

University of Alcalá de Henares
Spain

Winter semester 2020/2021

1. City of the exchange (miasto wymiany) (how to travel from Poland/ dojazd z Polski)

Alcalá de Henares

It wasn't difficult to get from Poland, I flew by plane from Warsaw to Madrid for 3.5 hours. And from there by bus to my city, about 40 minutes.

2. Host University / uczelnia partnerska (state or private, number of students, number of exchange students/ państwowa, prywatna, liczba studentów, liczba studentów z wymiany)

It is a public university with approximately 30,000 students. I don't know how many exchange students, but this year the number has decreased due to the coronavirus.

3. Courses/ przedmioty (what kind of courses did you take, how did you apply, the form of teaching, the form of evaluation/ oferta zajęć, sposoby zapisywania się na zajęcia, forma prowadzenia zajęć, sposoby zaliczenia, itd.)

I signed up for four courses, among which: Personal and professional development through coaching, Business trends, EU and international environment and Spanish language.

I signed up for all classes online, using a Google form that ISO sent me, in which I was asked what lessons I would like to choose. The downside is that I haven't received any confirmation that I have been accepted for this course. It was also problematic to find a schedule. And I had to write to teachers directly and find out if I could go to their classes and when they did. Classes were held in a mixed form, both online and face to face.

The forms of evaluation were different everywhere, basically we did some assignments at each lesson, and at the end of the course we did some final project, essay or test. Activity in the lesson was also taken into account.

4. Accommodation (does the host University offer a place in a dormitory, if not, does it help to find accommodation, czy uczelnia posiada akademik, jeśli nie, to czy pomaga w znalezieniu zakwaterowania, opinia o akademiku, itd.)

As I know, the university has dormitories, but they cost much more than renting a room. I did all the searches myself, no one helped me. I was lucky and found a nice room in a large apartment near the city center with a beautiful view. We lived together with a neighbor, each had its own bathroom. The apartment was a 20-minute walk from the university, but this was not a problem since I didn't have morning classes.

5. Communication with the host University / komunikacja z uczelnią partnerską

It was not difficult to communicate with the teachers, most often I received a quick answer to my question. Initially, there were difficulties in getting a response from ISO. The answer sometimes had to wait a long time.

6. Cost of living/ koszty życia (the average cost of living (accommodation, food, etc), practical tips „where to do shopping, how to travel/ praktyczne porady typu” gdzie robić zakupy, jakie środki komunikacji wybierać, codzienne wydatki, koszty mieszkania itd.)

Renting a room in my city costs about 300-400 euros per month, plus utility bills for about 40-50 euros. In comparison with other cities, this is still not much, since, for example, prices in Madrid start from 400 and higher. It is also worth noting the fact that not all houses have heating, which means more waste for electricity.

The tariff for a mobile account costs 10 euros per month. A monthly pass costs 20 euros, you can use any type of transport in unlimited quantities (buses, metro, train), and the pass also allows you to move around the Community of Madrid. The transport here is good, unfortunately there is no exact timetable at which time the bus or train arrives, but they run every 15-30 minutes and there were no problems getting to Madrid. I would advise to use the Moovit application, in which you can see how to get to a certain place, it works much better than google maps. In general, about 300 euros were spent on food, cafes and some other entertainment.

There were problems with travel, because due to the coronavirus, some restrictions were introduced all the time and there was practically no opportunity to leave the borders of Madrid. Therefore, I cannot say anything about this. Theoretically, this should not be a problem, since there are many buses, trains and planes to different parts of the country.

There were no problems with shopping either. There is a shopping center in my city with a lot of Spanish shops. Also in Madrid there are several shopping streets where there are always a lot of people. The purchase of products was carried out in the nearest shops, there is a large selection of supermarkets, such as Carefour, Mercadona, Ahora mass, Dia, Auchan, Lidl. There are also many fruit and vegetable shops with a large selection.

7. Students' life/ życie studenckie (on the University, in the city/ na uczelni, w mieście)

I had to arrange student life myself. Of course, there is an ESN organization, but in order to join it, you need to purchase a card for 15 euros, which I did not see the point in since most of the activities were online. And since I met other guys on the Erasmus program at the university, I wasn't at all upset that I did not join the ESN.

8. General opinion / opinia ogólna:

Overall, I liked this trip, despite the complications associated with the coronavirus, such as wearing a mask all the time, not only indoors, but outdoors, city closures and curfews. I find it a cool experience to study and live in other country, learn a different culture and meet new people from different countries.