lunch ( you could take part of lunch and it is cheaper). Everywhere the price for good meal is around 10-13 euro. The food is very good and the dishes are big.

## ***Transport***

Please describe the local transport options.

Bilbobus – inside the city.

Buses (alsa) – everywhere in Spain and nearest countries – very good, cheap and convenient.

Trambia (трамвай) – inside the city.

Train – euskatren – in bask country. Renfe – everywhere in Spain.  
Metro – Bilbao and countryside.  
Low-cost airlines with prices sometimes more cheap than trains and buses.

Was it expensive to use local transport? Please give an example of the costs.

Inside the city if you bought card it is not expensive. 10-15 euro per month, if you use transport from time to time and often.  
Separate trip could be expensive (3 euro for 40 minutes to the bitch – one way. In comparison with card – not more that 2.5 euro back and forth).  
Bus to Madrid and from to Bilbao – 28 euro for 4.5 euro. Sometimes there are offers. Train might be cheaper of a little bit more expensive – depend on the speed and time.

## ***Personal Safety***

Did you find the city in which you stayed safe?

Yes. But in clubs it is better to take care of you bag.

Do you have any safety advice for other exchange students?

In clubs it is better to take care of you bag. Also I heard that sometimes somebody loose his language in the bus.

## ***Highlights***

Briefly describe the highlights of your exchange experience.

A broaden knowledge about subjects, people and environment.  
Improvement of my English.  
New way of teaching.  
New point of view on another culture, people from other countries.  
Other nature, food, climate.  
Globalization.  
Similarities and differences with other people.  
Tolerance.  
Mutual aid.

## ***Problems***

Briefly describe any problems you experienced and any suggestions you may have to help others avoid them.

Language: in Spain it is better to know Spanish and not rely on English.  
In Spain I have only issues with communication outside of the university where people do not speak English.  
In Russia I have problems with passing examinations after I miss a lot of classes in home university. The system where home university take into account courses that you studded in host university does not work due to the differences in programs and lack of general understanding of the exchange idea that woks good in European countries as I understand. We have to miss one year or have difficulties with studding and passing exams in both universities at the same time. But in any way the existence of the opportunity to study in another country is magnificent.

## ***Other Comments***

Do you have any further comments?

Where reports like this are available to the students who are going to start there exchange program? When I started preparations to my exchange it was very difficult to find these simple but important things about which you even do not know that you have to think?  
I found people who study here before and ask them a lot of questions while huge amount of information I

could receive form such reports and then ask much less if any.

The information given in this Report CAN BE PUBLISHED on the Internet \_\_\_\_\_yes\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking the time to share your exchange experiences in this report.

Please save your report as a **Word document** and email a copy to [nechaeva@ir.pu.ru](mailto:nechaeva@ir.pu.ru)

Date: 13.02.2010

Name: Valeria Ikhlova

The idea and the model of this form is taken from the University of South Australia web pages.