

American students in Alcalá are joined by the commonality of living in a foreign place for five months, trying to learn the language, and trying to begin to feel as though you fit in somewhat in this new environment. It's great to have a support system of other American students, but the internship allowed me to remove myself from that comfort zone for a few hours a week. By working at a Spanish radio station, I was able to interact with Spanish people in their daily work environment. It was a very unique way to get another view of a culture that otherwise I would not have been able to see. The internship broke up my daily schedule and allowed me to try new things. The people I worked with were very helpful and really encouraged me to ask questions and explore their culture.

I worked at a Spanish radio station in Azuqueca, about a 15 minute train ride from Alcalá. This internship placement could not have been better for me. As a journalism major at the University of Maryland, it was important to me to be able to tie my study-abroad experience into my goal of becoming a journalist. By nature, when I go places I want to know all there is to know about that place. It was a great experience to be able to interact with other Spanish journalists and see how they worked. Because Azuqueca is a small town, I was able to do a lot of hands-on things at the station. Although I learned more about Journalism by working at the station, I think the biggest benefit was just being able to learn more about Spanish culture itself. The stories we covered in the town were very community-based. Whether it was going to a school fair or a community festival, the majority of what we did revolved around the people. It didn't have much to do with breaking news that so many journalists crave, but it really suited my personality and I enjoyed meeting so many different people.

I honestly didn't really know what to expect. I was really nervous at first because I didn't think my Spanish was good enough to be able to communicate with my coworkers. However, I really surprised myself once I found myself in that environment. More than anything, the internship taught me about myself and allowed me to get a unique glimpse into another culture. While it applied to my field of study, I think I learned a lot beyond just journalism.

Without a doubt I can say that my internship in Spain helped me to land my first job out of college. Being able to list on a resume that you studied abroad is something that really jumps out at potential employers. The topic of me working at a Spanish radio station came up time and time again in job interviews. I truly believe that interning while studying abroad sets you apart from others because it shows that you take initiative and have a strong eagerness to learn and try new things.

If you really want to get the full experience of studying abroad I would definitely recommend the internship program. It really is a great way to submerge yourself in the culture and meet extraordinary people. I learned a lot about how people of another culture viewed Americans and American culture. I really stepped out of my comfort zone and did something that I'll never have the opportunity to do again. I learned a lot and it added a lot to my experience abroad.