Instructors
- **What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?**
  - In general, the instructors were very approachable and more than willing to welcome international students to their classes. At the same time, however, this did not mean that they would make adjustments to their classes to make up for the language barrier.
  - Instructors often were more personal with the students as a result of the fact that classes were much smaller.
  - Instructors often taught without using over-heads or PowerPoint.

- **Could you call them by their first names?**
  - It depended on the teacher. In general I feel like most people simply said Profe or Profesor.

- **Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?**
  - Again, this varied depending on the teacher but in general I felt like the professors were much less formal than at UCSB.
  - Teachers were more than willing to meet outside of their office hours or get coffee if you wanted to talk with them.

- **Were they available for help during office hours?**
  - Most professors were available for their office hours.

Courses
- **Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?**
  - Classes were more difficult in terms in terms of the language. Gaining confidence to speak up in class, for me, took a while.
  - In terms of academic work, however, I found the classes easier. Most classes did not have nightly or even weekly homework or readings. Usually each class had one or two papers a semester and a final.

- **Was the grading system similar to UCSB?**
  - Unlike at UCSB where we use letter grades, at UAB a number scale was used. This meant students received anywhere from a 1-10 on their assignments with 3 and under being failing grades.

- **How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?**
  - Often only a final and one or two papers.
  - In general, no nightly or weekly readings.
  - Students were responsible for researching and reading materials for their papers on their own. There were no due dates for anything but the papers.

- **Did you have oral and/or written exams?**
  - Depending on the class, oral and written exams were both possible. Often when there was an oral exam, the written portion would be take home.

- **What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?**
- Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?
  o Yes. Life in general was more independent. We had to find housing on our own and learn our way around a foreign city.
  o Planning and making travel arrangements also took more initiative, as did putting yourself out there to make new friends.

- Was classroom participation expected?
  o In general, yes. Professors wanted to see that you were engaged and often like working debates into the different class sections.

- How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?
  o The courses were more Spain focused and tended to be more specific than those at UCSB. Students did not have as broad of requirements and thus were often more experienced and knowledgeable about their specific studies.

- Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?
  o Classes tended to be twice a week and for an hour and a half. Some classes had a third section for an hour once a week.

- What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?
  o Students were very respectful during class. It was important to be punctual and nobody ate during class. The only drink allowed in class was usually water. You were expected to be engaged and present during the lectures.

Language
- In which languages were the courses offered?
  o Spanish and Catalan

- What language did you take your courses in?
  o Spanish

- If you took your courses in a foreign language, please provide info about your overall experience, difficulty of courses, language acquisition, placement exams, etc.
  o I took all my classes in Spanish. The classes through the program with only UC students were much easier than the ones run through the actual school. I found a balance of two classes through EAP and two classes through the school was perfect. At first, it took a while to get used to hour and a half classes in Spanish as it was much easier to have my thoughts trail off during class but I quickly adjusted. Teachers were also very nice and often willing to explain things a second time if exchange students were having trouble following the lecture.
**Host University**

- How large is the university? Student enrollment and approx campus size (smaller than UCSB)? Is it an urban campus with many tall buildings or just a few building?
  - UAB was much smaller than Santa Barbara both in terms of student enrollment and campus size. The school was located thirty minutes outside Barcelona and surrounded by trees. The campus had multiple large buildings and libraries. In many regards, it resembled a huge American high school more than an American university.

- Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?
  - Students have the choice of living close to campus in student housing or apartments. They can also live in the actual city of Barcelona in apartments.

- If not located in the city center,
  - How far or close is it to the city?
    - The school is about a 30-minute train ride outside Barcelona.
  
  - What type of public transportation could you take – cost?
    - The train is the main form of public transportation to the campus. You need a 2 zone pass which runs at about 15 euros for 10 trips.

  - Could students take cabs -cost?
    - I would not recommend taking a cab to school seeing as it would be extremely expensive for a 30-minute cab ride.

  - How long would it take to get to the city center?
    - 30-minutes by train.

- Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?
  - There are clubs on campus like those here at UC though not as many or as frequently advertised.

- Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?
  - There is a bookstore on campus. I bought books from Amazon when needed though in general, I just used the campus library. Most classes did not require textbooks, only books for writing research papers.

- Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?
  - There are multiple computer labs on campus so a laptop is not needed. If a student wanted to bring theirs, however, there were also outlets in the libraries.

- What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafes, stores, etc)
  - Around campus there is mostly just housing but the small town of San Cugat (which is only 10 minutes away) has cafes and shops of all kinds.

**Housing**

- What types of accommodations are available to UC students?
  - UC students have the option of living with a host family, in apartments, or campus housing near the university. In general, people in the program chose to live in apartments in Barcelona rather than by the university.
- **How close are they to campus?**
  - Depending on where you chose to live, housing was as close as 10 minutes away or up to 40 minutes.

- **How did you find your housing?**
  - Most people found housing independently through the Spanish version of Craig’s List called loquo. ([www.loquo.com](http://www.loquo.com))

- **Where did you live and with whom?**
  - I lived in the neighborhood of Barcelona called Gracia with three Spanish women from San Sebastian. They were all around 27 years old.

- **If you lived off campus, was it difficult to find an apartment and roommate?**
  - The process was stressful and for many of us it meant moving at least once but in the long run not too difficult.

- **Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?**
  - The rooms were, in general, nicer than in I.V. and most people had their own rooms since doubles are uncommon in Barcelona. The rooms also came furnished.

- **Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?**
  - The rooms were less expensive in Barcelona. I paid about 500 dollars for my single with bills included.

- **How/who did you pay for housing?**
  - I paid in cash to one of my roommates.

**Food**

- **What was the food like?**
  - In general, the food was heavy with lots of ham and cheese. Meat was central to most dishes. Since Barcelona is a very international city, it was easy to find different types of restaurants. You could find Japanese to American to Argentinean restaurants. Doner kebabs were also very popular with restaurants on practically every corner. Fish was also amazing and paella was common.

- **Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?**
  - I ate most of my meals at home because it was cheaper. When on campus, I went to the school cafeteria. If I felt like going out to eat, there were plenty of restaurants in my neighborhood.

- **How much was an average meal?**
  - Meals were, on average, 10 euros with doner kebabs and the school cafeteria ranging from 5-8 euros.

- **What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?**
  - People ate lunch around 2 and dinner around 10.

- **Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?**
  - When going out to eat, vegetarians would have a harder time finding meals. It was easy, however, to find natural food stores that sold lots of vegetarian foods.
**Travel/Safety**

- If not discussed above, describe the public transportation system around your host university/city?
  
  o There is a train that runs outside of Barcelona to the university and other towns. Within Barcelona there is a great underground metro system and bus system. It is fairly easy to get anywhere in the city. What is more, it is possible to walk almost everywhere because the city is rather small. It probably takes about 45 minutes to walk across town.

- Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?
  
  o I felt extremely safe in Barcelona. To make sure you don’t walk alone at night, I would recommend taking cabs or going in groups. Also it is a good idea to learn about the late night bus system and memorize different routes home.

- Describe the public transportation in your host country?
  
  o There are renfe trains that run all over the country and into others as well. There are also buses, like the Greyhound in the US, that take you around Spain.

- Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?
  
  o Cheap airlines like Vueling, Ryanair, and Clickair all made it easy.

**Host City/Country**

- What was the weather like?
  
  o Barcelona was hot in the summer and then fairly rainy and chilly the rest of the year. It never got too cold.

- Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?
  
  o Barcelona is a very diverse, vibrant, and international city with a rather young, political vibe to it. The architecture is amazing with Gaudi structures all over the city. I would say that Barcelona is similar to San Francisco in the sense that it is relatively small but with a very liberal and open population. The weather during the winter was similar to that of San Francisco but a bit colder. There are also massive amounts of tourists year round like in SF.

- What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?
  
  o Simply walking around every neighborhood and finding your favorite restaurants and cafes was fun and exciting. There are also great festivals all year, like La Merce in September. Museums and great architecture line the city. Going out to tapas and later dancing was always a good time.

- How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?
  
  o Barcelona is an extremely international city in terms of tourism and, cultural diversity, and international business. Year-round the streets are packed with tourists. At times this made practicing Spanish difficult as people would constantly take me for a tourist and want to speak to me in English. Due to this international influence, there is a lot of cultural diversity in the city. Practically any kind of ethnic food restaurants can be found along with music performances. The fact that Barcelona has a strong Catalan culture makes it even more culturally diverse as people celebrate Catalan festivals along
with nationally big holidays. International business thrives in the city as it is a hub of commerce and communication. One direct experience I had with this was my internship at the NGO Intervida, which works all over the globe. The staff itself was very international.

**Culture**

- **Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.**
  - **Time & punctuality**
    - Besides from formal settings like work or class, people tended to have a more flexible idea of time and punctuality than in the US. I constantly thought I was running late and would always still be surprised to find that I would be the first one to arrive even when I was 45 minutes late.

  - **Eye contact & staring**
    - I felt that eye contact was stressed more in the Spanish culture. When you make toasts, for example, you must look at people directly in the eye or it is considered a bad toast.

  - **Relationships**
    - In general, I felt that people were much more warm towards their friends than in the US. For example, two kisses are used for greetings. I also found that people talked much closer to your face. Public displays of affection were also much more common; people were not afraid to touch in public.

  - **More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?**
    - People tended to wear more fashionable clothes in general. For example, people would not go to class in sweat pants like at UCSB. Flip flops were also only worn during summer months and they were often fancier pairs.

  - **Alcohol consumption**
    - Alcohol consumption is common, especially having a drink at the local bar and ordering wine or beer with dinner. At the same time, however, the concept of binge drinking does not exist since people eat later, go out later, and stay out longer. Since bars do not close till 3 or 4 and clubs not till 7, people know how to pace themselves better.

  - **What culture shock did you go through?**
    - I actually had a rather smooth transition. The main thing was just being homesick and sometimes feeling like I was not getting a handle on the Spanish language like I wanted. This was at times both frustrating and tiring.

  - **Other?**
    - 

**Banking**

- **Were credit cards widely accepted?**
  - I did not have one but I believe that they were.

- **Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?**
  - I did not open a local bank account.
- If you did not open a local bank account, was it easy to withdraw money from the ATM? Which banks were popular & had low ATM fees?
  o I used my Citibank account. There were Citibank ATMs stationed around the city but you still had to pay the conversion fee every time you used one. The upside to using a Citibank ATM was that I didn’t have to pay a fee for using the ATM. The most popular Spanish banks were La Caixa and BBVA. In general, BBVA had lower fees.

- Were there ATMs on campus?
  o There were ATMs for La Caixa on campus.