

**INTERNATIONAL
STUDENT'S
SURVIVAL GUIDE**

2015/2016



**UNIVERSITAT
ROVIRA I VIRGILI**

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Congratulations!

You are about to
have one of the most
awesome experiences
of your life!

JOIN US AND FIND FRIENDS AT:



International Center—UVR



@icenterURV

I. GETTING STARTED AT THE URV



Certificate of stay

This certificate shows the date when you have arrived at the URV (the beginning of your mobility period).

DELIVER IT TO THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER:

It will be signed and stamped, and sent back to your home university by email. The International Center will keep the original document until your departure.

Remember to pick up the original document 2-3 days before your departure! You need to present it at your home university in order to complete your mobility period.

Learning agreement

This regulates:

- ◆ The conditions of the parties involved in the period of stay,
- ◆ The subjects studied during the mobility period
- ◆ The number of ECTS credits
- ◆ Academic recognition
- ◆ Possible modifications

The learning agreement must be signed by all parties in order to complete your registration at URV.

How do I plan my studies and fill in my learning agreement?

Each faculty at the URV has a *guía docent* (*teaching guide*) which includes information on the courses available. When planning your studies, **first consult your faculty's *guía docent*** and choose the courses you would like to take.

After seeing the *guía docent* you must visit your mobility coordinator at the URV in order to ensure the recognition of your studies. He/she will sign your learning agreement. You will get his/her contact details in the welcome meeting.

Once your academic coordinator has signed your learning agreement, visit the International Center to complete your registration. The International Center will also sign your learning agreement.

If you have to modify your learning agreement later after, once it has been signed by all parties, you can use the section *During the mobility (Changes to the learning agreement)*. This document is available online.

What must I do when I arrive?

1. Sign up for a Welcome meeting
2. Hand in the Certificate of stay complete with your data
3. Meet your mobility coordinator

IT SERVICES AND THE URV STUDENT CARD



Username and password

You can find your username and password in the document given to you in the **welcome meeting**. These credentials will give you access to the URV's online services, such as your URV email account, Moodle and WIFI.

- ◆ **Username:** the number of the ID document which you gave us in the registration form.
- ◆ **Password:** your date of birth: DD-MMM-YY
DD: day of birth
MMM: first three letters of the month of birth in Catalan
YY: year of birth

Example: If your date of birth is the 3rd of January 1990, your password is 03-GEN-90



Moodle

Moodle is the URV's virtual campus which enables professors and students to communicate online. It allows you to download content for the URV subjects that you are registered for, upload activities and assignments, and communicate with students and professors etc.

You can enter Moodle 24 hours a day through any internet connection. You can login with your username and password.



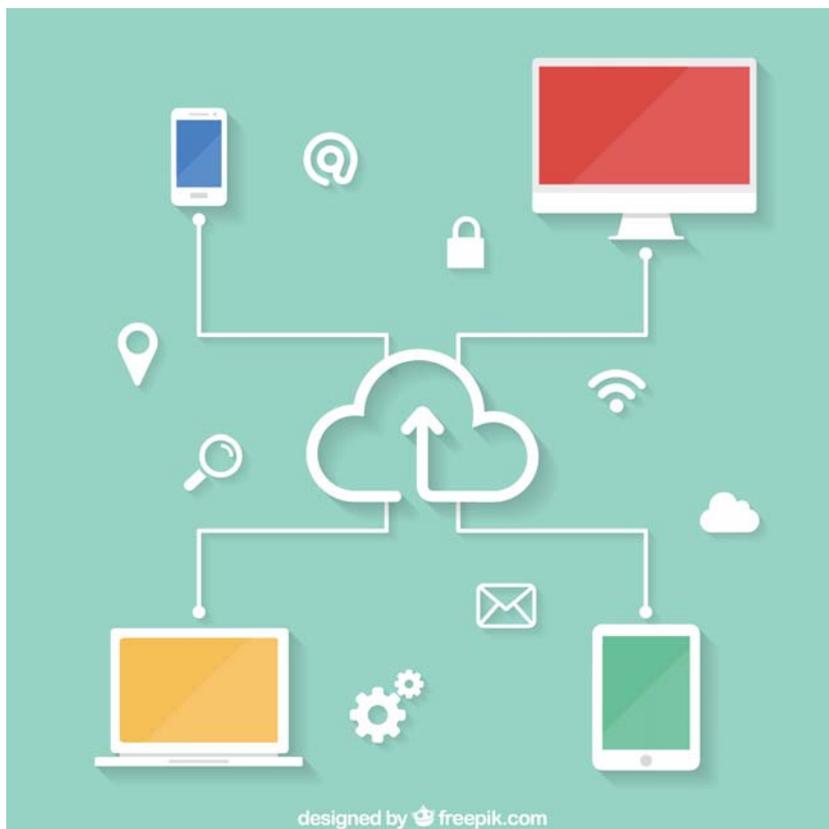
There is a free WIFI named **Eduroam** on all the URV's campuses. Log in with your username and password.

@ URV email account

You will have a personal email account at URV. Please note that all information regarding the courses, activities etc. will be sent to your URV email account, so remember to check it frequently!

URV Student card

The URV student card gives you access to the services provide by the URV's libraries and CRAIs and can also be used as a bank card, although you must specifically request this. It will be given to you during the welcome meeting.



II. STUDIES

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

1st semester: 7 September 2015 -
29 January 2016

2nd semester: 1 February 2016 -
24 June 2016

No teaching on:

- ◆ Christmas (21 December
2015 - 6 January 2016)
- ◆ Easter (21 - 28 March 2016)
- ◆ Public holidays



Classes at the URV take place between 8AM and 9PM. Lunch break is between 1PM and 3PM.

**Quart d'hora academic* (academic quarter of an hour) means that lectures don't generally start on time, but between 5-15 minutes late enabling people to get from one place to another.

ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPT

This document shows the courses you have taken at the URV as well as the grades and ECTS credits that you have obtained. Remember to pick up your transcript from your mobility coordinator before going home. Failing this the transcript will be sent directly to your home university.

MODIFICATION OF PERIOD OF STAY

If you wish to extend or shorten your stay at the URV, you need to get authorization from the coordinators both at your home university and at the URV. Once you have this, please contact the International Center.

III. SERVICES



LANGUAGE SERVICE

The URV's language service (*Servei Lingüístic*) is located at the Campus Catalunya, and it's available to all students of the URV.



Opening hours

Monday to Friday: 10AM-1PM (also Tuesdays afternoon between 4.30PM-6PM).

International students can attend the Catalan courses free of charge and can attend the Spanish courses at a specially reduced price.

The language service offers language courses also in English, Italian, French and Chinese. The registration fees for these courses are the same for local and international students.

Avinguda de Catalunya, 35 · 43002 Tarragona
llengues@urv.cat · Tel. 977 558 359
http://www.llengues.urv.cat/mobilitat/en_index/

*Free online courses in Catalan: <http://www.intercat.cat>



*How can I register for
the language courses?*

You have to register online for most of the courses provided by *Servei Lingüístic*, but you have to register in person for the beginners Catalan courses and Spanish courses.

More information on registration:

http://www.llengues.urv.cat/cursos/en_informacio-matricula/

Can I get ECTS credits by attending a language course?

It depends on the course and your home university. You don't automatically get credits for the language courses. This is why **the language courses will not form part of your learning agreement**. After successfully completing a language course, you will get a certificate. You must present it at your home university and ask for the recognition of the course to be recognised.

LIBRARIES AND CRAI

The CRAI (*Centre de Recursos per a l'Aprenentatge i la Investigació— Learning and Research Resources Center*) provides all the university services that support learning, teaching and research. The CRAI offers library loans, electronic publications, photocopiers, and lots of other useful services.

You need your student card in order to access the CRAI and use its services. If your URV student card is not ready yet you can enter the CRAI by showing your acceptance letter. However, you will still need the student card in order to borrow books etc.



STUDENT SERVICES CENTER (CAE)

The CAE (*Centre d'Atenció a l'Estudiant*) provides students with information and services in various areas of the university life, such as sports, careers guidance, and psychological support. The CAE is situated on Campus The Catalunya and most of its information is available online as well: http://www.urv.cat/cae/en_index.html

Sports

EsportsURV aims to promote students' physical activity and wellbeing. By paying the member fee you have access to various courses from jogging to scuba diving, outdoor activities like kayaking or mountain biking, and discounts at gyms with which the URV has an agreement.



You can fill in the membership application online. Once you have paid the member fee and obtained your EsportsURV card, you can start enjoying the benefits!

Other activities

There are plenty of activities to choose from at the URV, such as theatre and arts groups, the university choir, hiking or voluntary activities. More information is available online: http://www.urv.cat/international/vivir-urv/en_ocio-deportes.html

UNIVERSITY RESTAURANTS

Each campus has a cafeteria which offers a warm meal on weekdays between 1PM - 3PM. The price of the meal is between €4.50-€7.80.

URV SHOP

Would you like some URV souvenirs? Go to www.botigaurv.cat and choose yours! You can buy online, at the International Center or at the CRAI.

IV. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND STUDENT CLUBS

ISIC STUDENT CARD

International Student Identity Card (ISIC) is the only internationally accepted proof of student status. It also gives you access to thousands of Student benefits and discounts all over the world. You can apply for your ISIC card online:



<http://www.urv.cat/mobility/isic>

LIVING AT THE URV

URV mentors are local students at the URV who volunteered to help new incoming students integrate into university life, give advice on administrative procedures, and give tips on leisure activities, among other things.

Would you like to
have a **MENTOR**?

Ask at the **International Center** and they will find
one for you.

Mentors are here for you, so don't hesitate to ask them anything that you might think of!



Estudiants URV is a Facebook group providing URV students with information on events and activities. Join the group and stay up to date!

AEGEE Tarragona

AEGEE is one of the biggest interdisciplinary student organizations in Europe. You can contact them by email: aegee.tarragona@urv.cat

For more information, go to AEGEE: <http://www.aegee-tarragona.org/>



There are lots of different student clubs at the URV!

Check all the clubs online:

<http://www.urv.cat/consellestudiants/Associacions.html>

V. HEALTH CARE

EUROPEAN HEALTH INSURANCE CARD



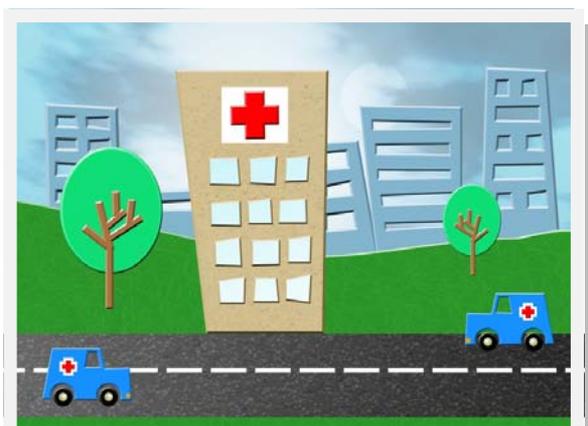
Students from other EU countries should obtain their European Health Insurance Card from their home country before coming to the URV. The EHIC gives you access to public health services in all EU countries and Switzerland, Norway, Lichtenstein, and Iceland. Make sure your EHIC will be valid for your entire mobility period!



MEDICAL SERVICES IN TARRAGONA

Primary Attention Centres (CAP) offer medical services during fixed opening hours (some also offer a 24-hour service). If you need to see a doctor for a non-urgent matter, contact the CAP closest to you.

In case of emergency, go to the hospital!



Remember! When using the medical services, you must have your EHIC and your URV acceptance letter with you. If you are from outside the EU, you must show your URV acceptance letter and your private health insurance document.

*Can I get private insurance
at the URV?*

The URV can provide you with insurance that will cover your entire stay at the URV. For more information, please contact the **International Center**.



VI. MOVING TO SPAIN

REGISTRATION OF STAY AND NIE

The procedure for registering in Spain depends on the length of your stay and whether you are a citizen of another EU country.

You need to register and obtain the NIE (foreign resident's ID card) if you are:

- # an International student from the EU staying more than 3 months
- # a Non-EU student staying less than 180 days
- # a Non-EU student staying more than 180 days

In all these cases the **International Center** will help you with the procedure that you have to follow.



VII. ACCOMMODATION

We recommend that you start searching for accommodation before your arrival. If you prefer to wait until you arrive to see the accommodation available, we recommend you to book a room in hotel/hostel/residence for the first nights.

How can I find accommodation?

The student services centre (CAE) is at your service in order to help you find suitable accommodation. You can use the password **BHURV** to enter its database of available apartments/rooms.

For more information:

http://www.urv.cat/serveis_universitaris/borsa_habitatge/en_index.html

Sant Jordi Residence

This student residence is located in Tarragona city center, between Campus Catalunya and Campus Sescelades. It's open all year round except during the URV vacation periods (Christmas and Easter).

For more information: <http://www.resa.es/eng/Residences/Sant-Jordi>

Private accommodation

You can find accommodation on several websites. We recommend that you check any accommodation in person before signing an agreement or making any payment. Make sure you understand the terms and conditions of the agreement in order to avoid any problems. Remember to ask if electricity, water and Internet are included in the rent. If you have problems with the language, for example, you can ask your URV mentor for help.

Here are some websites where you can search for shared flats:

<http://www.pisocompartido.com>

<http://www.easypiso.com>

VIII. DAILY LIFE

BANKS AND CURRENCY

The currency in Spain is the euro (€).

Banks are open on weekdays between 8.30AM and 2PM. Some of them may also open once a week in the afternoon or on Saturday mornings.

If you wish to open a bank account, you need the NIE (see part VI).

You can get cash with your credit or debit card from ATMs around the city. Remember that banks usually charge a commission for the international banking services.

COST OF LIVING

Whether food, clothes, accommodation and other things are cheap or expensive depends on what you are used to. A lunch menu in a restaurant costs €8-12, in the evenings and on weekends the prices are usually higher. Coffee in a cafeteria is around €1.2.

A student needs approximately €550/month for accommodation and other living expenses.

LOCAL BUSES



EMT is the public transport company in Tarragona.

A single ticket costs €1.45. If you need to use the buses daily, you can buy a rechargeable bus card. There are several tickets to choose from, for example 50 journeys in 45 days. There's also a ticket for under 25-year-olds. For more infor-

mation on the bus routes, timetables, tickets and fares go to: <http://emtanemambtu.cat/>

SHOPPING AND SIGHTSEEING

Shops and supermarkets are usually open from Monday to Saturday. On Sundays and on holidays they tend to be closed. In the Parc Central shopping centre you can find many shops selling clothing, shoes, jewellery, as well as restaurants, a cinema and a supermarket. The department store El Corte Inglés is located close to Plaça Imperial Tarraco.

In the old town you find small shops that sell souvenirs, handicrafts, traditional Catalan produce and wine, among other things. The old town is also home to many restaurants and bars.

The old town is worth seeing for its historical monuments. Tarragona has several ancient remains from the Roman era, which have been designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. An important part of the local culture are the *castells* (human towers). You can watch groups of people practicing every week and there is a competition in October.

TRAVELLING TO/FROM TARRAGONA



BY PLANE: Located in the north-east of Spain, Tarragona is well communicated with Europe and the rest of Spain. There are two airports close by: one in Reus, 7 km away, and another in Barcelona, 82 km from Tarragona. Some airlines also fly to Girona, which is 103 km away from Barcelona.



BY TRAIN: Tarragona is linked by rail to the main Spanish cities. You can get to Barcelona in less than an hour and to Madrid in less than three hours.

Note that Tarragona has two railway stations: Tarragona (in the city) and Camp de Tarragona (25 minutes by bus from the city centre).

More information: <http://www.renfe.com/>



BY BUS: Tarragona bus station is located in the Plaça Imperial Tarraco. There are direct buses to Barcelona airport, for example.



BY CAR: Located on the junction of the two of the most important motorways in Spain, Tarragona is also easily reachable by car.

IX. BEFORE GOING HOME



DOCUMENTS AND CERTIFICATES

Remember to collect your Certificate of Attendance from the International Center before you leave. You need to present it at your home university in order to complete your mobility period.

Visit your mobility coordinator to get your transcript. Otherwise it will be sent directly to your home university.

If you need other certificates or documents, remember to ask for them well in advance so that they can be prepared before your departure.



ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER THINGS

Remember to clean your flat/room and return the keys on time. If you have a Spanish bank account, you should close it. Other possible service agreements should also be ended and invoices paid.

X. UNDERSTANDING CATALONIA

If you are not familiar with the culture of the Mediterranean countries, you might find several habits surprising. We have summarised some of the things you should know so that you can avoid shocking or unpleasant situations.

People in Catalonia make gestures and use their body a lot when they speak and they touch each other more (for example by putting a hand on the shoulder). In informal situations people greet each other by two kisses on cheeks - particularly if the persons have just been introduced.



A conversation between a group of Catalan friends is usually lively (and loud). It's common for everybody to talk at the same time, so don't be surprised if another person starts a new conversation before you have finished what you were saying.



Perception of time depends strongly where you come from. In Catalonia, people tend to be punctual in formal situations such as lessons, public events etc. but are more flexible regarding informal situations. It's also common for that people to change their plans at the last minute. The Catalan expression "a quarts de" is used to give an approximate time.

As a part of the siesta culture (*migdiada*), shops and banks tend to be closed during the afternoon (between 1PM and 5PM). However, not all of them open again and not all of them close again, so always check the opening hours!

Eating habits can also be a little bit of a surprise. Lunch is eaten around 2PM and dinner between 9-10PM, and even later at weekends and in the summer. You will notice that some restaurants are closed between lunch and dinner time. Also meals themselves might be different from what you are used to: instead of a full breakfast at home people might have something small before going to work and then have a sandwich or cake around 10AM. Lunch can be a three-course meal with wine or beer. Eating is often related to social occasions, which is why friends and families tend to gather together for a meal.



If you wish to explore Catalan gastronomy you can start with tapas, paella and crema catalana. However, in order to get a deeper insight into our delicacies it's worth trying a lunchtime menu in a local restaurant or even travelling out of town to find other traditional dishes. Fruits and vegetables are fresh and easily available in fruterias, so enjoy them! Late night schedules apply not only to dinnertime but also to going out. People start gathering in pubs and bars around midnight and move on to the nightclubs from 2AM onwards.

There are several local festivals and lots of folk activities in Catalonia. In general festivals take place outside in the streets, on the beaches etc. For Sant Jordi (Saint George's day), on 23 April, the man gives the woman a rose, and the woman gives the man a book. On Sant Joan, on 23 June, people celebrate the summer solstice with organized fireworks shows. One of the most important festivals in Tarragona is Santa Tecla in September.



Catalonia has two official languages, Catalan and Spanish (Castellano). Catalan is the native language and is widely used in conversation, the public administration, the media, education, and in everyday official contexts like in traffic signs, advertisements, etc. Although almost everyone speaks Spanish and many people can also speak English, it is useful to know at least some basic words and expressions in order to make your daily life easier.



XI. SURVIVAL CATALAN

COMMON PHRASES	
Good morning / afternoon!	Bon dia! / Bona tarda!
Hello! / Goodbye!	Hola! / Adéu!
See you!	Fins aviat! / A reveure!
How are you? / Fine, thanks!	Com estàs? / Estic bé!
What's your name?	Com et dius?
What time is it?	Quina hora és?
Sorry, I don't speak Catalan.	Ho sento, no parlo català.
Do you speak English?	Parles l'anglès?
I don't understand.	No l'entenc.
Could you repeat, please?	Podries repetir, si us plau?
Thank you (very much)!	(Moltes) gràcies!
Excuse me...	Perdoni / Disculpi...
I'm sorry!	Ho sento!
Help!	Ajuda!
Cheers!	Salut!

WEEKDAYS AND MONTHS

Monday	Dilluns (dl)
Tuesday	Dimarts (dt)
Wednesday	Dimecres (dc)
Thursday	Dijous (dj)
Friday	Divendres (dv)
Saturday	Dissabte (ds)
Sunday	Diumenge (dg)
January	Gener
February	Febrer
March	Març
April	Abril
May	Maig
June	Juny
July	Juliol
August	Agost
September	Setembre
October	Octubre
November	Novembre
December	Desembre
Weekdays	Feiners
Holidays	Festius
Year	Any

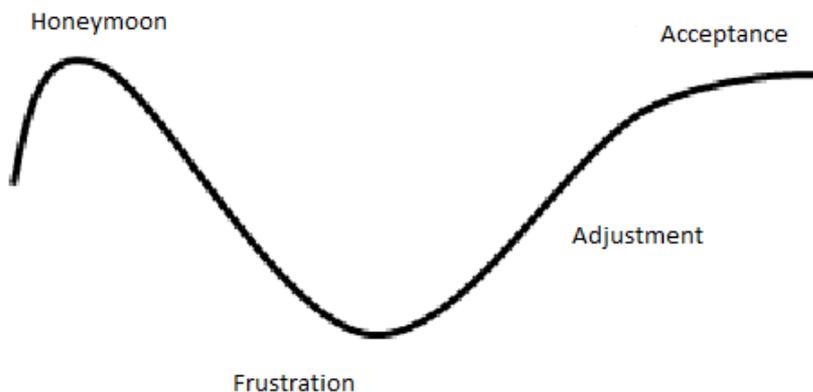
EVERYDAY VOCABULARY

ATM	Caixer automàtic
Bread / Butter	Pa / Mantega
Bus stop	Parada d'autobús
Cash / Credit card	Efectiu / Targeta de crèdit
Email	Correu electrònic
Envelope / Postcard	Sobre / Postal
Fish / Meat / Fruits	Peix / Carn / Fruites
Food Store / Supermarket	Supermercat
Lecture hall	Sala de lectura
Milk / Coffee / Water	Llet / Cafè / Aigua
Open—Closed	Obert—Tancat
Pen / Pencil	Bolígraf / Llapis
Prepaid SIM-card	Targeta SIM pre-pagament
Pharmacy	Farmàcia
Police station	Estació de policia
Post office	Oficina de correus
Railway / Bus station	Estació de tren/d'autobusos
Residence permit	Permís de residència
Sugar / Salt / Pepper	Sucre / Sal / Pebre
Tenancy agreement (for a flat)	Contracte d'arrendament (d'un pis)
Ticket (one way/return)	Bitllet (anada/anada i tornada)
Timetable	Horari
Toilet	Lavabo

XII. CULTURE SHOCK

Anyone who has ever lived abroad has gone through an emotional roller-coaster caused by their new environment with new people, different kinds of food, different language, and unfamiliar social norms and habits, among other things. For many mobility students it's also their first experience away from family and friends.

This phenomenon is known as **CULTURE SHOCK**, and can be described as a cycle of reactions that one normally goes through after moving to a new country. Culture shock is not only about negative feelings. In general it can be divided into five phases but it's always a personal experience. Not everyone undergoes all the phases, or they experience different phases at the same time.





Right after arrival you are excited about all the new things that are waiting for you: new country and culture, new people around you, new things to do and new places to see. You want to learn the language and understand local customs, make friends with the locals, and participate in all kinds of activities in order to get to know to your new surroundings. You are having the time of your life, everything at home seems boring, and you could actually consider staying in this new country.



One day it hits you. Suddenly everything seems to be complicated, whether it's about communicating with other people or buying milk in the supermarket. You are annoyed about the weather, it's always too cold or too hot. Your house mates don't clean or they complain to you about trivialities. You are losing your patience with the new language.

You feel lonely, sad and melancholy for no particular reason. You are no longer interested in participating in activities for students or going out with others. You are just annoyed and upset. You might also have physical symptoms such as pain, indigestion, problems getting to sleep or sleeping more than normally.

You are confused and losing your self-confidence. You start to doubt whether it was the right decision to go abroad or whether you are strong enough

to do this. You keep thinking about going back home where you don't have to struggle with the language, where people understand your gestures and habits, where people eat normal food and where, in general, everything is just as you have always known!



Little by little you are able to control negative feelings and overcome major difficulties. You become more socially active and independent again. You become more accustomed to your new daily routines (lectures, hobbies, eating hours etc.) and you start to feel more confident about yourself again.

From time to time you might still feel isolated or frustrated but having friends in your daily life makes the difficult moments easier. It's important to be able to share your experiences with others, particularly those who have experienced the same.



Finally you start to accept the differences and become accustomed to your new surroundings, the local custom and way of life and the way people behave (including the unwritten social norms). You have daily routines, you feel secure and able to face new situations, and you know more or less how the society of that country works. Communication has become easier because you have become accustomed to the local language.

You notice that both your own and the new culture have positive and negative things. You are able to value the differences and similarities between

those two cultures. You start to feel like at home. However, this doesn't necessarily mean that you change your personality or abandon the culture in which you were born and raised. Normally one preserves certain features of one's own culture side by side with those of the new one. This is called biculturalism.



Home sweet home - or maybe not! Surprisingly you might have feelings of longing, sadness and irritation when you return home after a period spent abroad.

All of a sudden the persons with whom you have shared your life are not there anymore. You may find it difficult to leave behind from those who have helped you overcome the difficulties in the new culture, with whom you might have learnt and shared a new language, and with whom you have experienced something that your friends at home can't understand. You would like to talk about your experiences but you get the impression that your friends are not really interested.

If you have travelled a lot or had an active life during your stay abroad it's possible (and very probable) to feel like "the party is over" when you go back home. You are faced with reality again and the need to readapt to your surroundings. You might realize that you have had an idealized view of your home country or that you personally have changed but at home everything has remained the same.

If you have learnt a new language, returning back to your mother tongue might also take a while. You might feel a stranger in your own country. The more the cultures differ from each other and the longer you have been away, the harder the readjustment is.



Being aware beforehand of culture shock and its emotional physical symptoms will help you. The following offers some advice how to survive the confusion caused by culture shock:

Remember that what you are going through is normal and everyone will go through the same thing in one way or another. *Share your feelings with other foreigners or with locals who have also been abroad!*

Participate in activities to make friends with other international students (if you prefer to spend time with locals, ever better).

Do things that you like (sports, volunteer work, music etc.). This is also an opportunity to try new things and step outside your comfort zone and therefore learn about the new culture. *Try something you never thought you would do!*

Don't complain all the time about everything that the country doesn't have or that is worse than at home. With a negative attitude you will have a negative experience and you will lose the opportunity to experience something different. *Keep your mind open!*

Be patient instead of afraid. Allow yourself time to get used to the new surroundings. It's normal to walk with a map, get lost on your way to the university or not to know how to use the printer in the computer class. *Ask when you don't know!*

Learn to laugh at yourself. When you communicate in a foreign language, you can't express yourself the same way you can in your mother tongue.

Don't worry about the misunderstandings or the funny mistakes that might cause uncomfortable situations. After all, those are best ways to learn the language!

Accept the differences. You can't change the society to which you have moved. Once you accept the differences everything will be easier and you can even laugh about the things that you don't understand. *Keep in mind that different doesn't mean worse!*

To summarize, keep in mind that most people suffer from culture shock in one way or another. Don't regard it as be a sign that you have taken the wrong decision or that you are not strong enough to deal with situations like this. The symptoms of culture shock will disappear gradually, and once they do, you will value the experience as an opportunity for personal growth.

Remember...

Abroad you represent your country and its culture. You are an ambassador for your country!



People are usually interested in different cultures, so don't be surprised about having to answer questions about your home country's customs and traditions.



**WE WISH YOU
A SUCCESSFUL,
PLEASANT AND
REWARDING STAY AT THE
URV!**



INTERNATIONAL CENTER

Avinguda Països Catalans, 17-19
43007 Tarragona

Tel.: (+34) 977 55 9754 / (+34) 977 25 6595

mobility.in@urv.cat
mobility.internship@urv.cat

www.urv.cat/mobility