



GEARE Ambassadors Student Resources

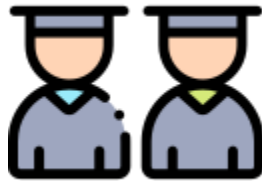


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Disclaimer

The information compiled here is intended to be a resource and a starting point for you when doing your own research into the GEARE program, not the definitive answer to all your questions. Please remember that the people writing and editing this document are students, just like you. Make sure to confirm any information you are unsure of with official sources, **and definitely make sure to let the GEARE office know where you're planning to go.** Please also consider submitting any resources you have found online through [this form](#) so that you can help the next student. Good luck planning your GEARE experience, and if you have any questions please let us know!

– The GEARE Ambassadors

Finding Work Experiences

Domestic

- LinkedIn
- Glassdoor
- Handshake
- [Purdue XEngine](#)
- [Purdue Symplicity](#)
- Purdue Career Fairs!
- [Engineering Undergraduate Research @ Purdue](#)
- [Office of Undergraduate Research @ Purdue](#)

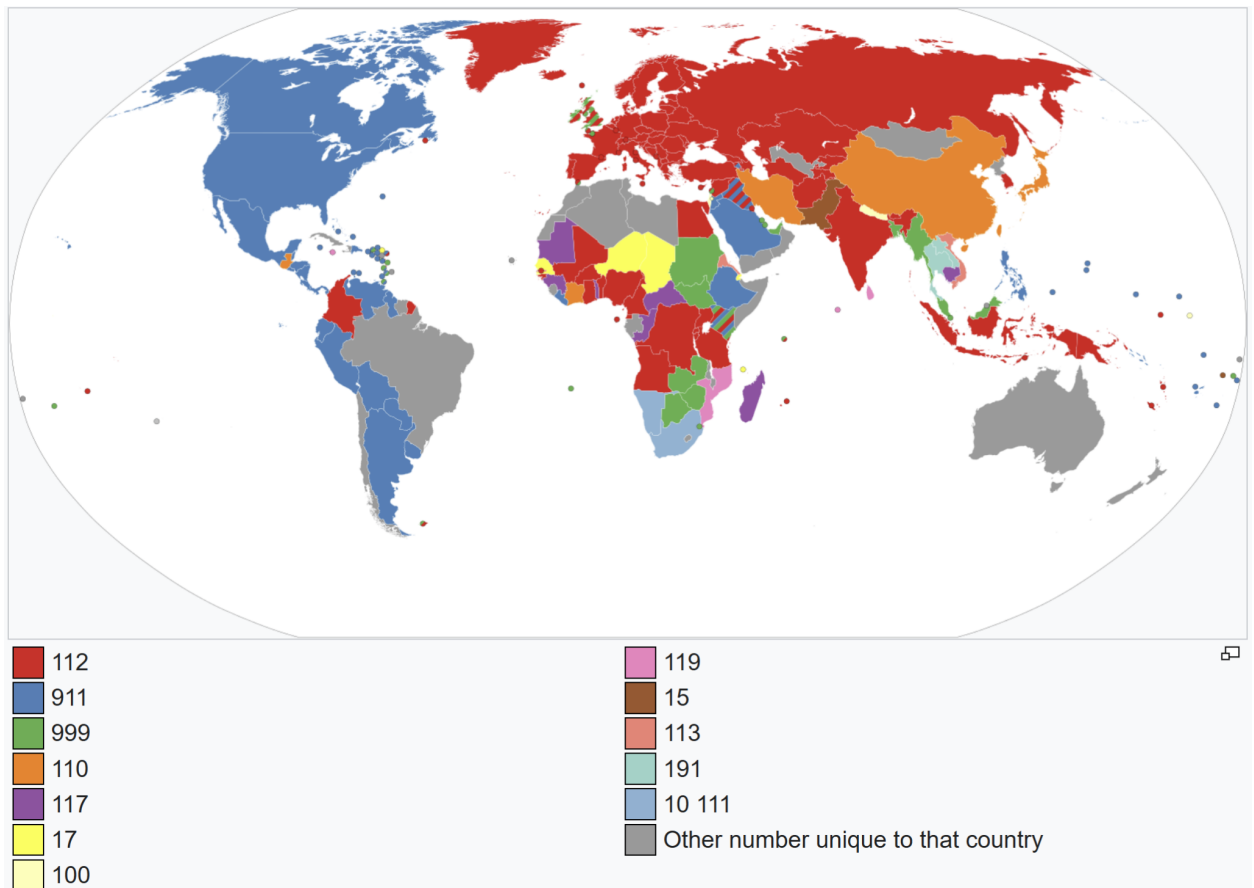
International

- [IASTE](#)
- [Purdue Global Internships](#)
- [GoinGlobal](#)
- [Purdue in Lima](#)
- [CLA Global Internships](#)
- [Work in Scandinavia](#)
- Research at English-speaking universities
- International research organizations
 - While a great thing to look into, these have application periods and you are not guaranteed a spot.
 - [Arcadia Abroad](#)
 - [CEA Abroad](#)
- International internship services
 - These guarantee you a spot, but you often have to pay to participate in them.
 - [Go Overseas](#)

Living Internationally

- Erasmus Student Network
 - The Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is the international exchange organization for European international students. You are still welcome to join it! For 15 euros, you can purchase a card that gets you into many of their student social events as well as some good discounts (especially useful for hotels and travel). Some universities have their own chapter of ESN, or the city might have one all together.
- [Cultural Comparison Tool](#)
- [Cost of Living Comparison Tool](#)
- [STEP](#)
 - Let the US embassy in your location know that you're traveling in their jurisdiction and sign up to receive alerts via email
- [US Dept. of State](#)
 - Learn about the location you will be staying at, especially with regards to medications, common diseases, travel advisories, etc.
- [Mobile Passport](#)
- [Global Entry](#)
 - A good resource to get through customs quickly in the US. Requires application and a waiting period – apply early!
- Finances
 - Make sure you have access to money while abroad. No matter where you are, you should have some cash in addition to your credit cards, so make sure you know what to expect from international ATMS.
 - If you need to renew your credit/debit card, do it before you leave! It's much more difficult to renew them from abroad.
 - Let your bank know that you're leaving so your cards don't get denied. Also, check the international fees or consider getting an international bank account if the cost is too high.
- Medications
 - Make sure to bring a full supply of all your prescription medications with you in your personal luggage. Keep the original labeling with your name and the medication name on the packaging in case you are asked about it in customs.
 - Bring a first-aid kit full of whatever over the counter medications you like from home – there are options in other countries, but they will likely not be what you want/or are used to.
- Remember to bring outlet converters!
- Phone plans
 - Depending on your carrier and the country, you may need to purchase a phone plan when you arrive in your country. Most new phones allow you the option to decide between [a physical SIM card or an e-SIM](#). Regardless, you will probably need to unlock your phone before you travel internationally. Check with your carrier to figure out how to do that.

- Buy a travel guide! It'll help you get to know your own city better and plan trips within your country.
- Google maps is more useful than Apple Maps internationally
- Make sure to take care of your mental health! Scheduling time to talk with friends and family back home or do something quiet to relax will definitely help you stay on top of things long-term.
- Download Google Translate or some other offline dictionary
- [Allergies Abroad](#)
 - Knowing how to talk about your allergies or food restrictions in your host country's language is a very important thing to prepare for.
- Check your country's [emergency number](#)!



France

***** more information to be added soon!

Germany

The OPP has a lot of really great connections with contacts in Germany. They will be a really great resource for you during this process – make sure they're aware of all your plans!

Visa

Before you go

The most important reference for you all to have is the form on this page: [Residence Visa / Long Stay Visa - Federal Foreign Office](#). The study abroad office will walk you through how to get the study visa, but if you will also be completing your work experience in Germany you will need to apply for the **Internship Visa** instead. The difference between the two is only bringing two additional documents and checking a different box (internship vs. student) on the application form. The [Internship Checklist](#) (including the two extra documents necessary) linked here is from January 2019 and was still accurate as of November 2024.

Notes: DO NOT use the application form listed on the Internship Checklist document. Use the application form listed on this website instead: [Residence Visa / Long Stay Visa - Federal Foreign Office](#) (same as the first link). It should be a form, not a PDF.

GEARE reserves the consulate for part of the day. In the past, students have carpooled together to submit applications in batch. The appointment is usually around mid-November, with visas returned sometime around New Year's. Please make sure to bring your *signed passport*, and remember that you will give your passport to the embassy for them to process with your visa. *You will not get your passport back until you receive your visa back in the same package.* That means that if you are planning on using your passport for plane travel over winter break, you may need to make additional arrangements.

Components of the application that merit extra mention:

Academic paperwork:

You will need an official transcript from Purdue. Make sure to order it a few days in advance because it needs to be printed and delivered to you. Your application may not be accepted with a printed unofficial copy of the transcript.

You can ask the OPP staff for your current enrollment verification letter.

Double check that the application number and the term match on both your visa application and your admission letter from your university. If you are staying in Germany for your internship as well, you will need to mark that you are applying for a visa for both the winter and summer semesters (WS/SS). If your admission letter from your university does not have that appropriately marked, talk to the OPP staff and your study abroad advisor.

Addresses:

Your proof of address in the United States (West Lafayette, for the sake of being in the consulate district) can be a bill from your apartment. If you live in Purdue housing, you can request proof of address from the dorm staff.

Proof of residence internationally is a little bit more tricky. Please see the Apartment Hunting section for information on how to find housing in Germany. It is highly recommended to have your living situation sorted out before you move to Germany. For proof of residence, you can use the address of the apartment or dorm you will be renting (along with the proof that you

are renting it) or the address of a hotel, Airbnb, or similar temporary housing you will be using until you find an apartment.

Financial + Insurance:

The visa application requires a ~\$120 fee that is payable *only in cash*. Be sure to have that prepared before you go to the appointment.

You should start the financial means section as soon as possible. You will need to prove that you have enough money to support you for the full duration that you are there (monthly requirement * number of months you are there). If the financial means section is an obstacle for you, work with Joe Tort to sort that out. You are also able to subtract your income (e.g. internship monthly payment) from the monthly requirement for the length of time that you will be working, provided that you have proof of it.

The money that you set aside for the duration of your study abroad will need to be placed into a blocked account. Most students in the past have used a service called [Expatrio](#) in order to do this. There is a verification process to be able to use Expatrio, so this is another reason to start the process early. You will deposit the required amount of money into it, and it will dispense a portion of it to you every month. Make sure to get the duration of the blocked account correct, as you will not be able to withdraw money from that account during its use outside of the monthly installments. You will get all the money out of the blocked account eventually. If there are issues with receiving your money at the end of the program, you can contact Expatrio and they can close the account early. You will need a German phone number and an address to open your previously made, blocked Expatrio account once you arrive in Germany.

Expatrio will give you a German bank account number, but you can link your blocked account to a different account if you would like to. Suggested options include WISE, Revolut, or N26. Make sure to take advantage of the referrals among your friends. As a side note, people from outside the United States do not use Venmo. The majority of Europeans will use these online banking services (or direct IBAN transfers) to transfer money between each other.

Expatrio will give you a proof of blocked account (the document that you will use for financial means) and also your proof of insurance. Past students have needed to buy a German health insurance plan (usually TK health, offered through Expatrio), not the Purdue plan. When you arrive in Germany, there is an Expatrio app that you can use for convenience. Also after you've arrived in Germany and finished your Anmeldung process (in the When you get there section), TK health will send you a letter with your insurance number. The letter will have instructions on information you will need to fill out online to get your insurance card mailed to you.

Internship Documents:

The ZAV is a confirmation of internship. You will ideally have two: one from Purdue to confirm that the internship is a necessary part of your studies, and one from your employer. Mark that box that says that you are completing an internship relating to the field of study, not the official semester break option.

Sometimes employers don't like to give interns ZAVs because the length of time is very short and it may not be a requirement for them to give you one. If you have this issue, work with your employer and the OPP staff to sort it out. While it's not technically required because of the duration, it's still definitely best to have them for the sake of visa processing.

Miscellaneous:

Your passport photo must be official EU sizing. You can get this taken at CVS or at the Study Abroad office. Make sure to specify EU sizing, as this is different from typical US passport-sized photos.

You will need to submit a CV and a letter of motivation. You may be able to find a template for what your letter of motivation should look like, but it should be a one page, formal letter detailing why you want to go to Germany, why the program in particular, what sort of classes you are taking, and how it will help you professionally in the future.

The German embassy can also sometimes be difficult to get a hold of. Work with other students (past and present) first, and confirm with the embassy as needed.

When you get there

Anmeldung:

The Anmeldung process registers you with the German census. It is necessary for your visa in both places that you live. You can make the appointment before you arrive in Germany, if you are prepared in advance. You can Google “Anmeldung + your city name” to find the registration forms. The process can vary depending on region, so make sure to read the city’s website carefully. Check at 7am to see the newest appointments available, as the system will release all available appointments once per day. The website will probably be in German, and the appointment will likely be in German as well, especially if you are living far outside major cities. Technically the Anmeldung appointment should be completed within two weeks of arriving in Germany.

Bring your passport and the Anmeldung form from your landlord. There is a form that you should print and fill out before you go, but larger cities may have it on hand at the appointment. This form will vary based on city so it is best to look up the procedures for whatever city you are in and go by that.

After the Anmeldung appointment, you will get a tax ID which you will need in order to get paid. Give it to your employer as soon as you get it. If you don’t give it to your employer, you will be placed in the highest tax bracket by default. You will also get a variety of other letters, like a residency paper and a letter asking you to register with the German public radio, that will be mailed to you and are necessary to keep on hand. **Do not throw anything away.** Ask your roommates if you are unsure about what steps to follow.

Abmeldung:

Before you leave Germany, you will need to Abmeldung, which is de-registering yourself. You can do this in-person or online, but the appointment can only be made seven days before your move-out date. You will Google “Abmeldung + your city name” again, and then you can submit your completed form and a copy of your identity card or passport to the citizen’s office.

Apartment Hunting and Other Important Things

Apartment Hunting:

You can get an apartment before you arrive, but some places will only make contracts in person. It’s possible to stay in a hotel for a day or two while you get your permanent living situation settled if that’s how you would like to do things. This will vary person to person, but it’s

also important to remember that you aren't moving to your university at first, which may limit your options.

One specific type of German housing option is called a WG (Wohngemeinschaft, "vay gay"). This is a more of a communal group home sort of situation. People living in WGs usually become very good friends and may cook meals and go to events together (Zweck WG vs normal WG). If you are interested in living in a WG, start looking around October or November. Most WGs have one-year terms, so finding one that's open to less than a year, with a good location, and a good price can sometimes be tricky. There may be in-person interviews to see if you fit well with the people currently living there. WGs will not guarantee single gender apartments. It's more like coordinating subletting from landlords or individuals.

No matter what type of housing you get, make sure that they provide an Anmeldung form to register yourself with the census. Do this in both apartments you will live in, if planning to live away from your university for internship.

- <https://www.wg-gesucht.de/>
- <https://rentola.com/>
- <https://www.wohnungsboerse.net/>

You will be offered student housing at KIT. It is easy to live in dorms there, but it can be cheaper and you will have more friends around if you find an apartment or a WG, even near KIT campus.

You may also find yourself in need of certain furniture or personal items upon moving. The link below is similar to a German Ebay.

- <https://www.kleinanzeigen.de/>

SIM Cards:

By far the most convenient way to get an international cell phone plan is with an eSIM, if your phone is compatible with them. With an eSIM, you are able to receive texts and calls from both your American and your international phone number. Physical SIM cards are also a viable option. There may be a verification process where you will need to show your passport for physical SIM card purchases, but it depends on the provider.

You will most likely be getting a prepaid plan. Make sure to double check your phone plan frequently, because you don't want to set it to auto-pay and still be paying for your German phone plan six months after you move back to the US.

Here are a few recommendations for providers in Germany:

- Vodafone
- LidlTalk
- AldiTalk

Public Transportation:

The Deutschland Ticket is the public transportation ticket for *public transportation for every city in Germany*. That includes metro trains (U-Bahn), commuter trains (S-Bahn), any trams, most buses, some ferries, and any regional trains (RB, RE, MEX, RX). Even airport fare is usually included. The only thing that is never included in the Deutschland Ticket are the IC, ICE, and other high-speed trains.

You will generally buy the ticket online. You will need a phone number in order to make the purchase. You generally* cannot buy the ticket for the current month; it will start a month ahead. Because of this, you will probably want to auto-pay for the Deutschland Ticket. However,

you will need to verify at what times you are allowed to cancel auto-pay. Some schools or companies will subsidize your Deutschland Ticket (ex. KIT, if you buy it from Karlsruhe local transit office). While the pass seems a bit pricey, it is more than worth it.

*you can buy the Deutschland Ticket from a number of local transport systems as well as DB itself. A few (for example MVV, the Munich transport company) allow you to buy the Deutschland Ticket for the current month.

Being a Student at KIT

Applying to KIT:

The study abroad office does a great job preparing you to go on study abroad to KIT. One odd note is that you should just mark down temporary classes on the learning agreement, because you're going to have to pick new classes when you arrive anyways.

You are also not able to complete the application for KIT in one sitting, as some of the parts are date locked.

Classes:

Some students have found it a bit difficult to find classes that work with their academic plan, but remember that it's always an option to apply to get courses approved if you submit the German syllabus compared to the Purdue syllabus to your academic advisor.

The grading scale in Germany is a bit skewed when transferring back to the US equivalent. It goes from 1 to 5, with 1 being an A+ and 5 being a fail. To get an A at Purdue, you will need a 2.5, a 3.5 for a B, and a 4 to pass the class with a C. If it's an option for students in your major to take classes pass/fail, you should definitely do that.

As you have likely been told, most (if not all) of your grade will be based on your final exams. Be prepared for oral exams and what strategies you might use to take and study for different styles of tests.

The Combined Cycle Power plants course is highly recommended for ME students.

Work

- [DAAD Rise](#)

Misc.

- If your cell phone is still set with a location in the US, you may not be able to download geo-locked German apps, even if you have a German SIM card.
- Be sure to check your mailbox regularly! Many important bureaucratic documents are only sent to you in physical form.
- Lots of restaurants and shops will only take cash, even in big cities. Make sure to bring some Euros with you to Germany, and ensure that your bank card will work for international ATM withdrawals.
- The "cold" stereotype is very often true. It can be difficult to make friends with Germans, but try and find the ones who are internationally minded.

- Follow all traffic laws. Traffic accidents are the #1 killer of American tourists abroad, and Germans take their road rights seriously.
 - Do not jaywalk if there is a child nearby.
- Bikes are convenient to have and cheap. Check Kleinanzeigen.
- The [GEARE Ambassadors Resource Guide](#) is a great reference for advice on living internationally in any country, as well as a few Germany-specific resources.
- Have so much fun! Study abroad is a once in a lifetime experience. Travel with friends, see historical and cultural sights, check the tour dates for your favorite bands and shows, and take lots of photos.

Past Student Contacts:

- Yashas Gentela (ygentela@purdue.edu) ME 2025 Cohort
- Aiken Komensen (akomense@purdue.edu) ME 2025 Cohort

Japan

**** more information coming soon!

Spain

Spain in particular has a lot of tricky paperwork to get through. Make sure the GEARE staff knows what university you're planning on going to in case they're able to help in any way.

Visas

- [Chicago Consulate Student Visa](#)
 - Generally speaking, this is the visa you should look into getting. The study abroad office is great at helping with this part!
- [Chicago Consulate Internship Visa](#)
- [BLS Requirements](#)
 - You submit your visa documents to the consulate through BLS, a third party contractor. Double check that the documents you have fulfill both the Spanish consulate and BLS requirements.
- [American Translators Association](#) (for extended visa)
- [Additional Translator](#) (for extended visa)
- [Extended Visa Guide](#) (useful blog)
 - Your extended visa will come back saying you can be in Spain for 90 days. Once you get to Spain, you will need to have an appointment with the Immigration Office to get your TIE (effectively a foreigner ID card) that lets you stay beyond 90 days.
- [Apostille Help](#) & [Spanish Visa Guide](#)
 - Two documents written by Evan Carr, OPP Head TA for Spain students in Fall 2025.

Housing

- Madrid (although some of these may be useful nationwide)
 - Aluni
 - Student-only housing, can filter by gender
 - Spotahome
 - Service that collates many different housing services. You will have to pay a finders' fee to Spotahome. There are several discounts offered by the Erasmus Student Network, UC3M, and other organizations, so check those ahead of time.
 - HelpHousing
 - MadridEasy
 - Homestays
 - These are a great option if you want to improve your Spanish a lot while you're in Spain!
 - [Madrid Neighborhoods](#)
 - While you'll be fine living just about anywhere, the tourist center of Madrid is right around Sol. Make sure to consider how far you want to travel to

class every day (Madrid center → UC3M Leganes is about 45 minutes to an hour) and how far you want to travel to go for dinner with friends.

Universities

- University Carlos III of Madrid
 - In the past, the Study Abroad and GEARE offices have worked with UC3M to get students acceptance letters that cover the summer term as well. This is great for GEARE students who might not have their offer letters yet, *but you need to make sure that you're on the list of GEARE students who need the long-term letter.*
 - There are a TON of Purdue students at UC3M. In Spring 2025, the number was well over 100, so you will be in good company. The engineering campus is in Leganes, but most humanities classes are offered at Getafe. You can take classes at whatever class you like. You will be able to find almost every class you want in English, but you will need to prepare ahead of time for registration – if you are taking classes from several different departments, it's up to you to make sure that the classes, labs, and exams don't conflict.
 - Your classes will generally meet twice a week for two hours each time. One session is the master session where you will learn the theory, and the other is a practice session where you do workout problems with a professor, like a recitation. The practice session may also be your lab time, but not necessarily.
 - The UC3M website is a great resource. They have a ton of information on everything from volunteering opportunities to clubs to cultural events. Make sure you review their [list of things to do](#) in order to be prepared on day 1.
 - Check out [wuolah](#)! They have lots of past exams and uploaded notes for a variety of subjects.
- Polytechnic University of Valencia
- Federal University of Viçosa
- CIEE Seville

Odds and Ends

- Transportation discounts
 - Tarjeta Joven de Transporte (city buses/subway)
 - This is specific to your region, but almost every region has it. In Madrid, it's 8 euros per month for unlimited public transport.
 - Tarjeta Más Renfe Joven (long distance trains)
 - This card works over all of Spain. It costs 50 euros, but then you get a 25-30% discount on every long distance train you book. If you plan on doing a lot of travel within Spain, this could definitely be worth it.
 - Erasmus Student Network Omio discount
 - If you purchase a ESN card, you can log in on their website to see available discounts for a variety of services, including a 10% Omio discount.
- Phone plans

- Depending on your carrier, you will need to switch to a Spanish phone plan. There are lots of great options and they're generally pretty cheap compared to the US.
 - Orange
 - Vodafone
 - Movistar
 - Yoigo
 - Lebara
- Banking
 - You probably won't need a Spanish bank account while you're abroad unless you need a Spanish credit card. There are some easy options for foreigners, including banks that are entirely online. If you want to transfer money to someone not from the US, they'll probably use Revolut or Bizum instead of Venmo.
 - Revolut
 - N26
 - WISE

Work

- Definitely look into research! It's difficult to find work experience in Spain because the long-term visas are tricky, but finding research is easier. Be prepared for research to be unpaid – look into funding opportunities and grants from Purdue!
- Endress-Hauser
- HP
- SEL

Cultural Notes

- Things in Spain start a lot later. The earliest classes at UC3M start at 9am but go until 7 or 9pm, and most restaurants are open very late. A typical Spanish meal schedule has breakfast around 9, a small lunch at 2, an afternoon snack around 5, and dinner (sometimes in the form of tapas, several small appetizer plates) around 9 or 10pm. Don't be surprised if your roommates come home from clubbing at 6 or 7am.
 - Fun fact: this is because during WW2, Franco changed Madrid's time zone to align with the Nazis and it stuck.
- Restaurants and Cafes
 - There are a ton of cafes (cafeterias) in Madrid. Coffee is a daily staple and can be found pretty cheap everywhere.
 - At a lot of cafes and similar places where you purchase food at the counter (e.g. ice cream shops), it's in good taste to put your dishes back on the counter so the workers don't have to clean off your table.
 - You don't need to tip the servers at restaurants, but they won't check in with you very much. Feel free to linger as long as you'd like, but if you want to leave sooner you'll have to flag them down.

- Make sure to look up some of Spain's most famous foods and beverages beforehand! Do your best to try a lot of them if you can.
- Meeting Spanish people
 - Making friends in classes (at least at UC3M) can be a bit tough. If you're looking to connect more with locals, join the UC3M buddy program or a community organization! Great options include university sports teams, volunteering, or joining community classes and Facebook/Meetup groups.

Other Useful Information

- Download Whatsapp! You will use that to talk with many people you meet and businesses, like your apartment manager, restaurants, classmates, etc.
- Primark is a great store for bedding, towels, clothes, etc.
- [Youth Discounts](#)
- Emergency #: 112
- [Erasmus Student Network](#)
 - The Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is the international exchange organization for European international students. You are still welcome to join it! For 15 euros, you can purchase a card that gets you into many of their student social events as well as some good discounts (especially useful for hotels and travel). Some universities in Spain (e.g. UC3M) have their own chapter of ESN, or the city might have one all together.
- [CityLifeMadrid](#)
 - Another resource for international students, CityLife Madrid has a little bit of everything – language blogs, immigration guides, housing and SIM card help, international student meet ups and WhatsApp groups, organized trips, and more. This is definitely a great stop on one of your first days in Spain to help you figure out important logistical things. They will encourage you to purchase an ~20 euro membership card for discounts, but you can still attend their events and use almost all of their resources without it.

Talk to a Student!

- Megan Earp – Electrical Engineering '26, UC3M (mearp@purdue.edu)
- Check the study abroad website for returned students! Send them an email and set up a meeting

Sweden

**** more information coming soon!

Scholarships

General

- [Study Abroad Aggregate List](#)
 - Purdue Giant Leaps Scholarship
 - Purdue Moves
 - Departmental Study Abroad Scholarships
- [Another Aggregate List](#)

Work Compensation

- [Honors College International Internship](#)
- [Office of Experiential Education](#)
- [Summer Internship Plus](#)

At Home

- Language + Culture
 - The School of Languages and Cultures has practice hours weekly for most languages offered at Purdue! The conversation hours are run by professors who teach you a little bit about culture while you get to know other students. They are very informal (and to be honest, the amount of language practice you get is hit or miss. The tea is great, though!).

Monday	
GERMAN	2:00-3:00PM
JAPANESE	3:30-4:30PM
(Bi-weekly beginning 9/9 - SC G002)	
CLASSICS	4:00-5:00PM
(Usually 1st Monday of the month)	
Wednesday	
RUSSIAN	11:00-12:00PM
KOREAN	12:30 - 1:30 PM
ITALIAN	1:30-2:20PM
FRENCH	3:00-4:00PM
Thursday	
CHINESE	3:00-4:00PM
Friday	
SPANISH	10:00-11:00AM
PORTUGUESE	12:00-1:00PM

(Accurate as of Fall 2025)

- Cultural Centers on campus also offer conversation hours.
 - [Latino Cultural Center](#) (Accurate Fall 2025)
 - [Asian and Asian American Resource and Cultural Center \(AAARC\)](#) (Accurate as of Fall 2025)
- Clubs are a great resource for language practice and making new friends! Just type in your language or country on [Boilerlink](#) and find a club that suits your interests. We have never met a club that's not excited to get some new members.

Other Useful Resources

- Your academic advisor and your department's study abroad liaison!
 - They are going to know best when it comes to course transfers, pass/no pass classes, and more. Making sure your classes transfer back is the most important part of the process.
 - Also, ask your academic advisor about getting your internships to count as lab credit! Varies by department.
- The study abroad office
 - Questions about visas, insurance, programs as a whole, Purdue guidelines, or other logistical things? They are a great resource. If they don't already know the answer, they'll help you find it.
- [GEARE Blog](#)
 - Check this out for student testimonials, alumni panels, articles and resources, and more!
- [OPP Housing Document](#)
 - This is a great thing to check out if you're thinking about what to do for Purdue housing before you leave, especially if you're looking at subletting.
- Anything we missed? Submit your own resources [here](#)!