



Semester in Spain (Core) 2018 Handbook

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Calvin College Core Semester in Spain Program!

This handbook introduces you to the Semester in Spain Program and attempts to anticipate some fears and misconceptions as well as any questions. It is important to study it carefully *before* leaving for Spain. This compilation, based on comments by former students, data from other overseas program handbooks, and vital information from departmental program directors and Off-Campus programs, will help prepare you for your time abroad.

The goal of the Study in Spain program is for students to enter the Spanish culture as empathetic guests and eager explorers, build their cultural knowledge and language fluency, deepen their understanding of both Christian and secular world views, and emerge as sensitive and seasoned world citizens prepared for work in the Lord's kingdom.

Some of this material will be useful immediately as you prepare for departure; other parts will become more important later, in Spain. The best approach to the handbook is to skim everything initially, and then reread each section carefully as the time seems appropriate. (You might wish to note key elements and their applicable dates in the margins for easier reference later.) It is very important that your parents read the handbook as well.

This handbook is a useful, but not exhaustive, tool. The director will relay important information via email and in meetings as it comes available, and Off-Campus programs will be getting other time-sensitive information to you as well. However, because of the many variables that come into play while traveling and living abroad for an extended period of time, parents and students should anticipate some changes in scheduling and/or protocol. Having patience and being flexible, as you are doubtless already discovering, are very important assets during your semester abroad in Spain.

Finally, the information in this Handbook is accurate as far as we know, as of the time of compilation. Since things can change from year to year, we will appreciate your help and good suggestions for updating the handbook for the next group.

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BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Academic Program

Details about the academic program come to you separately. Please refer to the detailed documents that you received at orientation. (The most important documents will be given to you hard copy; everything will eventually be available on the STSP 215 MOODLE.)

Advising

The spring before going to Spain, **students should have worked out a tentative schedule for the following spring semester with an academic advisor.** Students will register for classes for the next spring from Spain, and it can be difficult to communicate with advisors regarding registration during the semester abroad. Although the director is available to answer some questions, students should rely on their own advisor for specific information about their individual programs.

Total Credits

Students will typically earn between 15-17 credits. Although many of the courses taken in Oviedo are taught by local professors, they will appear as Calvin credits on a transcript. No transfer of credits will be necessary. Grades from Calvin classes taught in Oviedo (121 or 201; 215) will be figured in to your total Calvin GPA. Grades from non-Calvin courses will appear on your transcript but are not counted in your GPA.

BANKING & MONEY

Most banks in Oviedo are open 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. However, be aware that some banks (and many other businesses) close around midday, between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., for *siesta* (mid-afternoon break) and either stay closed or open back up around 2:00 p.m. or 3:00 p.m. Bank "*Santander*" is one of the best banks, as it has low rates for withdrawing money and accepts foreign cards (other banks have declined the use of foreign cards). *Santander* has different branches all over Oviedo, so it will not difficult to find one close to where you live. **DO NOT BRING U.S. DOLLARS TO EXCHANGE.**

There are two principal ways of obtaining euros while in Spain: ATM card and credit card.

ATM Cards

Students rely on ATMs to get money while in Spain. While ATM cards are very convenient, there are a few restrictions:

- Foreign ATMs will not provide account balances.
- Withdrawals may only be made from **checking** accounts.
- Computers may be down either in the US or in Spain. (This happens more frequently abroad.)
- Fees may be higher than you are used to.
- Specific banks may have other restrictions.

You must inform your bank in advance of going to Spain that you will be out of the country for the semester. It is also important to advise them before travelling to other countries during Spring Break or weekend trips. Some banks place a hold on services on ATM cards that they have issued when there is unforeseen international activity because they fear fraud. If this happens, you will have to call the

American bank's toll-free number to unblock your card. It is also possible that a payment may be rejected at a store simply because they do not recognize the foreign credit card. To avoid this problem, students are advised to pay for most things with cash.

Some students have noted that having an ATM card with a chip is very helpful for withdrawing money from certain banks. Others also suggest bringing more than one ATM card with you to Spain and leaving one at your house, in case the other gets lost/stolen.

Credit Cards

With Visa and MasterCard, students can obtain a cash advance from banks that post the Visa and MC card signs in their windows. Passport identification is required. Interest charges *on advances* begin to accrue immediately. Again, if students plan on using credit cards in Spain, they must notify their banks of their intention to do so. Some banks, when they see foreign activity without being forewarned, have declined the transaction.

Cash

Do NOT bring U.S. currency to exchange. Plan to use your ATM card. However, most places in Spain will not accept debit or credit cards for small purchases. Plan to pay regularly in euros. Be aware of the fees charged by your home bank and Spanish bank on each transaction. With this in mind, you should withdraw larger amounts of cash less frequently from ATMs. It is important to always have cash on hand, but not advisable to carry large bills with you.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Travel Services has sent or will send your individual travel information to you. Please consult your email. The director arrives prior to the student group and does not normally return with the group. Are you travelling with the group? How will you get to the airport? The program director will need confirmed travel plans from each student at least one month prior to departure date. You will receive email instructions from the director about what to do in the Madrid airport. Please stay tuned.

DETAILED CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS & EXCURSIONS

The program calendar has been made available to you as a separate document. It contains details such as the days Calvin classes happen, excursions and holidays. Students are expected to be present for all Calvin excursions. **The excursion dates are subject to change, at the discretion of program staff, should unforeseen circumstances arise.**

date	holiday or excursion
Saturday, 8 Sep	Día de Asturias
Friday, 21 Sep	Las Fiestas de San Mateo (Oviedo) [classes meet?]
Friday, 12 Oct	Fiesta Nacional de España (Columbus Day)
Thursday, 1 Nov	Todos los Santos
Monday, 26 Nov	Santa Catalina de Alejandría
Thursday, 6 Dec	Día de la Constitución Española
Saturday, 8 Dec	Inmaculada Concepción

COMMUNICATIONS IN SPAIN

Mail

In the past, students have encountered problems with receiving mail: some had to pay taxes to receive packages, other parcels took months to arrive, and some never made it to the student. Some tips to try and avoid these problems include:

- Address the mail to the host-family rather than the student
- Have all mail via Air Mail and packages sent through the U.S. or Canadian Post Office, (rather than **by Federal Express, etc.**) since customs in Madrid likely will hold them for customs charges.
- Letters/cards are almost guaranteed to be delivered to the student without any problems, so this is highly recommended.

Telephone

- The Calvin program will provide funds for students to have some emergency call minutes and some data on their cell phones. Most students insert a sim card into their personal cell phone. There are different packages available; students from previous years know the most about the best deals. Check with your cellular company now to determine what will be best for you. You **MUST** have a way to communicate with your host family and with the program director at all times.
- In Spain, there is no charge to receive calls on Spanish cell phones, but it can be quite expensive to make calls. (See WhatsApp below.)
- If planning to use your personal smart-phone, it is important to **contact your phone company before leaving the U.S. to unlock your phone**. That way you will be able to insert the sim-card without any problems.
- **Students are required to maintain a balance of at least 10 euros (provided by the program) on their cellphones and to keep the cellphones charged and turned on.** In case of emergency, they must be able to make and receive calls. **The emergency number in Spain is 112.**
- The telephone in the home is the property of the host head of household, and as such, it is his/her right and responsibility to determine the rules for its use.

Email

- You may send and receive email from the university facilities using your Calvin email account. Be sure to know your Calvin email address and password **BEFORE** you leave in order to avoid complications. While there are a number of computer labs in the university and WiFi in all common areas of the campus, **students are encouraged to limit time spent communicating in English with friends and family at home.**
- When registering for classes at Universidad de Oviedo, make sure that your e-mail address is correct on the paper work. This will help avoid further problems of not receiving important e-mails.

WhatsApp

- It is highly recommended that you download "WhatsApp" (a free messenger app) on your cell phone. It is important to do this **before arriving in Spain**, as they will send a text-message to your cell-phone number with a confirmation code. This messenger app is the most commonly used form of communication between host families and Spanish friends.

Maps.Me

- This is another free app that works offline. This is especially helpful to have during the first few weeks, while trying to navigate the city.

LIVING SITUATION

Families

Students are placed individually in the homes of residents of Oviedo. Living in Spanish homes is one of the highlights of our program. It provides the opportunity to learn first-hand about daily lifestyles in Spain, to rely on Spanish for communication in everyday situations, and to build relationships with people in Oviedo. It also means, of course, that students have the added responsibility of fitting into a home situation with unfamiliar customs, traditions, expectations, and restrictions. However, the students who are willing and mature enough to adopt the local customs for a semester find that giving up a little independence is well worth the experience.

If any problem arises within your family, you should first discuss it directly with them (Matthew 18). If that does not work out, then you should speak to the program director. **In no case should you try to solve a problem by speaking about the situation with another student or another host family.** The director will endeavor to make adjustments so that students are satisfied with the housing arrangements, even if it means changing homes. Most of the time, however, problems are caused by misunderstandings which can be avoided with good, open communication and sensitivity to differences based on culture, education, and other factors. It is also important to note that it may take some time to adjust to your family and their routines. Do not be discouraged when misunderstandings occur; simply give yourself time.

Meals

Housing includes three daily meals, seven days a week. Meal hours will be established by the family at the beginning of the semester based on their schedule and that of the student. **It is important that you inform your family in advance if you plan on not being home for a meal.**

When you leave on organized excursions with the group, you must request a packed lunch from your host mother. You may also do so when going on weekend trips individually. However, you may not take food from the kitchen without the authorization of the host mother.

If you have established dietary restrictions with a host family beforehand, you have the right to see those carried out. If you find that you do not like or want an item that you are offered, you may decline it without giving offense. That said, "picky" eaters (as opposed to those who have officially indicated food restrictions or distinguished dislikes) should not expect to be prepared a different meal than the family is eating. As in other areas, with food, *compromise, flexibility and an adventuresome spirit* are

the keys to success in an abroad situation.

It is quite likely that you will receive large portions of food from your family as they want to make sure that you do not go hungry. It is completely acceptable to ask for less if you would prefer smaller portions.

Sheets and Laundry

Bed sheets, pillows, pillowcases and towels will be provided by the family.

The host family will wash laundry once a week and change sheets every two weeks. Students may not wash their clothes without guardian authorization. Do not bring any articles of clothing that could be damaged easily or that need special handling unless you intend to pay to have them dry cleaned. Normally, Spanish homes do not have clothes dryers, so the laundry cycle will take longer than in the US.

Heating, Hot Water, and Electricity

Utilities in Spain are more expensive than in the U.S., and you need to be *very conservative* in your use of electricity and hot water. When leaving a room, **turn off the lights**. You may shower each day, but keep it short and be considerate of the amount of water used. That means that you should turn the water off while you wash your hair and soap up; the water should not run for longer than a few minutes for each shower. If your home or your bedroom have an electric heater, you should ask your host family how you may use it and not just run it at your own discretion. In all cases, students should be sensitive to the family and their way of doing things.

Visits

Traditionally it has been less common for Spaniards to entertain in their homes, unless the guests are family or very close friends and meetings have taken place more frequently in public spaces. However, traditions are changing in many families, and you will see that many Spaniards do invite people over and entertain in their homes.

However, the North American living in a Spanish home must take great care in requesting to have company in the home. You are generally discouraged from having company in your host home. That said, some of our host families are aware of North American norms and may invite you to have guests. Here are Calvin's guidelines:

- Students must ask permission before inviting people into the home.
- Company must be received exclusively in the public living space of the house, and the host mother must know that you are going to receive company beforehand, unless the host mother says otherwise.
- It is forbidden for students to entertain company of the opposite sex in their bedrooms, regardless of what the host mother says.
- Those students who wish to have lunch or dinner guests in their home, and who have been told this is welcomed, must come to an agreement BEFOREHAND with respect to *price* (if any).
- Under no circumstances may alcoholic beverages be brought into the home.
- Students are not permitted to 1) request to have large groups of people in the home for any purposes; or 2) invite friends/family in your Spanish family's home overnight. Guests must stay at hostels/hotels.

General Conduct

The experience of living with a Spanish family can be very different from one student to another. For some the host family becomes family and their house becomes home. For others, they become friends and learn a great deal from each other. For yet others, the relationship stays distant although cordial. Whichever is the case, students are expected to show respect for the Spanish people and their culture. Students are not in Spain to change the way Spaniards live but to learn from them and walk in their shoes for a while. Remember that every household has a set of rules and expectations. It is expected that you willingly comply with these as you learn to adjust and adapt to life in Oviedo.

When you arrive, you should discuss scheduling with the family and establish a standard for the semester. There is no curfew per se; however, students are generally expected to be in by midnight on weeknights and communicate their weekend plans. Students must notify the family beforehand if they plan to be out later than normal. Students will be given a copy of the house key. Some general rules of conduct in a Spanish house:

- When Spanish people enter a home, they always make their presence known with a greeting ("¡Hola!", "¡Buenas!", etc.), unless the family has gone to bed. Similarly, when you go out, acknowledge that you are leaving ("Me voy").
- Close all doors quietly—Americans have a reputation for “slamming” doors.
- Turn off the lights when you leave a room.
- Spaniards don’t walk around the house with bare feet or socks. Remember to wear slippers/flip-flops in the house—floors are tiled, not carpeted.
- Spaniards generally wear casual clothing while in the house.
- Students should not put their feet on the furniture or lie on the couch without permission.
- The student is expected to respect the furniture in his/her bedroom and is requested to keep the room tidy.
- There must never be any perishable foods, alcohol, or illegal drugs in the student’s bedroom.
- Always offer to help with small things around the house (doing dishes, setting the table, etc). It is likely that your family will decline your help, but it is still a very considerate practice.

In all things and at all times, you should keep in mind that you represent Calvin College, your home, and your faith to the people of Oviedo. Your conduct and attitude will leave lasting impressions.

HEALTH, IMMUNIZATIONS, INSURANCE

Medical attention regulations

For mild illness, the host mother can advise the student. (The student is expected to pay for any medication). In other cases, the director of the program **must** be contacted. The director will help the student locate a doctor, usually at a private clinic. It is important to carry cash with you to pay for medical appointments, as many private clinics do not accept credit cards.

In what could be an **emergency** the student should go directly to the nearest Centro Médico or to the emergency room (*sala de urgencias*) at the Oviedo hospital. The director must be informed as soon as possible, but medical attention should be sought *immediately*.

Health

Students who are taking medication should bring along an ample supply and a copy of their prescription, written in generic terms. Ask your doctor to find out if the medication is available in Europe—some are not—in case of emergency. ***Have a clear description of the medication, written on your MD's letterhead, if the medication is administered via needle.***

People should not mail medications from home. There is a possibility that medications that are mailed will be stopped at Spanish customs. Tylenol (*acetaminophen* in the U.S. and *paracetamol* in Spain) is readily available in Spain, as is ibuprofen. Many other medications have a Spanish equivalent.

The director should be informed if a student's state of health changes from that reported on the health form in the application.

Immunizations

The following immunizations are required beyond those that were required for entrance into Calvin College:

- Tetanus/Diphtheria booster: if none in the last 10 years, cost is at the student's expense.
- Hepatitis B is required, but most students will have already received this immunization, since it is a requirement for entry to Calvin. If students have not had the Hepatitis B series, the first two doses will be given and paid for by the program.
- Typhoid vaccine is recommended but not required (additional cost).
- Flu shots.

If students are planning to travel during break to Eastern Europe or for more than a day trip to Morocco, then further immunizations may be recommended or required.

Students are often surprised to learn that **regular insurance policies do not always cover accidents or losses suffered in a foreign country, especially if the insured is a student studying abroad for more than a certain amount of time (30 days is often the limit)**. Check your insurance policy to see exactly what it does and does not cover, and for how long, and extend and enhance coverage if you need or wish to. **All participants are required to carry a plan of personal medical insurance during the entire semester abroad.** As part of the program fee, Calvin provides secondary insurance for all students studying in Spain, including evacuation insurance.

KEEPING SAFE OFF-CAMPUS

Calvin College will do its best to provide a safe and healthy environment for you during your off-campus program, but we cannot eliminate all dangers and risks. Listen to and heed the advice of persons connected with the program—the Health Services travel nurses, OCP personnel, your directing professor, and any persons invited by Calvin to assist in your orientation. By following their advice, you can lessen the chances of an incident, accident, or illness. Here are some of the most important general guidelines:

Food & drink

Although the water in Spain is safe to drink, many Spaniards prefer to purchase bottled water. In a

restaurant, you can ask for “agua del grifo” (tap water) if you prefer.

Wash your hands frequently (or use sanitizer) to prevent minor illnesses.

Although this is less common than in less-well-off countries, your *mamá* might insist on your taking another helping of food when you are not hungry. A repeated “no, gracias, estoy satisfecho/a,” or “gracias, pero no puedo más” is appropriate. Like in any other country, offering a compliment about the food (and anything else) is always a good idea!

Since you will be of legal drinking age in Spain, if you choose to drink alcoholic beverages, be aware of your limits and of your heightened vulnerability. Your reflexes will be slower, and you are more likely to appear to be a good target for pick-pocketing or other malicious activity. Keep an eye on your beverage in bars and *discotecas* (clubs), regardless of what it is, and do not ever accept a drink from anyone. Drugs can be, and have been, slipped into drinks.

NOTE: Students will remember that, while alcohol is a common element in adult celebrations and meals in Spain, *they are by no means required to drink alcohol*. As with any other item that you do not wish to consume, a polite “no, gracias,” is appropriate.

Money & other valuables

- When traveling, keep your passport, credit cards, insurance card(s), and money in a money belt or neck pouch that is tucked away under your clothes except for when you need it.
- Most students leave their physical passport and insurance cards in the home of their host family, and they bring a photocopy of these documents (including the Spanish visa) with them at all times. **Make sure to take your physical passport on excursions and other trips**, and not a photocopy.
- Be aware of your surroundings; don’t get so involved in looking at the sights that you become an easy mark for a pickpocket or mugger. You can be easily distracted when getting on and off trains or buses in a crowded place. Be especially vigilant at such times.
- Travel light. The more luggage you have, the more vulnerable you are to theft. Mark your luggage both inside and out with your name and a contact phone number, and mark it distinctively, so that you can spot it quickly as yours if someone tries to walk off with it.
- Have at least two sources of money (ATM card, credit card) in addition to euros, and keep them in separate locations on your person. If you are robbed of one source, you will still have a way to get money.
- Make a PDF of your passport ID page, insurance card, credit cards, tickets and other travel documents and store it on your computer. Send a copy to someone at home, too, as a back-up.
- Leave expensive jewelry and other valuables in the States.

Travel & sightseeing

- You are discouraged from traveling alone.
- Read up on the area that you’re planning to visit; the more knowledgeable you appear, the less you look like a potential target.

- **For safety reasons, complete the Independent Travel form before you travel on your own and submit it to the director**, so that the director has as much information as possible about your plans. If your plans are somewhat indefinite when you leave on a trip, keep in touch with the director or someone at home by phone/Skype or e-mail periodically if possible.
- Do not travel late at night unless you have someone meeting you at your destination. Be cautious about going out late in the evening.
- Ask receptionists at your hotel or hostel about areas to avoid; they are usually reliable sources of local information.
- Follow your instincts—if you hail a taxi and you feel uncomfortable about the driver, send the taxi on its way.
- Stay on major streets as much as possible after dark. If you see people loitering in your path that appear suspicious, turn back and head to a place where there are people around.

Medical emergencies

- You must have insurance to attend Calvin, and Calvin purchases additional insurance for abroad stays, as well as emergency repatriation insurance, for you. You must bring proof of insurance (and insurance card) with you.
- Be sure you know the regulations of your insurance coverage regarding prior approval for care.
- Again, keep your insurance card or a copy of it with you, and retain a PDF copy.
- If you require medical attention while away from home, **you will be asked for payment at the time of service**. This can usually be done via credit card. You can apply to your insurance company for reimbursement, PROVIDED YOU HAVE RECEIPTS. Be sure to get—and retain—them!
- If you have a medical condition that should be immediately known when receiving medical attention, wear a med-alert necklace or bracelet.

Physical violence

Here are some safety tips to avoid precarious situations:

- Walk in groups, especially later at night
- Avoid unlit roadways and sidewalks; be especially on your guard later at night on the weekends or during *fiestas* when young people are likely to be drinking
- If you feel targeted, enter a building, if possible, or cause a commotion (some people carry whistles for this purpose)
- Avoid any locations that are discouraged by the program
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times
- Do not respond in any way to verbal attacks, which could escalate to physical violence.
- **If you are physically harmed, call the program director immediately.** Verbal altercations should be reported at the earliest opportunity.

Miscellaneous

- Keep a charged phone (with a positive credit balance) and contact information for your director and Spanish family with you at all times.
- Avoid large crowds that are politically motivated. In the event of civil unrest, keep a low profile. If you are away from the Calvin group, try to contact the nearest embassy or consulate of your home country for advice.
- If you have a chronic medical condition (diabetes, asthma, food allergies, etc.), be sure you give full information to your director BEFORE the group leaves, so that he/she can be helpful if needed.

Harassment

Just as in the United States, female students will sometimes encounter harassment, but uncomfortable situations can usually be avoided by taking the following precautions:

- Avoid walking alone at night or in questionable places.
- Dress conservatively. While short skirts and tank tops may be comfortable, they may also encourage unwanted attention.
- Do not agree to meet a person whom you do not know well in a non-public place or late at night.
- Be aware that some men from other cultures tend to mistake the friendliness of North American women for romantic (or sexual) interest.
- Avoid eye contact with unknown men on the street.
- Don't respond if strange men try to speak with you.

Remember that no one has the right to take sexual advantage of you, no matter what you do or do not do. If you are victimized in this way *to any degree*, be sure to get help from your program director and/or another person in authority immediately. This is important for your physical and mental well-being and to protect others from becoming victims in the future.

PACKING

Luggage

Regulations for luggage size and what may be carried aboard a flight vary from year to year, and from airline to airline. Check out baggage requirements at the airline website to confirm **weight and size** restrictions. **Note that students are responsible for paying excess baggage fees.**

How Much Should I Pack? A simple answer is, "Bring enough for one week—it will last you for 4 months." There is limited dresser and closet space in many host-family homes; furthermore, many students prefer to buy clothing in Spain. Most students find they have brought far more than necessary.

To prepare for shopping, many students bring clothes that they would be willing to leave behind. Also, some students note that continued wear and tear on a limited set of clothes means that they don't wish to bring them home. Bring clothes that you are willing to leave behind.

Clothing

Spaniards generally dress better than most mid-westerners do. Don't dress sloppy. Think in terms of versatility: dressing in layers, a warm all-weather jacket with removable lining, preferably with a waterproof exterior, and **shoes for walking**. As you will be walking almost everywhere, it is very important to have more than one pair of shoes with good support. Winters are milder in Oviedo, but some of the places you travel can be cold and humid: bring a winter coat. Bring very minimal summer clothes, as the weather will be quite cool in fall. It is important to have a pair of slippers, as this is what the Spaniards wear around the house.

Personal belongings

You will be able to buy many items you need in Spain. Toiletries and such are easily purchased. However, such supplies can be somewhat more expensive in Spain.

Small musical instruments would be good to bring along, but airlines may not allow you to carry something as large as a guitar on board. Check with the airline in advance.

Gift for host family

As a guest in a Spanish home you should try to think of a small present, very North American, to bring along for your host family. Be aware, however, that many have hosted North American students in the past and already have picture books of practically everywhere, and many candles. It is a good idea to know what is common in Asturias/Spain to make sure you don't buy the family something that their region is already known for. Consumables (a small jar of jam from your home city) are nice.

Electrical appliances

The voltage in Spain is 220 and the size of plugs is different. Students who wish to bring their own appliances (hair dryer, curling iron, etc.), should look for dual voltage appliances, and bring along a plug adapter. You may also want to consider how often you will use the appliances as they take up space in your luggage.

Higher-end/more-sophisticated electrical devices will handle the different electrical system. **Lower-end electrical devices (hair dryer, curling iron, etc.) won't, and they will burn out fairly quickly.** You will probably be better off leaving the lower-end items at home and purchase them in Spain. Remember that you will need to be VERY careful with use of electricity in Spain as it is much more expensive.

Packing the essentials

- Passport on your person, plus a photocopy of the front page and visa page packed separately, plus an electronic copy on your computer.
- Copy of e-ticket(s) for flights
- Carry-on bag with *extra change of clothes and medications* (in case suitcase gets lost!)
- Small amount of U.S. cash or debit card for any airport purchases
- Bank ATM credit/debit card(s), with copy of numbers and contact info in separate place
- Insurance cards
- Winter coat**

- ❑ **Appropriate clothing for cool, wet weather and comfortable (waterproof) footwear**
- ❑ Under-clothing money belt or pouch
- ❑ Textbooks bought in the USA (as needed)
- ❑ Bible (or there are excellent versions on line)
- ❑ Extra set of glasses/contact lenses & contact lens solution, if you prefer a certain brand
- ❑ Plug adapter for any electrical appliance (laptop, smartphone, camera, etc.)
- ❑ Prescription medications in original containers (in carry-on bag), with backup prescription written in generic terms
- ❑ Backpack or smaller bag for school and travel
- ❑ Extra chargers for phone, laptop, etc.
- ❑ Good tennis or walking shoes!
- ❑ Gift for family

Optional

- ❑ Small first aid kit, including Tylenol or aspirin products (if you use them), flu/cold medicine, nasal decongestant for flight (if you have a cold), band aids, first aid cream (all available in Spain)
- ❑ “Thank you” card for end of program
- ❑ Hiking shoes
- ❑ Bathing suit (most families will loan towels/beach towels for excursions)
- ❑ Small travel pillow
- ❑ Padlocks for luggage or hostel lockers (though **don’t lock bags during flights**)
- ❑ Travel guides, international student ID card, Eurail pass (check to make sure Eurail pass is really worth it for your travels. Sometimes buying separate flights is a better deal)
- ❑ Swiss army knife/small scissors, **packed in checked luggage**; Travel size bathroom items; toothpaste, deodorant, etc

Don’t forget to review the airline requirements for checked luggage and hand baggage. Weigh your bags! Weigh them again! Remember that excess baggage fees are expensive!

POLICY REGARDING VISITORS TO OFF-CAMPUS PROGRAMS

You may be already thinking of sharing your experience abroad with North American friends and family by inviting them to visit you in Spain.

While we understand the desire of family and friends to visit students who are away from home and campus for a significant length of time, such visits can be disruptive if not done with sensitivity to other students and the program director. These policies and procedures are based on our experience with such situations.

The official policy of Calvin’s Off-Campus Programs Office about the role of visitors in our off-campus programs follows:

- Any visitor to a Calvin off-campus program must notify the program director at least 3 weeks in advance.
- Family and friends should plan their visit to coincide with vacation and/or other periods of free

time (a longer weekend, for example) for students.

- Family and friends are urged **not** to visit at times when group excursions are planned. Family and US friends may not join us on excursions.
- Students whose family or friends are visiting while classes are in session are **not** excused from classes (or program excursions) in order to be with visiting family or friends.
- Visitors may not stay in the host home.
- If you plan to have visitors, you/they should inform the Program Director prior to their arrival. If you will be traveling out of Oviedo or overnight with them, you will need to fill out this form: https://calvin.edu/offices-services/off-campus-programs/files/faculty-resources/INDEPENDENT_TRAVEL_FORM_2015.pdf

RECREATION & SPORTS

The city of Oviedo is proud of its many parks and green spaces (more than a million meters squared). There are running and biking trails in the city, as well as areas for basketball, tennis, ping pong, etc.

The Principality of Asturias is both mountainous and coastal and offers opportunities for hiking, skiing, swimming and many other outdoor activities. There are also many museums, cathedrals and historical gems close by that are worth a visit. See online sources (such as Trip Advisor), through which you can get up-to-the-minute advice on day and weekend trips in and around Oviedo. (Be sure to bear in mind what we are doing as a group so as not to duplicate accidentally!)

Students at the University of Oviedo can participate in over 300 classes, including fitness, sports education, outdoor activities, etc. They can also compete in intramural tournaments (indoor soccer, handball, beach volleyball, chess, skiing, etc.) and represent the university at the Spanish Championships. Federated sports have a long-standing tradition, with high ranking teams in track and field, soccer, basketball, and chess, among others.

There are groups for International Students at the University of Oviedo, but the main group is ERASMUS. You will most likely receive more information about various student organizations during a meeting for international students at the beginning of the semester.

The campus also features “talleres” and “clubes,” about which more information is available on campus, and GBU, an organization like Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. The contact person for GBU is Javier Santos (javiersantos@gbu-es.org).

Specific Activities:

- Surfing in Gijon: There is a place where you can receive 2 hour lessons, with the use of a board and wet-suit for very little money.
- Senda del Oso: a beautiful scenic path through the mountains. You can easily catch a bus to "Area Recreativa de Buyera" where you can rent bicycles for the rest of the day.

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Evangelical

Iglesia Evangélica de Oviedo

C/ Martínez Marina, 9, 33009 Oviedo

Escuela bíblica adultos y jóvenes. Domingo 18:00 h.

Culto General y Escuela Dominical niños. Domingo 19:00 h.

Pastor Luis Rubiales

This church is attended by many international students and there are a number of English speakers in the congregation. They have Sunday worship, weekly Bible Studies, and a Youth Group.

For more information: <https://www.iglesiaevangelicadeoviedo.es/>

Anglican

Parroquia de Santa Eulalia - La Corredoria - Oviedo

C/ Ciudades Unidas, 12-14, 33011 Oviedo,

Tfno.: 985 29 43 29 / 677 681 234

Rector: Rvdo. José A. Quesada Blanco

Lector: Henrique García-Facuriella

Worship service: Saturdays at 19:30, Sundays at 12:00

Vespers: Tuesdays and Thursdays at 19:30.

Misión de San Juan - Oviedo

C/ Fray Ceferino, 24-3º Esc. Izda. (Capilla)

33001 OVIEDO

The church is on the outskirts of Oviedo, but they also have a building in town, quite close to the center. The pastor is eager to welcome us and excited to have the opportunity to have the students become an active part of the church. The *Lector* is bilingual.

Assemblies of God

Iglesia Peniel de Oviedo

Calle Hermanas Sanchez Tamargo, 12

33012 Oviedo, Asturias, Spain

Pastor Gabriel Corradini 985 980 173 // 696121626

Sunday worship: 11:30 and 18:00

Thursdays: Fellowship and Bible study: 18:30

Fridays: 17:00 Prayer, 19:00 Evangelism, 20:30 Youth groups

Students are encouraged to invite Spanish family members to attend church activities with them but are also encouraged to explore their family's religious tradition and observe their religious activities (mass, baptism, first communion, etc). Of course, some of our host families are non-religious.

Students have also found it valuable to explore the Catholic options for worship that exist in Oviedo whether or not their families are church attenders. There are too many options to list them here; explore!

TRANSPORTATION

Buses

In general, students will be able to walk to class. However, there is an excellent city bus system in Oviedo: <http://www.tua.es/>. Students who live more than twenty minutes' walking distance from the campuses that they need to reach will be given a stipend by the program for academic travel.

Additionally, there are buses that run nationally and internationally from the central bus station, which is conveniently located next to the train station. The main national bus company is ALSA (www.alsa.es).

Taxis

Taxi fares in Spain are comparable to those in North America and their service is good. Service is metered and is not negotiable. A taxi driver is only allowed a maximum of four passengers at a time. There may be surcharges added to the fare for luggage, weekend travel, and travel after 10:00 p.m.

Trains

The main train station in central Oviedo accommodates both commuter trains (*cercanías*) and trains with national and international destinations. The high-speed rail lines have not yet reached Oviedo, although they are expected to do so within the next years. The national train company (RENFE) has an easy-to-use website for buying train tickets, however in order to make reservations using a Eurail pass, it is usually best to go in person to the train station.

Plane

The nearest airport is in Aviles, about 50 km from Oviedo. The airport can be reached by an ALSA bus from the city. The airport is served by Iberia, Spanair, Air Nostrum, Air Europa, Easyjet, and Vueling. Its identification code is OVD.

Santander airport is another common option for students traveling to other countries and is about a 2-hour drive from Oviedo.

TRAVELING IN SPAIN

For any overnight travel outside of Oviedo, **students MUST file a "travel form" with the program director**, including their travel destination and the anticipated date of return. Please do not omit to do this. In the (unlikely) event that something happens that you cannot communicate, we need this information. Travel form: https://calvin.edu/offices-services/off-campus-programs/files/faculty-resources/INDEPENDENT_TRAVEL_FORM_2015.pdf

In keeping with our academic and cultural goals of improving Spanish and learning about Spanish culture during the abroad experience, students are **strongly encouraged to stay in Spain, and even in Oviedo itself**, during the weekends. Students should think about balancing any travel on weekends with staying in Oviedo, since many family, sports, and church activities occur in Oviedo over the weekend. In no case will a student be excused from a class assignment, quiz, or test because of travel.

During holidays, students are encouraged to take a more in-depth look at Spain itself and discover the diversity of the art, architecture, language, people, scenery, wildlife, cuisine, sports, and more in each

one of its autonomous regions.

Students are expected to be present for the Calvin excursions. (Illness will require a letter or phone call from a head of household.)

Miscellaneous

University of Oviedo Student ID: You can get a Student ID for the University of Oviedo at Santander Bank (Oficina Banco Santander Universidades), which is located in Plaza del Frenso. All you need to do is take your passport and some sort of documentation from the university showing your enrollment as a student. This ID can help you to **receive student discounts for various activities**. If you receive one, please also bring it on group excursions, since sometimes it can contribute to discounts, or will be requested.