

parent  
handbook  
SEVILLE

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Hola and greetings from Seville! We hope you are as excited as we are that your student has the amazing opportunity to study abroad in Seville.

We have created this handbook to provide you, the parents of a study abroad student, with helpful information about your students' time abroad. Inside, you will find practical information about where students will be living, health and safety concerns, how to keep in touch with your student, and more. We hope that this handbook will serve as a useful resource. If there are any concerns you have that you believe should be added to the handbook, please do not hesitate to contact us with any suggestions!

On behalf of all COWA staff, we thank you for trusting us to take care of your students during this exciting time in their lives. We promise to do everything we can to make their stay in Seville as memorable, enriching and fulfilling as possible!

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## ABOUT US

Connecting Worlds Abroad (COWA) began in 2015 with the goal of providing an affordable study abroad option for every college student. We believe that all students should have the opportunity to study abroad before they graduate. To meet this goal, we work with our collaborating universities to ensure that the programs we offer are tailored to students' different needs.

COWA is housed on the Campus Universitario EUSA, which offers degrees in journalism; audiovisual communication; publicity and public relations; and tourism through the University of Seville, as well as professional development courses and other certificate programs. This location provides an active university campus with the accommodations essential to a successful academic program, while permitting interaction with local students.

Since 2015, we have been bringing students to Seville. We offer 8 programs through 4 different universities, and these numbers are continuing to grow. We have the experience and the passion to ensure that all students have a positive and fulfilling study abroad experience.

For more information about COWA, please visit our website at <https://cowa.es/>

## CONTACT INFORMATION

COWA's offices are located in the Centro Internacional EUSA: Calle Plácido Fernández Viagas, 4, 41013, SEVILLA

Our office hours are Monday-Thursday 09:00-14:00 and 17:00-20:00; Friday 09:00-14:00.

COWA's Director and Coordinators are on call 24/7 for emergencies.

### **COWA Contact Numbers**

Carlos Valencia - COWA Director  
(+34) 665 334 451

Lauren Groffsky - On-site Coordinator  
(+34) 653 843 328

Rocío Rodríguez - Housing Coordinator  
(+34) 616 936 614

Irene Ramos Arbolí - Student Life Coordinator  
(+34) 663 879 810

### **Other Emergency Phone Numbers**

Police/Ambulance/Fire: 112 (national) 092 (local)  
Consulate of the United States in Seville:

(+34) 954 218 751

Embassy of the United States in Madrid:  
(+34) 915 872 200

## EMBASSY INFORMATION

All US citizens should register with the US Department of State. Registration can be completed online at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>. This allows for more efficient communication between Consulate staff and US citizens residing in Spain. It is also important for replacement of lost or stolen passports, or in case of an emergency.

The US embassy in Spain is located at:

Calle de Serrano, 75  
28006, MADRID  
Tel.: (+34) 915 872 200  
Fax: (+34) 915 872 303

There is also a US consular office in Seville, located at:

Plaza Nueva, 8-B  
2ª planta, Oficina E-2  
41001, SEVILLA  
Tel.: (+34) 954 218 751  
Fax: (+34) 954 220 791

## US CONSULATE SERVICES

The US Consulate provides a variety of services to US citizens including:

- **Lost or Stolen Passport Services:** An application for a replacement US passport can be made at any US consulate or consular agency. These applications are sent to the US Embassy in Madrid, where the passport is issued. For urgent cases, US citizens will need to travel to Madrid and apply for the passport in person.
- **Legal Services:** According to the Consular Convention between Spain and the United States, US citizens have the right to contact a Diplomatic or Consular Officer in the event of an arrest. It is recommended that no statements be made until consultation with a Consular Officer has taken place.
- **Notary Public**
- **Tax Assistance**
- **Other Services:** Lists of Attorneys and Legal Advice; U.S. Customs Regulations; Absentee Voting; Marriage Formalities in Spain; Spanish Employment Regulations; Social Security Benefits; Customs Procedures for Americans Moving to Spain

## HOMESTAYS

During their time in Seville, our students will live with Spanish families. We believe this is one of the most important parts of students' learning experience in Spain. Living with Spaniards adds to their understanding of Spain and Spanish culture and greatly enhances the overall experience. We do our best to match students with families based on the preferences they give us, however, we understand that not all homestays work out. Our Housing Coordinator is available to resolve any issues that may arise between students and their host families, and if necessary, find them a new homestay. We always want our students to feel comfortable in their home away from home.

- All of our host families are personally interviewed and evaluated by our Housing Coordinator. We will never put a student in a home without visiting the home first and thoroughly vetting the families.
- All students live in the center of Seville or the "barrios" (neighborhoods) of Los Remedios or El Porvenir. All of our homestays are within a 20-30 minute walk from EUSA, where COWA offices are located.
- Most students will live with one other COWA student, however, we will never place students in

a homestay that has students from any other non-COWA program. In some cases, students may live alone based on their preferences.

- Students will receive a set of keys to their home (the actual apartment as well as the building), just like other members of the family. It is the students' responsibility to replace keys and/or locks if the keys are lost or stolen. The student is also responsible for any damage or destruction of property in the homestay that is a result of negligence or incorrect use by the student.
- Homestays will provide students with 3 meals a day (breakfast, lunch and dinner). They will also provide common household necessities such as: sheets, towels, toilet paper, light bulbs, etc. The host mother will wash students' clothes once a week.
- In accordance with Spanish law, all students and all homestays will sign a housing contract. This ensures that all parties involved are aware of the rules and regulations regarding homestays, and helps to avoid any possible issues that may arise between students and host families.
- Our Housing Coordinator will perform occasional housing evaluations with both students and host families, to ensure that things are going smoothly and to resolve any issues if they exist.

## HEALTH CARE

All of our students come with functional international insurance for the duration of their stay in Seville. For any sort of medical concern, our staff is always available to assist students making appointments or seeking the appropriate specialists, as well as to accompany students to any appointments.

We use primarily four clinics and hospitals in Seville. The way we frame it to students is a 3-stop system based on the severity of their medical concerns.

1. The first stop, for medical concerns that are not life or death emergencies, is a clinic called [Medicur](#). This clinic handles basic general medical concerns, for example, common colds or viruses, ear or throat infections, twisted ankles, etc. Medicur can also be a gateway to a specialist for students who have a more specific concern. The clinic is located at: Calle José de la Cámara, 3, and their telephone is (+34) 954 53 50 00.
2. The second stop for medical concerns that are not life or death emergencies, and must be dealt with after hours, are the Sagrado Corazón

or Fátima Hospitals. Both are private hospitals that offer personal service and are well-equipped to deal with most medical concerns. However, they are not as prepared for life-threatening emergencies or intensive surgeries (for this reason we have our third stop hospital below). Both Sagrado Corazón and Fatima Hospitals have emergency rooms and are open 24 hours. Sagrado Corazón Hospital is located at: Calle Rafael Salgado, 3 and their telephone is (+34) 954 93 76 76. Fátima Hospital is located at: Glorieta de Méjico, 1, and their telephone is (+34) 954 61 33 00.

3. The third stop for life-threatening emergencies is the Virgen del Rocio Hospital. This is a public hospital which has all the resources and specialized staff necessary for emergency procedures. This hospital is located at: Calle Avd. Manuel Siurot, s/n, and their telephone is (+34) 954 24 81 81.

As previously mentioned, for any sort of specialized medical concern, COWA staff will assist students in finding the right doctors. In addition, again, staff will always be available to accompany students to any appointments, in order to help with translation and to provide general support.

## MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

While our students' insurance does not cover mental health concerns, COWA does provide our own mental health resources for all students. We understand that study abroad can be a difficult experience for students, as it is a big adjustment full of transitions and emotional challenges. Our goal is for all students to have the assistance and resources they need to help with this adjustment.

We have an on-site counselor, Alberto Leal Crespo, who is a certified psychologist and psychotherapist with a Masters in Clinic Psychology. He offers students up to 3 hours per week of counseling and will also help to make referrals to private offices. Mr. Leal's counseling services are available to students in both Spanish and English.

As mentioned in the previous section, COWA staff are always available to assist students making appointments and will accompany students if they feel more comfortable. This is also applicable to mental health concerns; our staff will always help students to make appointments with private offices if necessary and will be available to go with students if they want additional support.

## SPECIAL NEEDS & ACCOMMODATIONS

We want all students to have an experience in Seville that is as productive and as problem-free as possible. We will do our very best to accommodate any special needs students may have.

### Limited Mobility

- COWA and University Facilities: The COWA office is wheelchair accessible, as are the various facultades of the Universidad de Sevilla and EUSA. Students may also find it useful to contact El Servicio de Asistencia a la Comunidad Universitaria (SACU). SACU is the office that oversees the quality of these services at the Universidad de Sevilla.
- Transportation in Seville: Seville has an extensive bus system with stops in all parts of the city. There is at least one bus on each route that is equipped for passengers with wheelchairs. For late night travel and/or for greater convenience, there are specially-equipped vans available through Eurotaxi (+34) 954 476 060. Both the metro and the metrocentro (tram) are wheelchair accessible.

- Transportation outside of Seville: The San Pablo Airport and Santa Justa Train Station have staff available to help those with physical disabilities. From Santa Justa, the AVE, Talgos, Alaris, and Euromed trains are all equipped with special facilities for those with limited mobility. Unfortunately, regional buses are not wheelchair-accessible.
- Useful Websites:
  - [www.valinet.org](http://www.valinet.org) – Information on accessibility around Seville including museums, public areas, libraries, bars, restaurants, hotels, and much more.
  - [www.vialibre.es](http://www.vialibre.es) – The site for Eurotaxi. This contains information on the types of vehicles available, as well as contact phone numbers for all of Spain.
  - [www.miusa.org](http://www.miusa.org) – Mobility International USA provides information to students with disabilities who want to study abroad. This includes stories and testimonials from past students.
  - [www.cermi.es](http://www.cermi.es) – Additional information on accessibility around Spain.

## Visually/Hearing Impaired

La ONCE: La Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles has been an extremely important voice for the visually impaired in Spain. For detailed information on La ONCE, please visit [www.once.es](http://www.once.es). In 1988, La ONCE founded the Fundación ONCE, dedicated to helping people with other types of disabilities.

- Useful Websites:
  - [www.diariosigno.com](http://www.diariosigno.com) – Online news for the deaf in Andalusia.

## Special Academic Needs

Students with documented learning disabilities should be in touch with Resident Staff for assistance. We will help you arrange whatever services you might need.



## SAFETY IN SEVILLE

While Seville is certainly a beautiful and magical place, we always tell students that they must never forget that this city is just as much a part of the real world as any other. Crime exists in Seville, however, violent crime is significantly less frequent than American cities. The most common crimes seem to be robberies, purse snatchings, pickpockets, and cell phone theft. Sadly, foreigners (including students) are often the target.

As in any big city, we urge students to be cautious during their stay in Seville, especially late at night. We tell them to use common sense and always be aware of what is going on around them at all times. Here is some advice we give students to help them stay safe in Seville (these also apply to when traveling, as well!):

- Don't walk alone at night. Most robberies take place after midnight and usually when the victim is alone. It is important to be extra cautious at night. When in doubt, always take a taxi.
- If ever in need of assistance, call the local police (092) or any of the COWA staff (remember, COWA's director and coordinators are on call 24/7) if not in an emergency situation.
- It is best to leave valuables at home unless they are absolutely necessary. This includes large sums of cash, credit cards, ATM cards, passports, driver's licenses, cameras, etc.

- Never leave valuables unattended. If at a club or a bar, always keep belongings (purses, jackets, backpacks, etc.) in sight at all times. If working on a laptop in a cafe, make sure all belongings are within sight and never leave the laptop unattended.
- Make a lost document kit. Make photocopies of passports, credit cards, ATM cards, driver's licenses, student IDs, and other valuable documents to keep in case of lost or stolen documents. This will make it much easier to replace documents.
- Do not hitchhike or accept rides home from strangers.
- Drink responsibly. Students are very easy targets when they are drunk. Always drink in moderation.
- Be careful when using mobile telephones. A good deal of theft occurs while victims are talking on phones, as they may be distracted. Be aware of valuables and surroundings at all times.

### Steps to Take if Robbed

- If emergency assistance is required, call for help. The police, fire, and ambulance can be reached by calling 112.
- Cancel credit cards and/or ATM cards. Lost or stolen credit cards should be reported immediately.
- Report the crime to the police as quickly as possible (poner una denuncia). This report will be necessary for insurance purposes and for replacing certain lost documents.

- Police Stations in Seville
  - Sevilla - Centro Alameda de Hércules
  - Sevilla - Triana C/ Betis
  - Sevilla - Nervión Avda. Cruz del Campo, 17
  - Sevilla - Los Remedios Santa Fé, 1
  - Sevilla - Macarena C La Barzola

### **Sexual Aggression / Inappropriate Sexual Behavior**

Any incidents of sexual aggression, inappropriate sexual behavior, or gender discrimination should be reported to the COWA Director. There are also services available from:

Asociación Asistencia a Víctimas de Agresiones Sexuales

C/ Alberto Lista, 16, 41018 Sevilla

Tel: (+34) 954 905 649

Fax: (+34) 954 903 146

a.amuvi@teleline.es

[www.violacion.org](http://www.violacion.org)

Counseling Services are available through COWA's on-site counselor (see section on Mental Health Resources). Additionally, COWA can provide students with options in case of unsafe sex, reproductive health, STDs and other concerns.

## **MONEY**

### **The Euro**

On January 1, 1999, eleven countries in the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) decided to give up their national currencies and adopt the new Euro (EUR) currency. Today, a total of twenty-three countries make up the eurozone. These countries include Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Portugal, San Marino, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, and the Vatican City.

Euro banknotes and coins were first put into circulation on January 1, 2002. There are seven euro banknotes, ranging in value from 5 EUR to 500 EUR. All share the same design. There are also eight euro coins, ranging in value from 1 céntimo (1/100 of a euro) to 2 EUR. Euro coins share a common design on one side. The reverse side of each coin, however, displays a symbol of the country in which the coin was minted. Despite these different symbols, euro coins can be used in any of the thirteen countries using the euro currency.

There is a conversion calculator, providing current exchange rates for the euro, at [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com).

## Exchanging Dollars for Euros

US dollars can be readily exchanged for euros at any number of banks and/or exchange centers in Seville. Both exchange rates and commission rates vary depending on the place, so we encourage students to look for a bank/exchange center that offers both a good exchange rate and a low commission fee.

## Credit Cards

Most day-to-day purchases in Spain are made with cash and, as such, many small businesses do not accept credit cards. However, for larger purchases such as airline tickets, hotels, clothing, and gifts, using a credit card can be a convenient alternative.

- If students plan to use a US credit card while in Spain, it is important to notify their credit card company. Credit card companies are becoming increasingly concerned about credit card fraud and may deny international charges if they are not informed of travel plans in advance.
- Credit card companies generally offer excellent exchange rates on international purchases. Still, most international credit card transactions involve a fee of around 2-3% of the cost of the purchase. Check with the credit card company for more specific information on exchange rates and transaction fees for international purchases.

## Traveler's Checks

The use of traveler's checks is not at all common in Spain, and most businesses refuse to accept them as a form of payment. Local banks are increasingly reluctant to change traveler's checks, making it difficult to convert them into cash. We do not recommend sending students to Spain with traveler's checks.

## ATM Cards

ATM cards can be a very convenient way of obtaining cash while in Spain, as they provide quick and easy access to US bank accounts.

- Most US banks charge transaction fees for international ATM withdrawals. Normally, transaction fees are around 2-3% of the amount withdrawn. There may also be fees (\$2-3) for using ATMs not affiliated with the US bank associated with the card. Transaction fees are charged by the home bank, not the Spanish one, so it's important for students to check with their home bank for fees and details.
- Some cards may have withdrawal limits. Most US banks set limits on the amount of cash customers are able to withdraw in any given day (i.e. 300 EUR per day limit).
- ATM cards used in Spain must be associated with a checking or money market account.

Unfortunately, cards linked to US savings accounts don't seem to function in Europe.

- As in the US, students will only be able to use machines that function on the same network as their card (ie. Cirrus, Plus, Interlink, Yankee 24).
- As in the US, we advise students to be cautious when using ATM machines in Spain and to try to use machines that are in well-lit, familiar locations. It is of course important to be aware of surroundings and use common sense.

### **Wiring Money to Spain**

If you need to send your student money in an emergency, the best option is an international wire transfer via Moneygram or Western Union. General information including FAQs on performing international wire transfers can be found online, at: [www.moneygram.com](http://www.moneygram.com) or [www.westernunion.com](http://www.westernunion.com).

### **General Prices in Spain**

Here is an outline of general prices of everyday items in Spain. This is to give you an idea of how much students may spend on day-to-day purchases. Keep in mind that students will receive 3 full meals a day in their homestays, so any money spent on food/drink is at their own discretion.

- Food/drink
  - Sodas: around 1.25€
  - Coffee: around 1.20€

- Draught beer: around 1.20€
- Draught beer and tapa: around 3€
- Dinner at a cheap restaurant: around 8€
- Dinner at a nice restaurant: 15-30€
- Dinner at a VERY nice restaurant: 30-50€
- Personal care
  - Hair cut for men: around 5-10€
  - Hair cut for women: around 10-20€
- Cell Phone use: between 5-15€ per week, depending on how much they talk on the phone!
- Stamps: around 30-80 cents

## MAIL AND PACKAGES

### Mailing Letters and Packages

Students will be able to mail letters and packages through the main post office in Seville. There are also several UPS access points throughout the city that handle UPS express mail services as well as other shipping needs.

### Receiving Mail and Packages

All student mail and packages should be addressed to the COWA offices:

Student Name  
EUSA-COWA  
Calle Plácido Fernández Viagas, 4  
41013, SEVILLA  
ESPAÑA

Receiving packages in Spain can be problematic and often quite expensive. International mail service (both public and private) is often slow and costly. For these reasons, we suggest that you avoid sending packages to students while they are abroad. If it is necessary to send a package to Sevilla, we suggest that the package be sent by air parcel post or express mail, to allow for a more timely delivery. Here are some things to keep in mind regarding packages:

- **Import Taxes:** import taxes are imposed on certain goods sent through the mail. These charges can be quite high (often more than the value of the goods themselves) and must be paid by the receiver. You must be extremely careful in how you complete the customs declaration form for any packages. The information on this form is for import tax purposes, not for insurance. We suggest that you provide a complete description of the package contents, and in most cases, the words “UNSOLICITED GIFT.” For more information about this, please consult the [Correos website](#).
- Make sure that you have all tracking information for any packages sent to Spain in case they get lost. In the case of a lost package, you will need to contact the shipper directly.
- You should avoid sending packages within the last month of the program. If delivery is delayed, students will probably not receive the package before they depart.
- **PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION:** Please note that it is illegal to send prescription medication through the mail. Students should bring enough medication with them to last for their entire period of study.

## PHONES AND WHATSAPP

### Phones in Spain

For safety reasons, we require all students to have a working Spanish cell phone while abroad. Having a working cell phone may prove vital in the case of an emergency, and will help students stay connected with the program office, peers and local acquaintances, as well as you all back home.

To get a working Spanish cell phone, students have two options:

1. Unlock their American cell phone
  2. Get an unlocked or prepaid Spanish cell phone
- COWA staff will assist students in securing a working Spanish cell phone when they arrive to Seville.

The majority of Spaniards use Whatsapp to communicate. This is also the main way our students keep in touch with friends and family in the US. It is quite expensive to make international calls, so we recommend using Whatsapp to communicate - the app uses Wifi or data and will not incur extra calling charges. Whatsapp has texting capabilities, as well as calling and video calling.

In any case, in order to call an international number, you must always add the country's calling code to the beginning of the number (this is true for Whatsapp as well).

The Spain calling code is **+34**.

For any additional questions, please contact us at:

[contact@cowa.es](mailto:contact@cowa.es)

We know your student will have an amazing time abroad, and we hope you get a chance to visit them in Seville!

*-COWA Staff*

