

SPAIN

Higher Education

Spanish students follow a prescribed plan of study for each degree, called a plan de estudios. Students will begin taking coursework specific to their degree in their first year of study and are usually not permitted to take courses outside of their degree. Spanish students do not enroll in general education courses. "Minors" do not exist in Spain, but many students will take courses in a specific concentration of their degree. To avoid scheduling issues, ISEP strongly recommends that students take courses in one *carrera* or degree if at all possible. Spanish students in the same year of the same degree will likely take the majority of their classes together, similar to a cohort, and their classes will normally be located close together.

After four years of study students earn a *grado* equivalent to a bachelor's degree. Technical undergraduate degrees such as engineering and architecture are also awarded at this level. Graduate programs are designated as *maestria* (masters) or *doctorado* (doctorate).

As a part of the new grado degrees, many courses have tutorials, lab sessions, or *practicas* as a part of the class. Class attendance is important, as materials covered in class make up a large portion of the exam. Attendance may be taken regularly, but if it is not students should resist the urge to skip classes, as exams will be difficult without regular class attendance.

Academic Calendar

The academic year is divided into two semesters (*cuatrimestres*) that run from September to February and February to June. Courses may be taught on either a semester or year-long basis.

Universidad de Murcia's Language & Culture program follows the U.S. academic calendar, with semesters from September to December and January to May.

Course Load

Spanish students attending university full-time take 30 ECTS per semester. ISEP students may not be expected to take as many credits, but it is recommended they maintain enrollment in at least 24 ECTS per semester. A student's course load depends on their home institution's policies for their outbound students. The number of classes per semester will vary depending on the number of credits granted per course. Depending on the degree field students may take fewer courses that grant a high number of ECTS, or several courses that carry fewer ECTS per course. An average of 15 to 25 hours per week is spent in lectures.

Grading

<u>Spanish Grade</u>	<u>U.S. Equivalent</u>
10 (Matrícula de Honor)	A+
9-9.9 (sobresaliente)	A
7-8.9 (notable)	B+
5-6.9 (aprobado)	B-/C/D
0-4.6 (suspenso)	F
No Presentado	Dropped course or did not take the final exam
Apto	Pass (in a pass/fail system)

Matrícula de Honor is the highest grade awarded in the Spanish system and is generally given to the student with the highest score in a course, or 1 out of 20 students in a larger class. A score of 9 or 10 is considered excellent, 7 or 8 is very good, and 6 is average. Aprobado is the minimum passing grade in the Spanish system. Students generally receive a grade between 6 and 8. Spanish professors are tough in their grading in comparison to the U.S., and there is no grading curve. In technical fields such as architecture it is not uncommon for over 50% of students in a class to fail.

Re-take exam periods in July and September are available for students who fail their exams the first time. ISEP benefits do not cover these re-take periods, and it is not guaranteed that re-take exams can be completed remotely.

Credits

Spain operates on the ECTS credit system (see page 4). ECTS credits take into account the total student workload per class or degree program.

ISEP students enrolled in Language and Culture programs are generally awarded university credit as opposed to ECTS. This is because a full-time student at the university would not be allowed to apply the credit earned for these courses towards their undergraduate degree (the European requirement to grant official ECTS). Students' transcripts may note the number of hours per course for the semester instead of the number of credits. Many U.S. universities divide the number of hours of instruction per course by the length of the program to arrive at the number of credit hours granted, although this is at the discretion of each home institution.