

## Polytechnic University student about studying at the University of Cadiz during the pandemic

In spring, Arina VESELOVA, a student of the St. Petersburg Institute of Humanities, went on an internship at the University of Cadiz (Spain) [within the frame of the Erasmus+ program](#). Like some other Polytechnic University students, Arina happened to be in another country during the coronavirus pandemic. Read about how her studies at the Spanish university changed, about the specifics of her education there and more in our interview.



**- Arina, it's good to hear you! Tell us why your choice was Spain was the choice...?**

- I study translation and translation studies, so for me the opportunity to go to the country of one of the languages I study, to get to know its life and culture and to communicate with native speakers was particularly valuable. The Erasmus+ program has combined all this. So when I was offered an internship at Cadiz University, I immediately agreed.

**- Was it easy to prepare for the trip?**

- Of course, the desire to go to study abroad and suitcases ready to go are far from all. The participant of Erasmus+ program will have to communicate with representatives of international departments of both universities, prepare various documents, collect signatures and so on. If you are not afraid to ask questions and follow all the instructions, you are almost guaranteed to do everything in time.

**- And here you are in Spain. How did you get to Cadiz? What were your first impressions?**

- Armed with all the necessary documents and having tried all different modes of transport in Spain, I finally got to Cadiz. Apart from palms, parrots and the Atlantic Ocean, you first of all pay attention to people. The Spaniards are very open, friendly, always ready to help, and if you say a few words in their language, they will treat you like a best friend. Surrounded by such people, even difficulties with transport or orientation in a new city are not so frightening. Although I would certainly recommend to arrive before the school starts to get used to the city and look around.



**- Do you remember how the school started? What are the differences between Russian and Spanish education?**

- After a few days of adaptation and rest, study began. The first two weeks were chaos and muddle. I wanted to try all the subjects; due to that it was difficult to

make a schedule, and it was not easy to find an audience and navigate the university campus. But everything was smoothed out by excellent teachers and coordinators, who were always ready to help understand the tricks of an unfamiliar system of education. From the first academic day you notice the difference between teaching in Russia and Spain. A lot of material is devoted to independent study, and the learning process is built around a dialogue between students and teachers, who encourage students to express their thoughts and ideas boldly.

**- But generally speaking, was it easy to study in another country?**

- A can't say it was easy. A huge percentage of the educational process in Spain consists of research, reading and commenting on authentic materials (from Greek historians and medieval documents to French postmodern philosophers), analysis of films, books, advertisements, historical maps, in general, everything where thought can set sail freely.

**- What do you think are the benefits of an exchange student internship?**

- It might seem that an internship abroad is just an endless digging through books and trying to get used to studying at a new university without forgetting your own. But it is far from that! Such trips are also a great opportunity for travel. In a month and a half of free movement around the country, I visited Madrid and several cities in Andalusia. Madrid is a classic European marble and tiled capital, with its cathedral and town hall, certainly beautiful and charming, but more cosmopolitan than Spanish. The real heart of the country lies in Andalusia, the cradle of Spanish culture. Here the architecture is intertwined with religions, nations, victories and defeats, all against the backdrop of harsh mountain scenery. Unfortunately, I didn't have a chance to visit all the sights in the region, but there's a reason to come back here.





**- You were in Spain when the coronavirus pandemic began. Has the education process changed much? How did the city respond to the situation?**

- From March 16, quarantine was introduced in the country: schools and universities, cafes and restaurants, non-food shops were closed and transport was suspended. This situation lasted for almost 2 months, and then it was allowed to walk on schedule. Now the country is gradually returning to normal life. How did it affect the life of the university? Frankly speaking, almost nothing changed. Through the campus virtual, local electronic educational platform, teachers actively sent tasks, shared materials and kept in touch even before quarantine, so the learning process was not that affected. Although, of course, I lacked personal contact with faculty and students, as any other communications at this difficult for everyone time.

**- And by tradition: what will you advise students who, when the pandemic is over and the borders open, decide to go abroad to study?**

- First of all, look for all possible internship options and learn well to pass the selection. Since I am now in my 3rd year, I managed to get into the "last car" of that sort of a trip, and the only thing I regret is that I did not try to do that earlier. Secondly, listen carefully to the coordinators and accurately fill in the documents. Believe me, you won't want any unnecessary paperwork when your home is 5

minutes away from Atlantic beaches. And thirdly, fit in with everything you can: student organizations and their events, trips to other cities and countries, just walks or seeing sunrises and sunsets with new friends - all these are priceless impressions and experiences for which you should get up early or go to bed late. And ¡saludo fervoroso de España: I sen you a passionate welcome from Spain!

**- Arina, thank you for the interesting interview! Good luck and success to you!**

Prepared by the SPbPU International Office

Дата публикации: 2020.07.06

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