

# White Rose University Consortium: College of Arts and Humanities

## Arts and Humanities Research Culture in Spain

### Academia

- [Norms of Behaviour](#)
- [Applications and Registration](#)
- [Costs](#)
- [Funding](#)
- [PhD](#)
- [Beyond PhD](#)
- [Glossary](#)
- [Web Links](#)



### ***Norms of Behaviour***

In lectures, it is usually necessary to raise a hand to ask a question.

In emails and in class, initially it is best to be as polite as possible, using the *usted* form, and in correspondence using their full name (without the academic title). How the lecturer responds should give you an indication of the degree of familiarity with which you should treat him or her.

For example, a formal email could begin: *Estimado Juan García Fernández* or *Estimada María Fernández García* and be formally signed *Un cordial saludo* followed by your full name.

Students generally dress casually, in much the same way as they would in Britain. For presentations or oral exams, dressing as for class is usually fine, although smart-casual can be a good idea. For a viva, smart dress, i.e. business dress, is appropriate. It is better to be slightly overdressed than underdressed for such an important event.

[Back to top](#)

### ***Applications and Registration***

#### *Essential documents*

[Universidad.es](#) provides a guide of the necessary documents to be admitted to a Spanish university and is available in English. For undergraduate studies, EU students do not have to sit the PAU exam.

Documents must be in Spanish. Official documents, such as certificates, need to be translated by a *traductor jurado* (sworn translator) who has been appointed by the Spanish state. There is a list available of these translators via the [Foreign Ministry's](#) website. You should also check that you do not need to have official *homologación* (accreditation) of your qualifications, see [Universidad.es](#) for details and if in doubt, contact the university.

For a postgraduate course, a mixture of personal documents and academic documents are necessary. You should check the individual university for their requirements, which should be published on the website.

For example, for a foreigner to apply for an MA at the *Universidad Complutense de Madrid* the following documents are necessary:

- Passport
- CV
- Academic certificate(s) which has been and officially translated (this means by a sworn translator authorised by the Spanish government), and which details the length of the course, the modules completed etc.
- Specific documents for the MA in question, if requested by the department.
- Authorisation of access certified by the UCM.
- Application form, which can be completed electronically.

#### *Time scale*

The time scale for applying for postgraduate courses depends upon whether you are applying for a scholarship. If you are simply applying for a place on an MA or PhD course at university and not for a scholarship, there is generally more than one application period – often in Spring, Summer and in September. Students can generally apply without having completed their previous and necessary qualifications, as long as they can accredit that they fully meet the admission requirements at the beginning of the course. Check the University for details.

#### *Who to contact*

If you are interested in an MA, it is worth contacting the coordinator of the MA programme. For a PhD, going directly to the prospective supervisor is a good idea, or perhaps in the first instance the co-ordinator of the doctoral programme.

#### *Language requirements*

Universities are allowed to set their own criteria for admission to PhD courses, in accordance with legislation. Ask the co-ordinator of the programme what the language requirements are.

#### *Application process*

The application process should be explained on the university's website. There has been a move towards electronic submission and applications should be accessible remotely, even if by post, followed by registration in person. Nevertheless, this does not mean that things will necessarily be straightforward.

Try to have all of the documents, and photocopies of them, ready in advance of the opening of the application period by checking the previous year's requirements, especially if sworn translations are needed. The same can be said for applying for a *beca* (scholarship). The application period for

national FPU and FPI scholarships can open at any time and so it is necessary to have already had contact with the university/prospective supervisor beforehand.

### *Study Visa / Residency Permit*

For citizens of the European Union, no visa or permit is required. For stays of longer than three months, foreigners are obliged to register with the authorities via the *Oficina de extranjeros* (local Foreigners' office).

[Back to top](#)

## **Costs**

### *Tuition fees*

**Please note that all prices are an approximate guide for the academic year 2012-13. For accurate information check the university website or the bulletin of the relevant Autonomous Community.**

Tuition fees have increased in recent years, but are still a great deal cheaper in the UK. The Autonomous Communities fix the price to be charged per credit, within limits set by the national government, and this charge is usually revised in the spring/summer before the academic year begins and published via the official bulletin of the region. In addition to the price charged per credit, students have to pay a small amount for insurance and sometimes for the student card, or other charges.

The price charged per credit for *títulos propios* is fixed by the university itself.

### Undergraduate and MA level

The charge changes depending on the subject to be studied, although arts and humanities courses are generally among the cheapest (except in Andalucía, where currently the same is charged across all disciplines). A student then multiplies the numbers of modules for which he or she registers by the price. If the student fails a module, the charge made to re-register in order to re-sit the exam is higher.

Prices do vary widely; the annual cost of tuition fees for an undergraduate degree in an arts and humanities subject is between about €600 and €1000, depending on the area of Spain. MA courses are more expensive.

### PhD level

PhD *tutela académica* (tuition fees) costs between €40 and €450 per year. The huge difference is due to the different legislation that has been introduced in 1998, 2007 and 2011. According to figures from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport for 2012-3, *tutela académica* for those students to whom the pre-2011 legislation applies costs an average of €110, whereas for students who have started more recently, the average cost is €240.

As with undergraduate and MA courses, the cost is fixed by the Autonomous Community. The webpage of the university/PhD programme should be able to direct you to the bulletin in which the price is detailed.

For the viva, an extra fee must be paid which is currently €100 and €200, usually. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport cites the average cost as €142.

In Spain, students have to pay for their official university certificate (which varies but is generally between €100 and €300) and for the academic transcript.

### *Living costs*

According to [Universidad.es](http://Universidad.es), researchers and students spend an average of €900-€1100 per month on living expenses. Living in Spain is still cheaper than in Britain, despite prices increasing in recent years. Prices vary widely, however, between larger cities, especially Madrid and Barcelona, and smaller, provincial cities.

[Spainexpat.com](http://Spainexpat.com) provides a rough breakdown of living costs in Spain.

[Back to top](#)

## **Funding**

### *Scholarships*

Scholarships are available from the state, and other sources, to study for an MA.

### Funding for PhDs

The two main sources of national funding are the FPI and the FPU scholarships (see web resources), of which 900-1000 are generally awarded each year. The FPI (*Formación del Personal Investigador*) scholarship is for research training, whereas the FPU (*Formación del Personal Universitario*) scholarships are to train students to work in university departments. Foreign students can apply for these scholarships. According to figures published by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, Spanish students were awarded 85% of FPU and 92.9% of FPI scholarships respectively, whereas students from the EU received 5.1% and 4.9% of these respective scholarships.

Applicants for an FPI scholarship have to be accepted onto a particular collaborative research project, whereas FPU scholarships are awarded according to individual thesis proposals. Both consist of a bursary for two years, followed by a two-year contract. In 2012, the monthly payment was of €1,142 and students can also apply for mobility grants.

Other sources of funding include the university itself, the Autonomous Community governments, which sometimes offer similar grants to the FPU scholarships and also private foundations. Check with the university and also the Autonomous Community.

[Universia.es](http://Universia.es) provides information and links to a large range of grants and scholarships.

Most programmes are convened annually and applications for funding begin when the *convocatoria* (application period) opens. Different schemes open at different times and it is worth checking previous years to get an idea of how the system works with regards to each scholarship.

In recent years, FPU scholarships have had a window within which applications can be made of around three weeks to one month: in 2012 it was from 10 May to 8 June. There is no specific time of year in which they are convened; whereas in 2012 it was May-June, in 2010 it was January-February (2011) and in 2009 it was November-December. Because of the fluctuation, it is important to check the website of the Ministry regularly. The Official State Bulletin has introduced a specialised RSS feed (see web resources), which features each official announcement calling for *convocatoria* (applications) and decisions related to scholarships and grants as they are published.

### *Student loans*

Student loans are available via banks, but are not as common in Spain as they are in the UK. As most students attend their local university and live at home if possible, the cost of higher education is often absorbed by the family.

[Back to top](#)

## **PhD**

### *Structure of doctoral programme*

This information relates to the most recent legislation: the *Real Decreto 99/2011*, which has shortened the length of a PhD. A PhD programme is now three years long full time, or five years part time.

The committee in charge of the doctoral programme can authorise a one-year extension, and even (exceptionally) a further year.

The thesis must be submitted within three years of admission to the programme, unless an extension has been authorised.

The legislation allows universities to design their own doctoral programmes and as such the content of each programme is determined by the university. It is necessary to ask the university if they provide or require compulsory training of any sort.

### *PhD support*

The relationship between the student and their supervisor is determined by individual circumstances and the university, in accordance with the [Real Decreto 99/2011](#) which applies to all universities. The following information is from this legislation. However, individual situations can be different and consequently, there are PhD students in Spain who do not work under the following conditions.

The number of meetings per term depends on the relationship between the student and the supervisor. The supervisory role and responsibilities are determined by the university. The

legislation dictates that a signed agreement outlining this role and responsibilities must be made between the university, student, tutor and supervisor.

During the first year, a personalised programme of activities to be carried out by the student as determined by the university, department or committee in charge of the PhD programme.

Initially a tutor is allocated for each PhD student and within 6 months of the commencement of studies a *director* (supervisor) must be appointed. This can be the tutor.

PhD students are usually supervised by one person, though a *becario* forms part of the community of the department and sometimes works within a research team working on a particular project.

### *PhD thesis*

Universities set their own criteria in terms of the thesis and its defence, according to the legislation. It is therefore important to check the university in question.

There is nothing in the legislation and there is little information on the web pages of the universities about minimum or maximum *extensión* (length) of the PhD thesis. An MA thesis is usually around 80-100 pages, for comparative purposes. A survey of the digital repositories of the different universities shows that theses can be between 350-500 (Seville) or even up to 750 pages long (Salamanca).

It is worth asking your prospective supervisor if there is a limit and what he or she expects in terms of length. In Spain, the length of a thesis is often calculated according to the number of pages, not by the number of words.

It is possible to submit a compendium of publications instead of a thesis. Check each university's exact requirements: it should be detailed in the information about or the *normativa* (regulations) governing the thesis. At the University of Granada, for example, a minimum of three articles must be submitted and they must have been accepted and/or published since the beginning of the PhD.

### *Viva*

When a thesis is completed, several copies (paper and digital) are submitted to the university, according to its requirements. This is known as *depositar*. It is guaranteed by legislation that the thesis must be available before its defence such that others can consult it. Similarly, a Spanish viva is a public event and members of the public who themselves are *doctores* are also permitted to ask questions.

The university establishes both the requisites for the thesis and for the composition of the tribunal (panel) which will judge it.

For example, the *Universidad Complutense de Madrid* dictates that there must be five *titulares* (full-members) and two *suplentes* (substitutes) appointed, of which the President and the Secretary must be from the *Universidad Complutense de Madrid* and the majority must be external to the university. The *defensa* or *lectura* (viva) must take place within forty days of the appointment of the evaluating panel.

At the viva, the doctorand must first present and defend his or her work before questions are put to them. The decision is made as to whether the thesis is considered an *apto* (pass) or a *no apto* (fail). A secret vote can be taken to decide if it is to be awarded cum laude.

### *Employment*

During the contract period (the last two years) of the FPU scholarship, PhD students are expected to gain teaching experience, with up to a maximum of 60 hours of teaching per year. PhD students do not receive additional remuneration for teaching.

During a PhD it is not so common to take on extra, part-time work while studying, particularly if the student has been awarded a scholarship.

### *Visiting other institutions, exchange programmes and placements*

There are a number of national schemes that aim to encourage the mobility of students and university staff. Recipients of the FPU scholarship are eligible for mobility grants under a sister programme of between six and eight months, however in 2012 only 63 were awarded.

[Back to top](#)

## **Beyond PhD**

### *Jobs*

The jobs market in Spain is currently extremely difficult due to the economic problems that the country faces; over 50% of young people are unemployed. Those who have postgraduate qualifications tend to fare better than those who do not. Nevertheless, a large number of Spaniards are now leaving the country to find work abroad, including those with MAs and PhDs. Those who do find work in Spain at the moment are often on temporary contracts.

Cuts in public spending have affected all levels of education and paralysed the appointment of new teachers and staffs. Teaching at secondary level has traditionally been a common option for *doctores* who do not obtain a university post.

The Spanish higher education system is changing rapidly, due to the Bologna Process, and it appears that it is becoming more market-oriented and similar to the British model.

### *Career progression*

To make the step from the PhD to joining the teaching body of a university, [ANECA](#) (Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación) must first evaluate your qualifications and accredit your CV.

A PhD is necessary to join the teaching staff, except in the case of two: *profesor ayudante* and *profesor asociado*. The former must be working towards a PhD while the latter must be an expert in their field who enjoys a certain amount of prestige and who also works outside the university.

For those wishing to be considered for the post of *profesor contratado doctor* (permanent post), *profesor ayudante doctor* (temporary post) or *profesor colaborador*, accreditation must be obtained through the [PEP](#) (*Programa de Evaluación del Profesorado*) programme. The following documentation must be provided: application form, curriculum, copies (*fotocopias cotejadas*: this generally means that either the photocopy must be checked against the original when the document is submitted or a certified photocopy must be provided, i.e. with the necessary stamps) of the degree certificates and a copy of your passport or national identity document. The procedure is outlined on the website and takes several months.

Higher on the scale is the [ACADEMIA](#) programme which evaluates if applicants are eligible to be appointed to the post of *profesor titular* or *catedrático*. It is a permanent programme and the application for accreditation can be made at any time. The application is evaluated by two experts within six months of reception of the application. During the ten days after the decision applicants are allowed to appeal against a negative report. There is also a guide on Universia.

### *Life as a lecturer*

University staff are obliged to combine teaching and research at the same time. In the Spanish academic system, there is a strong emphasis on the volume of research produced, in addition to its impact. Articles and books are generally published in Spanish (with the possible exception of those studying other languages and cultures), but punctuated with publications in other languages, such as English, in order to gain more international recognition. Research output does not depend solely on university staff: studies are also published by institutions and foundations (such as the Fundación Pablo Iglesias, which is linked to the Spanish Socialist Party) and also by secondary school teachers.

Members of university staff who wish to apply for a sabbatical year, or research leave, usually must have worked there for six or seven years. Research periods and visiting positions in other countries, such as the USA, UK and France, are highly regarded.

Generally, a great deal of, but by no means all, research focuses not only on Spain, but also on the province or the local region. For example, in Andalucía there is a [Centre for Andalusian Studies](#) with a range of research projects managed by university staff from different universities in Andalucía.

Many students attend their local university and will live at home or in shared accommodation. Spain is the [most active country](#), as a receiver and sender, of Erasmus students. It is also not uncommon for students to take part in the Seneca programme: an internal Erasmus within Spain.

Many lecturers go on to carry out research in their local university and continue to work there afterwards, if a job becomes available. That does not mean it is unheard of for lecturers to teach at different universities. However, rather than a high degree of mobility around Spain, it would be fairer to talk of movement towards Barcelona and Madrid. This system tends towards encouraging local specialism, i.e. historians in Andalusian universities tend to research the history of Andalucía, although this is also an effect of funding from local institutions.



## Glossary

### *Academic titles*

Note: the following titles are used in the CSIC (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas), the Spanish national research institute. The English equivalents are approximate.

**Profesor de investigación / Profesora de investigación** - Professor (Civil servant)

**Científico titular / Científica titular** - Research fellow (Civil servant)

**Investigador científico / Investigadora científica** – Reader (Civil servant)

**Investigador contratado / Investigadora contratada** - Reader (Contracted by the research institution)

**Contrato con cargo a proyecto / Contrato con cargo a proyecto** - Research associate (Temporary, project based post)

**Ayudante de investigación / Ayudante de investigación** - Research assistant

### *Academic abbreviations and acronyms*

**Beca:** Grant/scholarship

**Doctorado:** Doctorate

**FPI:** State funded programme to train PhD research students

**FPU:** State funded programme to train PhD students, including teaching experience

**Grupo de investigación:** Research team, working on a project

**I+D+I:** Research, development and innovation

**Investigación:** Research

**Matricularse:** To register (for a course, for a new academic year)

**Personal (investigador, docente, administrativo):** (research, teaching, administrative) staff

**Pos(t)grado:** postgraduate

**Proyecto de investigación:** Research project

**Tesis:** Thesis

## Web Links

[Eurydice-Higher Education in Spain](#): The information from the European Encyclopaedia of National Education Systems related to Spain. (ES, EN)

[Universia](#): Universia is a network of Spanish and Latin American universities. There is a great deal of information and resources related to higher education, including information on courses, career progression and scholarship opportunities. (ES)

[Universidad.es](#): This portal is run by the Spanish government and aims to improve the international profile of the Spanish university system. There is information on different courses, different levels of study and links to every university, specifically designed at foreign students. It provides information on [admission requirements](#) and on the [recognition of foreign qualifications](#) (ES, EN)

The [Foreign Ministry](#) maintains a list of sworn translators authorised by the state to translate official documents (ES)

The [FPI](#) and [FPU](#) scholarships (ES)

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport has [a section dedicated to PhD scholarships](#) (ES)

[Universia.es](#) provides updated information on different grants and scholarships (ES)

The [RSS feed](#) which publishes information related to grants and scholarships run by the Official State Bulletin (ES)

[Spainexpat.com](#) (EN) and [Universidad.es](#) (EN, ES) provide information related to the cost of living in Spain

The [Real Decreto 99/2011](#) regulates PhD programmes (ES)

[Grants and programmes](#) from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (ES)

[ANECA](#) (Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación) provides information on its [PEP](#) and [ACADEMIA](#) accreditation programmes for those who wish to join the teaching staff at universities (ES)

The [Universia.es](#) guide to the accreditation procedure (ES)

[El País](#) reports on Spain's attraction as an Erasmus destination (EN)

The [Centre for Andalusian Studies](#) (ES)

[Back to top](#)



Copyright © 2013 University of Leeds. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>.