

TUHH experience report - Studying abroad

July 12, 2025

Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), Spain 2024/2025 , SS 2025

Program: Erasmus (SMS)

Stay: 10.02.2025 - 04.07.2025

Study program: Environmental Engineering, EQF Level 2, Master

Dean of Studies: Civil Engineering

Information, application at TUHH

I discovered the possibility of studying abroad through emails from the international office. I also read information from previous student's experiences abroad from these very documents. The application process went well; I had no major issues. My reason for applying to this placement were to experience life in Spain and to improve my Spanish while continuing to learn about core subjects related to my degree.

Applying to the host university, travel preparation, visa?

The application process to UAB was fine. They provide a document that guides you through the process.

Choosing courses that had credits that would transfer to my degree at TUHH was difficult. As an exchange student, you are accepted into a department (facultat) of the University, and you must take at least 50% of your credits within that department (maybe this varies by department). I am a master's student that did an exchange to a master's program that was only one year in duration. The number of courses offered in the summer semester was limited because the (non-ERASMUS) students were also expected to work on their thesis in this time. In addition, only a limited number of courses outside my degree were offered in English. I also had to change my DLA after arriving because some of the courses were full or were listed in English on the website but were actually presented in Spanish.

What made the process of finding each course very difficult was having to access the various faculty websites of the university to plan my courses. I would recommend reaching out to the exchange office of each faculty you are interested in because they might be able to provide you with an excel sheet of all of the courses offered within the faculty. I was provided one by the faculty of science and it made things easier.

I would also recommend using this timetable planner from the university:

[https://web02.uab.es:31501/pds/consultaPublica/look\[conpub\]ActualizarPestanaPubHora?rnd=7199.0](https://web02.uab.es:31501/pds/consultaPublica/look[conpub]ActualizarPestanaPubHora?rnd=7199.0)

Also, if you are not an EU citizen but have an EU residence permit, you MUST get a student visa. UAB will help you with this and they schedule virtual meetings to help you plan. IMPORTANT: You must apply within 30 days of arriving. AND if you are flying to Spain from Germany, you need to make sure to get your passport stamped or do a Declaracion de Entrada with the police within 3 days of arriving.

Accommodation & Costs

I used *idealista* to find my apartment. I know there are also large whatsapp groups where people are constantly posting apartments.

The process of renting was very different from renting in Germany. It is more informal than Germany. No ERASMUS students that I know of signed contracts for accommodation. I also know many people who switched their accommodation, sometimes more than once. Also, the process of finding and moving into an apartment can happen pretty quickly.

I lived in the city based on recommendations from the previous TUHH exchange students to UAB. I am happy with my decision. The on-campus housing is conveniently located right next to campus (and has a pool) but it takes around an hour to get into the city (depending on where you're going).

I lived in Guinardo, a district of the city of Barcelona. It was not too far from the central areas of Barcelona, and it was relatively quiet but still active. The downside of living here was that it took 1.5 hours to get to the University.

Food is on average cheaper in Spain than in Germany. So, if you want to cook at home or eat out, it is generally less expensive.

For electricity, water, and internet, my roommates did not charge me for this.

For my mobile phone data, I was able to use Aldi talk in Spain, just like I do in Germany.

For transportation, I used the T-Jove. It was 40 euros for 3 months. You get unlimited access to all transportation within Barcelona and you can take trains out of the city as well (also to the university). To get this you need to go to a metro station that has an office in it.

I had a gym membership in the city which was 50 euros a month. There is a gym on campus that is cheaper.

- Living costs per month (*approximately; including rent*) : 900-1000 €
- Monthly rent (*including heating*) : 520 €

On-site – Host university orientation / support

I did not participate in any orientation events from UAB. I'm not sure if these are provided for the summer semester.

I participated in ERASMUS Student Network (ESN) orientation events. This is how I met many people who I remained friends with. I would recommend paying 20 euros or so to join ESN and get an ESN card. You get many discounts for visits to sites like museums and churches within the city and you will "earn" your money back if you participate in enough events.

Here is the contact info for the exchange office of the faculty of sciences: intercanvis.ciencies@uab.cat

The international Support service team were also helpful when I was applying for my visa: international.support@uab.cat

On-site – courses taken / curriculum at the host university

I studied in the faculty of sciences. I took courses that aligned best with my degree curriculum at TUHH. All of my courses were in English

Courses:

Spanish B1.1 – 6 ECTS – *Language Service*

Environmental Chemistry and Sustainability – 6 ECTS – *Faculty of Sciences*

Water, Energy, Land Management – 9 ECTS – *Faculty of Sciences*

Sustainable Mobility & Ecocities – 9 ECTS - *Faculty of Sciences*

The instruction and examination method of each course is different. Some courses have midterm exams, some have recovery exams at the end of the semester if you fail the midterm/final exams. Overall, the communication of the course content with the students is very good. They use a website provided by the university and all lecture content is uploaded online.

As far as credit transfer, ECTS credits will be transferred to TUHH

On site – everyday life / leisure / contacts

I met many students through ESN events. Students from other universities in the city also participate in ESN events, so you will have the opportunity to meet a lot of people through this organization. I also met many students through my courses.

There is a lot happening on campus. It is very large and open and the university has a much larger student population than TUHH. There are always groups promoting events on campus. There is also a sports complex on campus. I lived in the city, so as far as nightlife, I know that Barcelona has a seemingly infinite amount of options for clubs and bars.

For leisure activities I joined a climbing gym. Barcelona has many. I would also recommend checking out the beach for volleyball and padel. Even in the winter there are many activities going on there.

Formalities on site

My telephone and internet connection were handled by my roommates. I used my DeutscheBank account for all of my purchases.

Personal experiences – evaluation of the stay abroad – things worth mentioning – own comment

Overall, this was a great experience, and I strongly recommend it. I was also able to get my Spanish to a comfortable B1 level (I was approximately A2 when I arrived) which was one of my goals of this semester. One thing to note is that Catalan is the main language of Catalunya/Barcelona so everything will be written in Catalan. So, it is maybe not the optimal Spanish city for learning Spanish. However, everyone can speak Spanish, and many signs are also written in Spanish as well.

Contact with fellow TUHH students

<p>Would you be willing to give tips to fellow students about a similar project in your host country?</p>	<p>drew.gilmore@tuhh.de</p>
<p>Do you agree that the Outgoing Team may share your experience report with selected fellow students upon request?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>If your academic dean's office has a Stud-IP group with information about stays abroad, may your experience report be made available there? <i>(Your name will not appear on the report; your email address will only appear if you enter it yourself.)</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>May your experience report be made available on the Mobility Online information portal? <i>(Your name will not appear on the report. Your email address will only appear if you enter it yourself.)</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>