

Welcome to our lovely corner of Spain. We look forward to working with you to ensure that your stay is as beneficial and enjoyable as possible, and as you expected. If you have any questions or any problems, please do not hesitate to contact us. We stand ready to serve you before your arrival, during your visit, and after you return home.

## WHO WE ARE

MS Barcelona's services are directed toward European mobility programmes, particularly work experience and internships. At the heart of MSB is a team of seasoned professionals and support personnel dedicated 100% to the success and satisfaction of our clients and partners.

## LOCATION

MS Barcelona has its main offices in the commercial centre of Barcelona, and is ideally situated to provide a diverse and interesting mix of experiences for beneficiaries participating in our mobility programmes.

Barcelona is an excellent destination for people of ages to enjoy. Situated on the Mediterranean Sea, Barcelona as a cosmopolitan city is full of museums, theatres and cinemas, extensive nightlife, and a wide range of sport activities. The diverse range of commerce and industry present in this region of Spain make it an excellent place for work, study, rest, play and intercultural exchange. Barcelona is the capital of Catalunya, an area that is bustling with first rate tourism and has a long tradition of international commerce. Site visits can be arranged in areas as diverse as the vineyards at the French border to the shipyards in Tarragona and places in between.

The city of Barcelona is modern and cosmopolitan, but has inherited many centuries of history. Its geographic location and the open character of its inhabitants are the reasons why the city is being culturally enriched all the time. It has a valuable architectural and monumental heritage, the most splendid exponents of which are its Gothic and modernista buildings. Five of its buildings have been designated World Heritage Sites. The entire city guarantees that visitors will enjoy taking a stroll around its streets that are replete with charm.



## MS BARCELONA – Mobility Specialists

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Whatever your interests, be sure not to miss a stroll along Las Ramblas. It is one of the city's landmark sights, a bustling thoroughfare where flower stalls and performance artists jostle for space. The historic centre is imbued with a bohemian atmosphere which you can discover as you walk through the Gothic Quarter, and the Ribera and Raval districts. This is one of the world's best-preserved medieval quarters. However, if Barcelona is famous for anything, it must be the buildings in the L'Eixample. If you take a walk around this neighbourhood you will be able to admire architectural masterpieces such as the Sagrada Família and La Pedrera, among other wonders inherited from Antoni Gaudí and the other architects of the city's home-grown artnouveau movement, Modernisme.

In Barcelona city, which overlooks the sea, you can enjoy a whole host of open spaces such as beaches, the Olympic Marina, Tibidabo or Montjuïc and its surroundings. All in all, it is the ideal city to discover exceptional monuments and surprising places. All nicely contained within an area bordered by the mountains to the west, the sea to the east, and two rivers north and south. You will always find something to do in the city of Barcelona. The city has over 50 museums, showcasing permanent collections of works by artists such as Picasso, Joan Miró and Antoni Tàpies. At the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC) you can see one of the world's most important collections of Romanesque art. It also has famous collections of contemporary art housed in museums such as the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) and CaixaForum. Most museums stage temporary exhibitions, and many are open free of charge, especially the first Sunday of every month.

The city of Barcelona also hosts a number of sporting events for the sports enthusiast. In addition to its world-famous football (soccer) team, Barça – newly crowned Champions – also has professional basketball, handball and hockey teams. Entries are available either at the stadium of Camp Nou or online at [www.lacaixa.es](http://www.lacaixa.es) (for many other entries, too) or directly at [www.fcbarcelona.com](http://www.fcbarcelona.com). You will also find areas where you can play sports in the open air and a whole host of leisure attractions, such as the Tibidabo Amusement Park (and Universal Studios/Port Aventura about an hour away), and the old harbour area, the Port Vell.

These are some of our favorite links for information about Barcelona:

[www.bcn.es](http://www.bcn.es) - The City of Barcelona, with information in English, Spanish and Catalan

[www.barcelonaturisme.com](http://www.barcelonaturisme.com) -- The official tourist promotion of Barcelona

[www.gencat.net/turistex\\_nou/territoire.htm](http://www.gencat.net/turistex_nou/territoire.htm) -- the official tourist promotion of Catalunya

[www.bcninternet.com/fr/tourism.php](http://www.bcninternet.com/fr/tourism.php) - BCN Internet with much information

Barcelona is the capital city of Catalunya, one of the autonomous regions of Spain. The government of the region is parliamentary in form and is led by a governing body known as the Generalitat. The Catalan people have learned to become natural polyglots, speaking Castellano as well as Catalán, a Romance language similar to Spanish and French. But no need to worry – here, Spanish is spoken by everyone.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

The main objectives of all Work Experience and Placement Programmes organized, monitored and certified by MS Barcelona are the following:

- To increase the understanding of the commercial and industrial culture within the country where the student is placed
- To assist the student in the development of his or her career and develop an improved Curriculum Vitae to contribute to future employment prospects
- To contribute to the development of the placement companies through completing a range of different projects
- To develop a great understanding of the use of Spanish in a business environment

All students must interview for the work placement. They will be accompanied to the host company, but must go through the interview unaccompanied – i.e. they must come with a level of Spanish sufficient enough to get through the interview. Once a student has been placed with a host company, they are expected to become a member of the workplace team, working under the same environment and working conditions as a normal employee.

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Students will have to observe company policy with regards to timekeeping, discipline, standards of dress, health and safety. The student can expect to work the regular business hours of the host company – in most cases that means 10h00 to 14h00 and 16h00 to 20h00, Monday through Friday. Except in the case where there might be weekend business hours, shift work, or a special event the company is involved in, students pretty much have the weekends as free time. The student will negotiate the work schedule with the host company at the time of the interview.

In addition to the evaluations carried out by the host company supervisor, Work Experience programme participants receive an Activities and Achievements Progress Form for their supervisors to track their acquisition of skills and experiences in other areas throughout the course of their placement. Upon completion of the programme, participants are presented with a Scorecard with our considerations regarding whether he or she has successfully achieved an acceptable level of competency in several skills we feel are critical mobility programme objectives and outcomes. These skills are categorized into Professional Skills, Business Skills, Technical and Specialty Skills, and Personal Skills with corresponding competency indicators. The student also receives a Certificate of Successful Completion of the programme, as well as a certified Europass.

## **PARTICIPANT WELFARE**

Probably the most important element of all of our programmes is the welfare and safety of the participants coming to Spain on their mobility work experience programme. We assign a programme Participant Welfare Officer (PWO) to every participant, whose is available as a 24-hour in case of emergency. Additionally, the Programme Welfare Officers have responsibility for providing support to the students throughout their stay and will troubleshoot all problems that may occur. He or she will act as the liaison between the student and host company and is responsible for the completion of an evaluation of the student's work placement.

## **IN CASE OF ILLNESS**

Programme participants are expected to come to Spain with insurance coverage for illnesses. Your PWO will advise you of the closest infirmary, clinic or hospital facility in the event treatment is required during your stay. Likewise, all medications need to be paid for by the programme participant. You will find a local pharmacy very close to your accommodations from a list of pharmacies maintained by your PWO for your location.

## **PERSONAL SECURITY**

During their stay in Spain, we advise programme participants to be careful and look after their personal possessions (e.g. credit card, passport). It is best not to carry a lot of money and travellers cheques. It would be a good idea to keep a record and photocopy of information about passports or National Identification Documents and also of credit cards. We advise them to keep these at their accommodations in case the originals are lost or stolen. The photocopies will be of help if they need to report any stolen documents. Although Barcelona is one of the safest cosmopolitan cities in Europe, it is better to exert caution. The local police -- Mossos de Escuadra -- are the most wonderful resource we have for safety. But please avoid potentially unsafe situations: do not travel alone after dark, especially in the "Raval" sector of town. Never surrender your personal property to persons posing as police officers. And be vigilant of pickpockets, especially in the heavily congested tourist areas such as Las Ramblas. Please leave your valuables and jewellery at home, as we cannot be responsible for loss of personal property. The student will be responsible for going to the police station outside work hours to fill out the paperwork, which can take up to 3 hours.

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## TRAVEL AND ARRIVAL

Barcelona is serviced by three airports. The main international airport is BCN El Prat, located approximately 30 minutes from the city center. Two smaller airports (Girona to the north and Reus/Salou to the south) serve as hubs for reduced-rate airlines operating flights to other cities in Europe. These both are located approximately 1.5 hours away from Barcelona and are serviced by regularly-scheduled buses that meet the arrival/departure of flights.

Participants arriving at Barcelona´s El Prat will always be met at the airport. Those individuals choosing airport transfer service will be directed to transportation (either a special bus, car service or taxi) that has been arranged to transport them to their accommodations. Others will be directed to the public transportation available. Several options are available to travel from the El Prat airport to the city center. Once arriving at the city center, it is possible to take a combination of buses, metros, or taxis. Remember to pack light if you will be navigating the public transportation system with your luggage. Considering the amount of luggage participants bring and the ease of transportation, we high recommend the airport transfer service.

## ORIENTATION MEETING

Following your arrival you will meet with your Programme Welfare Officer to go over the details of your placement, the itinerary of activities, as well as the nuances and logistics of the programme. Afterwards, you will be shown how to navigate the public transportation system, and pass by some major tourist areas of the city.

## LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

The metropolitan area of Barcelona counts with one of the best transit systems in Europe. Visitors can access virtually any point in the metropolitan area through public transportation, a system of metro, buses, trolleys and trams that crisscross the city with a prompt and efficient rendering of services.

There is an interactive website to find the most appropriate means of transport between any two sites within the metropolitan area at the website of Transports Metropolitans de Barcelona online at [www.tmb.net](http://www.tmb.net) (in English, Spanish and Catalan). There are also local systems of trains operated by the Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya at [www.fgc.net](http://www.fgc.net) for travel within Barcelona and the outer suburbs, and by Renfe at [www.renfe.es](http://www.renfe.es) for travel outside Barcelona to other areas of Spain and Europe.

The Barcelona Metro runs during the workweek (Monday to Thursday), Sunday, and holidays from 5:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. Friday and Holidays eves other holiday 5:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m., and Saturdays during summer months 24 hours. There are two funicular railways and a cable car that crosses the marina area. Normal buses (red numbered with no letter) typically run until 11:00 p.m. and normally arrive every 10-15 minutes during rush hour and every 30-45 minutes during off-peak hours. Nit buses (N-plus a number) take over the night routes for the normal buses. Bus maps will be provided for your convenience. There are also local taxis that are flagged down by outstretching your hand and waving. All taxis in Barcelona are closely regulated and metered, charging a combination of time and distance. A green light indicates their availability.

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## WEATHER

Being right on the Mediterranean mitigates against extreme temperatures. Having said that, however, we are prone to sporadic spells of extreme weather, and you may experience a cold snap during your winter stay or a heat spell if you come in summer.

Winters are among the mildest of the continent. If you are coming during the winter months (December through February), best bring a coat, as temperatures can dip to 0 degrees, especially at night, for short periods of time. Winter temperatures average about 12°C (about 53° F), and snow is very rare, though rain does occur occasionally, so bring an umbrella in the event it does rain. Spring in Barcelona is beautiful, with temperatures ranging from about 13°C to 20°C or (about 55°F to 70°F). Summer in Barcelona is hot, with temperatures in August reaching up to 34°C (or about 95° F.) Autumn in Barcelona is very pleasant with a mix of warmer and cooler days. Temperatures range from about 21°C to 15°C (or 69°F to 59°F.) with rain likely to fall intermittently. Check out the up-to-date local weather conditions at the city's website,

<http://www.bcn.es/temps/english/>

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Programme participants select the type of accommodations that meet their budget and life-style, ranging from accommodations with a host family, in a hostel, in a self-catering student flat, or in university residences. Self-catering is the most frequently selected accommodation as they are the best value and contain all the amenities and necessities for living within a home environment, including fully-equipped kitchens allowing students to cook their own meals. We work with several housing agencies to secure student flats. While there are standards that must be met in order for us to engage a flat on behalf of our groups, there are no market-wide consistent features. Therefore, each property will have a unique layout, location, and access to local resources.

Student flats are a shared environment – the common areas are shared with other students or young professionals. Rooms available in self catering flats are “private rooms” where each participant has their own bedroom, “double rooms”, where there are two occupants of the same gender to a bedroom, or in some flats “shared rooms” which may be a triple or quad and may use bunkbeds.

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Each programme participant will be given a set of keys to the building and to the flat so as to allow them to come and go as they please. Each flat comes with cooking utensils, and cutlery, electricity, heat and running water, a clothes washing machine (clothes lines to dry), and an iron/ironing board. The programme participants will be responsible for bringing their own bed linen, purchasing and preparing food for all meals. The common areas of the flats are cleaned under contract.

Host family situations vary. Some offer breakfast and a meal, while others offer kitchen privileges so that the participant can fix their own meals. If you are placed in a host situation, you will have the opportunity to live like the Spaniards and become another member of the household. You will be expected to keep tidy your personal space and clean up after yourself in common areas.

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In closing, please know we are committed to making your experience in Barcelona the most valuable possible. We look forward to welcoming you to Barcelona and are available to help in whatever we can to make your visit both beneficial and fun. We will bid you a hearty Bienvenido!

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