Universidad de Santiago de Compostela
# Table of Contents

The University ............................................................................................................. 3
International Relations ............................................................................................... 4
Location ......................................................................................................................... 5
Travel ............................................................................................................................. 6
Accommodation ............................................................................................................ 7
Admissions ................................................................................................................... 8
Academics .................................................................................................................... 8
  Libraries .................................................................................................................... 8
  Computer Rooms ..................................................................................................... 8
Practical Matters ......................................................................................................... 9
  Health and Insurance ............................................................................................... 9
  Acclimation and Immersion ...................................................................................... 9
  Spanish and Galician Courses ................................................................................ 10
Tips from UCC Students ............................................................................................ 10
The University

With more than five centuries of tradition, the University of Santiago de Compostela is a historic institution that projects itself to the future and beyond its frontiers, always attentive to the different demands of society, where it stands as an important academic frame of reference and where it develops its academic, research work. Centuries of history give the University and special capacity to merge experience, security and confidence with present and future challenges.

The roots of the University go back to 1495, when the Santiago de Compostela solicitor López Gómez de Mazoa founded, with the help of the San Martiño Piñeiro abbot, a school for the poor known as "Gramatic Academy" in the monastery of San Paio de Antealtares. From then on, a period of uncertainties followed due to the lack of economic resources. But in the year 1504, Diego de Muros adds brilliance to the centre as he gets a papal bull issued by the Pope Julius II that allows for the realisation of higher learning in the "Gramatic Academy".

In the last decades the universities of Coruña and Vigo have segregated. The USC student population numbers over 45.000. Nowadays, the University is organized into two Campuses, Santiago and Lugo, which include 30 centres, nearly 80 departments and more than 60 degrees, apart from numerous installations such as research institutes, halls of residence, sports and cultural facilities, libraries, etc. Definitively, with the security and confidence of 500 years of experience, the University of Santiago de Compostela looks towards the future without forgetting its past, promoting new initiatives and putting its knowledge and leadership in the service of the demands of our society.
International Relations Office

The International Relations Office is the equivalent to UCC’s International Education Office. Their job is to help international students with any enquiries they may have. Please go there or contact the Office if you need any assistance.

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The Cathedral borders the main plaza of the old and well-preserved city. Legend has it that the remains of the apostle James were brought to Galicia for burial. In 813, according to medieval legend, the light of a bright star guided a shepherd who was watching his flock at night to the burial site in Santiago de Compostela. The shepherd quickly reported his discovery to the bishop of Iria, Bishop Teodomiro. The bishop declared that the remains were those of the apostle James and immediately notified King Alfonso II in Oviedo. To honour St. James, the cathedral was built on the spot where his remains were said to have been found. The legend, which included numerous miraculous events, enabled the Catholic faithful to not only maintain their stronghold in northern Spain during the Christian crusades against the Moors, but also led to the growth and development of the city.

Along the western side of the Praza do Obradoiro is the elegant 18th-century Pazo de Raxoi, now the city hall. Across the square is the Pazo de Raxoi (Raxoi's Palace), the town hall and seat of the Galician Xunta, and on the right from the cathedral steps is the Hostal dos Reis Católicos, founded in 1492 by the Catholic Monarchs, Isabella of Castille and Ferdinand II of Aragon, as a pilgrim's hospice (now a parador). The Obradoiro façade of the cathedral, the best known, is depicted on the Spanish euro coins of 1 cent, 2 cents, and 5 cents.

Santiago is the site of the University of Santiago de Compostela, established in the early 16th century. The main campus can be seen best from an alcove in the large municipal park in the centre of the city.
Travel to the University

By Plane:

The University offers the names of several airlines which have terminals in AENA, Santiago de Compostela’s airport.

- Air Europa
- Spanair
- Ryanair
- Iberia

Flight costs vary by airline. AENA is located approximately ten kilometres to the northeast of the city, a distance traversable by bus or car.

By Train:

RENFE is the state-owned operator of freight and passenger trains in Spain. A student who does not wish to fly into AENA will be able to find rail transport from a multitude of Spanish stations into Santiago de Compostela.

By Bus:

The University provides the names of three bus services which are capable of ferrying students to and from Santiago de Compostela

- Alsa
- Monbus
- Freire

Students are advised to book any travel well in advance to ensure that they will be capable of arriving at Santiago de Compostela without any trouble, and that they find the most affordable prices.
Accommodation

Vicerreitoría de Estudiantes y Formación Contínua
Servicio de Ayudas y Servicios al Alumnado
Pavillón estudantil, 1º andar, Campus Vida
15782 Santiago de Compostela
Tlf.: 881 814 574 / 575 / 582
Fax.: 881 814 559
Email: sur@usc.es mobilidade.sur@usc.es dirsur@usc.es

Private and public USC Residence Halls constitute the so-called SUR Residence Halls, with its own legal system stated in the Regulations passed, on 14 June 1998, by the USC Governing Board and, on the other hand, in the Internal Regulations of each centre.

The Vice-rectorate for Students and Continuing Education publishes annually the regulations of the call for accommodation (around 1500) for degree, master, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Cycle students, researches in training, postgraduate and CAP (Pedagogical Training Course) students, teachers and research staff, PAS (Administrative and Service Staff), visitors, exchange programme students and students with special needs. The call for the academic year is published in June, opening the process which ends with the final awarding of places in September. This call, which must be approved by the Governing Board, includes, among other aspects, the admission criteria, scale, and the number of vacancies for each category of the University community. The summer call is published in May and finishes at the beginning of July.

Cost of Living

As an approximate guide, the prices listed below are intended only to provide students with a rough understanding of various costs associated with living in Santiago de Compostela so that they might plan accordingly.

- Accommodation (per month): €250-300.
- Food (per month): €200
- Spare Time (per month): €200
- Bus Ticket: €1.10
- Cup of Coffee: €1.10
- Cinema: €5-6
- Museum (student price): €1
- Planetarium: €3-4
Admissions

Admission is decided by the Office of the Vice-Rector for International Relations after consultation with the International Coordinators of the different Centres and after having verified that the mobility is in accordance with the established agreements. Information regarding post-admission arrival and orientation will be made available to students who have been accepted for study at the Universidad de Santiago de Compostela.

Academics

The Spanish grade scale is from 1-10, and 5, or aprobado, is the minimum passing grade.

Grades are awarded on a scale from 1-10, as follows:

- 10 Matrícula de Honor (Distinction) (limited to 5%)
- 9-10 Sobresaliente (outstanding)
- 7-8.5 Notable (credit)
- 5-6.5 Aprobado (pass)
- 0-4.5 Suspenso (fail)

Libraries

Santiago de Compostela has one general library intended for student use, as well as two more specialized libraries for use by students in the respective departments. Information about the general library may be sought at http://busc.usc.es/A_Biblioteca/

Biblioteca Universitaria de Santiago de Compostela
Colexio de Fonseca
Rúa do Franco s/n
15782 Santiago de Compostela

Computer Rooms

The Universidad de Santiago de Compostela has an extensive array of computer rooms available for student use. The ability to utilize these rooms will be granted to visiting students after arriving and registering with the university. Some computer rooms are not intended for student use, and instead serve as research centres or are designated for faculty usage.
Practical Matters

Health and Insurance
All students must have complete health insurance (civil liability insurance is not required). Students from EU member countries should obtain a free European Health Insurance card (EHIC) in their country of origin. Applicants from other countries must obtain private health insurance, either in their home country or in Spain, before matriculating at the university.

Other non-EU countries with which Spain has an agreement regarding the Spanish National Health System are Andorra, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Tunisia and Morocco (ask in the country of origin about the conditions and documents necessary to be able to use the Spanish National Health system). Further information at:

http://www.seg-social.es/Internet_1/Internacional/Conveniosbilaterales/index.htm

Acclimation and Immersion
The university offers a program of cultural activities for visiting and home students aimed to enrich the students’ stay at the university. The activities are held at both campuses: Santiago and Lugo.

VoLANGteer - The aim of this programme is to promote the learning and use of minority languages of the different European Union member states, so that visiting students from other countries can learn the language of the host country and use it naturally, in their daily lives. The programme also aims to help foreign students to become integrated in Galician society and in the university community.

The programme is aimed at young foreign students at the USC in receipt of Erasmus grants, and Galician students with an interest in cultural exchange.

The students will form pairs –one foreign student and one from the USC- and will meet to talk about diverse topics (culture, sport, social topics...) as well as to take part in different activities such as going to the theatre or to a sporting event, cultural activities, a visit to a gastronomical festival etc. The aim of these meetings is to use an informal method of learning to encourage interest in the languages of the host country (in this case Galician and Spanish), thereby helping the visiting student to become integrated, as well as to encourage exchange of experiences, knowledge and values.

The USC offers many services to the university community and the support of the teaching and research. We provide some of the most important information for visitors relating to their personal needs for accommodation, language, connection, etc. We are also involved in services offered to support students with special needs, adapting the spaces of the USC and removing architectural barriers in schools, schools, residential colleges and identifying the needs that are detected as increasing the number of students disabilities enrolled. In addition, direct support organization when applying for some assistance in relation to their disability.
Spanish or Galician Language Courses

The university offers language courses in both Spanish and Galician for educational purposes. It is meant for students with an intermediate/advanced level of Spanish or Galician intending to start their higher learning education in a Spanish and Galician speaking university and need to acquaint themselves with the written and oral expression and the socio-cultural context they are going to find in a university environment. Information regarding these courses will be made available upon arrival to the university, and may also be found on the university’s website at http://cursosinternacionais.usc.es/Template2.asp?UID=afd58033-b698-437f-bcb3-0b0c36e43f11

Tips from UCC Students

UCC students who have travelled abroad for study in the past have given the International Education Office a collection of tips for students interested in studying abroad.

Erasmus is full of excitement and adventure, but also uncertainty and nerves. Although the International Education Office in UCC and the International Relations Office in Santiago de Compostela will help you as much as possible, nothing can beat the experience of being in your shoes. So here are some tips and tricks from UCC students who have studied in Santiago de Compostela.

Academic Matters:

- Take the chance to learn new things.
- Try and take some courses that allow you to learn more about Spanish life, culture, history, or literature. You’ll never have quite the same opportunity in Ireland.
- Contact the Erasmus officers in your subject area if you have any questions about academics.
- Be aware that you are entering a new education system with different administration, course, and exam structures.
- Keep up with your reading.

Accommodation:

- Be aware that university residences are located outside the city centre. It’s a good idea to find the location of your faculty before securing accommodation.
- Find out whether bed linen is included or if you have to buy it on arrival.
- When booking accommodation, ask about the times you will be able to collect your keys and access your residence so you can either arrive during these times or make alternative accommodation arrangements for the first night.
- Bring pictures of home to put on the walls.
- Bring a 2-pin plug for your Irish electrical products.

Travel:
- Remember generally the earlier you book the flights, the cheaper they are.
- Some clubs organise really cheap day and overnight trips.
- If you are coming home for Christmas, it is a good time to bring back excess luggage.

Bureaucracy:
- Bring multiple photocopies of any documentation you might need.
- EU citizens do not need a Residence Permit.
- It is a good idea to carry some sort of ID with you at all times.

Social:
- Buy local newspapers and magazine, and listen to local TV, radio, and music.
- Immerse yourself in the culture.
- Try to interact with Spanish students and the local community.

General:
- Bring a good Spanish dictionary
- Unlock your mobile phone before you leave Ireland if you want to put a Spanish SIM card in it.
- Brings some books in English. Although you can buy some English-language books in Spain, they can be expensive, and it is handy to have some for travelling and for when you first arrive.
- Look into phone cards – they are one of the cheapest ways to phone home.
- If you have a laptop and internet access in your accommodation, look into getting Skype or other internet phone packages.