

Slide 1: Hi, and Thanks for joining us to learn more about DU partner programs in Spanish-speaking countries!

Slide 2: If you're considering studying abroad in a Spanish-speaking country, this video will cover a lot of the basic information you need to know, as well as answers to some of the most frequently-asked questions that we get from DU students. After watching this, please come in to chat with an OIE advisor so we can talk about YOU, your goals, and finding the program that fits you best.

Slide 3: Let's start by defining language levels and program requirements. You will see on DU Passport most programs in the Spanish-speaking world have a language pre-requisite that must be met before you go abroad. Here's how you break that down: You should count each quarter of Spanish at DU that you either took at DU, transferred in, or that you tested out of.

Slide 4: So if you tested out of the first year of Spanish, and then you take SPAN2001, then you have 4 quarters of Spanish. You should count all quarters that you will have taken before your term abroad, even if you haven't taken those courses by the time you apply. Please also be aware that some programs require RECENT Spanish study, so they might not accept you if you haven't taken any Spanish in the last year or so.

Slide 5: For students at beginning and intermediate level Spanish, you may find that your course options are limited to Spanish-language classes and then some other limited coursework in English. For more advanced-level students, you may have more course options that are available to you in Spanish. And for students who qualify to take classes with local students, you could have hundreds of classes to choose from.

Slide 6: It is important to keep in mind that you will most likely register for your courses once you arrive on site. In fact, some programs will not have course lists finalized until you are on site. For this reason, it is important to have at least a few back-up courses in mind, just in the case any of your original course choices are not available.

Slide 7: Be sure that the programs that you're considering offer coursework that will keep you on track for graduation, AND that you understand any pre-requisite requirements for the classes you're considering.

Slide 8: If you plan to take coursework for a Spanish major or minor, we recommend talking to the Spanish Department to ensure the courses you choose are the best fit for your level of Spanish proficiency, and will transfer back as the credit you need to stay on track. This is especially important for students planning to take coursework with local students.

Slide 9: Most of our programs are traditional study abroad programs where you attend classes on a foreign campus, however we also have a few programs in Latin America that are focused on experiential learning. These programs may have a specialized academic focus, and they may incorporate field work, research, or project-based learning.

Slide 10: You also might consider doing an internship, service-learning opportunity, or volunteering abroad. This is something you can search for in DU passport, and definitely bring it up with your OIE advisor if you're interested. We often hear that finding an individual way to engage with the local community ends up being one of the most impactful parts of a study abroad experience.

Slide 11: Also carefully consider how much you want to focus on learning Spanish during your study abroad term. Language learning is challenging and exhausting; but also incredibly gratifying and it opens up a whole new world perspective. If you're not really sure you want to face a language barrier all-day, every-day; then you might want look at other destinations.

Slide 12: If you really do want to focus on learning Spanish, then pay attention to the program's immersion and support level. Find out if the program structure offers you opportunities to interact with locals – in the classroom, in the home, in student clubs. On some programs, it can be more of a challenge to get out of the American bubble.

Slide 13: But perhaps the most decisive factor to how much immersion you'll experience on your study abroad program is fully in YOUR hands: how you choose to spend your free time, and who you choose to spend that time with. And what language you choose to speak. You will make decisions on a daily basis that will affect your immersion level.

Slide 14: Also try to have realistic expectations for how much your Spanish will improve. You might know someone who has been learning and speaking English for many years, and they still don't speak perfectly. While everyone defines "fluency" differently, it might not be realistic to expect to become fluent in just 3 or 4 months.

Slide 15: Students who take classes with local Spanish-speaking students may face a larger academic cultural adjustment (in the way the professors teach & grade, for example), you may deal with more ambiguity and have a hard time getting straight answers to your questions to the university... but you will also benefit by overcoming these challenges and learning what you're truly capable of.

Slide 16: As you start to research and narrow down the programs you're interested in, be sure to pay attention to details of the program on its own website. One example of an important detail for you could be the program dates. Some programs in the southern hemisphere start in July and end in November. Northern hemisphere programs usually start in August or September, and end in late December.

Slide 17: OK, let's talk about housing options. Generally, you're going to see one or more of the following housing options: Host family (also called homestays), residencia or pension, and apartments. Homestays are usually the most popular option with DU students.

Slide 18: Many students say that the homestay family was one of the best ways to improve Spanish skills and understand the local culture. Some students worry that they'll feel like they're moving back in with their parents, but remember these families are used to hosting foreign students and know that you're there for a short period of time. Let us know if you have questions about homestays.

Slide 19: All of the programs that offer apartments will place you in an apartment with other Americans on your study abroad program. This is by far the least-immersive option, and many students have told us that they missed out on practicing Spanish and learning more about the culture if they lived in an apartment. Most apartment options require a refundable security deposit that you would be responsible for.

Slide 20: And lastly, some programs offer a residencia or pensión. “Residencia” is a word that is used to describe a large variety of housing and really the only thing they have in common is that young people live there. It could be an apartment, boarding house, or more like a dorm. You could have a cafeteria with a meal plan, or access to a kitchen to cook your own food.

Slide 21: You could be living with local students, or other foreign students. If you are considering a residencia or pension, we encourage you to reach out to the program directly to get more details. Be aware that there may be additional housing fees for residencias or pensiones that would be your responsibility.

Slide 22: Lastly, we want you to be aware that you may have to complete an immigration process in order to legally reside and study in a Spanish-speaking country. You might have to get what’s called a student visa or residence permit. The OIE can offer some guidance in the visa process, but it should be noted that obtaining a student visa is ultimately the student’s responsibility.

Slide 23: We want to bring up two countries in particular because the visa process may involve extra expense and travel: those are Spain and Chile.

Slide 24: Both of these countries require U.S. citizens to apply for a visa prior to departure, and they require that you apply in person at a local consulate. For Colorado residents, both of these countries’ closest consulate is in Los Angeles. So you may have to travel to Los Angeles to drop off your visa application, and may potentially need to return to Los Angeles to pick it up. Chat with your OIE advisor for more info.

Slide 25: Now that you’ve got this info under your belt, please be sure that you attend a First Step Session and that you come in a meet with an OIE advisor. You may attend a drop-in advising session (find the schedule here), or schedule an individual appointment (which you can do here).

Slide 26: You’ve got lots of research to do in DU Passport and on each program’s own website. Narrow down your best-fit programs, and complete your application by the deadline! Be sure to come in to the OIE to talk with an advisor as soon as possible about what you’re looking for in a program – we’re here to help you throughout this process! Hasta pronto!