

Erasmus in Salamanca

Making the decision to go on an Erasmus year was a difficult one for me. As a single mother with responsibilities I knew I was not the typical student to avail of this opportunity. However, opportunity was the key word for me and I knew a chance to study at one of the most prestigious colleges in Spain would not come my way again. Therefore, I made the decision to go and I brought my nine year old daughter Abby and our dog Toto.

Arriving in Madrid, we got the train to Salamanca and began the search for accommodation. One thing that was noticeable from the outset was the sheer beauty of the city. Also known as the city of gold, Salamanca resembled an old Roman film set. When I saw the Pontificia for the first time I was in awe at its beauty and felt so grateful at the chance to study there. Although I was initially worried by the lack of spoken English it was the best environment to improve my Spanish. The staff at the Pontificia were very welcoming and the Erasmus co-ordinators in Ireland and Salamanca were always at hand to help with any issues. There is a wonderful “Departamento de Idiomas para Extranjeros” where classes are held throughout the year. I would highly recommend these classes unless you have a very good level of Spanish. There is a fee, however, it is a reduced for Erasmus students. Credits from the language courses can be earned to go towards your total ECTS for the year. In second semester I focussed on Theology when my level of Spanish improved. Although it was still a huge challenge the teachers and students were very friendly and encouraging. My daughter and I took part in monthly trips organised by the college and were supported and included in everything.

Going to Salamanca for my Erasmus year proved a challenge but it was one of the best years of my life. I would highly recommend that students avail of the opportunity as not only will you broaden your Theological studies, you will also engage with a different culture and language. No doubt by the end of the year the people, the place and the experience will retain a special place in your heart that will last a lifetime.

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