

PROMOS-Experience Report
Universidad ESAN, Lima, Peru
WS 2024/25
BSc Business and Economics

1 Preparation

After being nominated by the university of Cologne to spend my semester abroad at ESAN, I received an email from Lorena Hein, the international coordinator of ESAN, containing the next steps to enroll for my studies in Lima, Peru. I had to submit a letter of motivation and a CV in Spanish, a flight ticket, a learning agreement, my transcript of records, proof of language skills, and several other documents.

As soon as my enrollment for my semester abroad at ESAN was complete, I started looking for options to facilitate the financing of my studies abroad. For my PROMOS application, I had to submit a detailed description of my plans and aspirations during my semester abroad, a CV, language certificates, a transcript of records, and additional documents, such as a letter of evaluation written by a professor or lecturer from the University of Cologne.

After receiving the great news from the “Abteilung 93 Internationale Mobilität” that my application was successful, the following steps were very straightforward. I had to sign a scholarship agreement and a leaflet, and I received the funds in two payments during my stay in Peru.

When planning your stay in Peru, you have the option to either apply for a student visa, which is valid for 180 days, or enter the country with a tourist visa, valid for 90 days, which you must extend during your stay. I recommend applying for a student visa before arriving in Peru. Even though the application process for a student visa can be tedious and difficult, it will save you a lot of time and hassle during your stay. Additionally, Lorena will assist you during the application process. If you choose to enter Peru with a tourist visa, the extension will cost you \$80, and communication with Peruvian government offices can be challenging. If your request for a tourist visa extension is denied, you will have to pay overstay fees (€1.10 per day). Hence, I recommend obtaining a student visa before traveling to Peru. Furthermore, note that “border runs” to obtain a new tourist visa are not possible in Peru.

Before leaving, you should also check for necessary vaccinations. Do this well in advance because some vaccinations are hard to find (for example, the rabies vaccination) or require several doses at weekly intervals. Additionally, check that your travel documents have sufficient validity, especially if you have additional travel plans after your semester in Peru ends. Also, make sure to arrange health insurance for your stay.

ESAN also provides a Buddy Program. The buddies were extremely nice, helped me prepare my semester abroad and organized many group activities upon arrival in Peru.

2 Accommodation

I lived in a shared Airbnb with a friend of mine from Cologne. Compared to Cologne, there are many modern and relatively affordable apartments on the outskirts of the popular and safe districts of Barranco and Miraflores. These apartments often have security service and nice community spaces like rooftop terraces, pools and gyms. I recommend searching for an apartment a couple of weeks before arrival.

Many other exchange students lived in international houses with other international students. If you enjoy partying, socializing, and don't mind sharing a kitchen and bathroom with many people, you will have a great time.

Even though ESAN is located in Surco, I recommend looking for accommodation in Barranco or Miraflores. Miraflores and Barranco are probably the safest and most lively districts in Lima. Most international students live there, and as a result, also almost all free-time activities also take place in these districts.

The cost of accommodation for a comfortable and safe flat ranges between €300 and €500 per month, depending on the location you choose.

3 Studies and University

ESAN is a relatively small private university located on the outskirts of Surco. The buildings are modern, and there are a couple of small cafeterias on campus, as well as a large sports center and a beautiful garden. ESAN offers a variety of sports like volleyball, football, and basketball, as well as Peruvian dance classes. These activities are especially useful if you want to connect with Peruvian students.

The teaching style at ESAN resembles high school in many ways. You must attend at least 80% of all classes to pass the course. Classes often have fewer than 30 participants and focus on weekly assignments and presentations. Class participation, small online tests, and ongoing evaluations accounted for 60% of my final grade, while the remaining 40% was equally split between a midterm and a final exam.

Since I only needed to pass the courses - as my Peruvian grades did not count toward my average grade in Cologne - I didn't have to spend a lot of time studying for the exams. However, the weekly assignments and tests can be quite time-consuming. I took courses on topics like entrepreneurship, supply chain management, international relations, knowledge management,

and behavioral finance. All of them were taught in English, with small class sizes and interactive teaching methods. Since the general level of English skills in Peru is not too high, good language skills facilitate getting good grades. Professors often valued participation and group work, although the emphasis on practical applications and subjective evaluations varied. I found that the way of addressing scientific questions at ESAN was rather relaxed when compared with the standards at the University of Cologne.

In general, it was interesting to gain insights into business-oriented topics as an economics student. However, if you plan to spend a semester abroad purely for academic reasons, ESAN might not be the best choice for you.

4 Every Day Life

The first and most important step to fully explore and enjoy Lima is getting a SIM card. I recommend choosing either a Movistar or Bitel card. Registering for a cell phone plan at an official Movistar or Bitel store can be quite a hassle since they require a lot of information. Instead, I suggest going to one of the *bodegas* (small convenience stores similar to kiosks in Cologne) and buying a prepaid card. You might pay a little more, but you'll have an instant mobile connection. Keep in mind that you can bargain almost everywhere except in restaurants and shops with clearly marked prices.

Getting around Lima can be chaotic, and travel times depend heavily on traffic congestion. The city has several bus systems, which can be confusing. I mostly relied on Uber and Yango for transportation. Yango is a taxi app similar to Uber and is often slightly cheaper. However, unlike Uber, Yango drivers' backgrounds aren't as thoroughly checked, so some Peruvians consider Yango less safe. That said, I never felt unsafe or uncomfortable using it. If you share an Uber or Yango with friends, you'll likely pay less than €2.50 per ride on average. This is slightly more expensive than taking the bus, but safer, more comfortable and way quicker.

Peruvians are very proud of their food, and rightfully so. Eating out in Lima is generally very affordable, you can expect to pay between €3 and €10 for a good meal. Small restaurants called "Menus" often offer lunch consisting of a starter, a main dish, and a drink for less than €4. Near ESAN, you'll find many "Chifas," which serve a fusion of Chinese and Peruvian cuisine, providing a great alternative to the campus cafeterias. You'll find excellent food almost everywhere, but here are some of my favorite spots:

- Conchale (in my opinion the best Ceviche in Lima) [Link](#)
- Ocllo (very affordable lunch, traditional Peruvian food) [Link](#)
- Isolina (a little more expensive, good peruvian food) [Link](#)
- Mérito (fancy food for relatively affordable prices) [Link](#)
- Burrito Bar (really good Mexican food) [Link](#)
- La Lucha (traditional Peruvian sandwiches) [Link](#)
- Apuro (if you have cravings for decent bread) [Link](#)

With over 10 million inhabitants, Lima offers a vibrant and diverse nightlife. Several WhatsApp groups, such as the "Erasmus Perú" group, organize and promote parties. You can go out almost every night of the week and, as a foreigner, often enjoy perks like free drinks or free entry before a certain time. Popular clubs include "Noise Barranco," "Bizarro," "Casona," and "Lima Bar." Here are some of my personal favorite bars:

- La Noche (alternative bar with space for small concerts) [Link](#)
- Cordial (fancy bar with good cocktails and wine) [Link](#)
- Juanito (good beer and great sandwiches) [Link](#)

Lima offers plenty to see and do during the day as well. I especially enjoyed strolling through the "Centro Histórico" and exploring the diverse markets and the "Barrio Chino". The city also has several beaches. "Playa Makaha," near Miraflores, is great for surfing but, unfortunately, is a rocky beach located right next to a highway, making it less ideal for relaxing. For a more laid-back experience, "Playa Agua Dulce," a sandy beach south of Barranco, is perfect for spending a sunny day. About an hour's drive south of Lima, you'll find "Punta Hermosa," which offers calm and pleasant beaches outside the city. I also enjoyed the "La Molina Hike," a short trail into the mountains outside Lima. It's especially beautiful at sunrise, offering stunning views of the city. Lima is home to many museums as well, such as the "MAC" (Museum of Contemporary Art) and the "Museo Oro del Perú".

If you want to improve your Spanish, I highly recommend the "Peruwayna Spanish School." My PROMOS scholarship enabled me to take weekly private classes, which significantly improved my Spanish skills. This, in turn, greatly enhanced my experience in Peru and my travels after the semester. Being able to communicate properly with the locals opened many doors and created countless new opportunities.

5 Traveling

Lima is a great city, but the real highlight of Peru is its stunning and diverse nature! Peru offers incredible variety, you can explore the Amazon jungle, breathtaking mountain landscapes, idyllic beaches, vast deserts, and everything in between. Before the semester starts, you'll receive a list of all classes and their schedules for your time at ESAN. By carefully selecting your courses, you can condense your university days to just 2-3 days per week. I completed five courses but only had classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays, leaving me with long weekends perfect for traveling and discovering other parts of Peru. I mostly traveled by airplane, but Peru also offers comfortable and affordable bus options for getting around. Here are some great destinations to consider for your trips:

- Ica (desert, buggies and Sandboarding)
- Arequipa and surroundings (beautiful city and nice alpine landscapes)
- Iquitos and the Amazon (exotic city and jungle)
- Mancora (surfing)
- Cusco and Machu Pichu (5day hiking trip form Cusco to Machu Pichu)
- Huaraz (great for hiking)

Receiving the PROMOS scholarship made it also possible for me to return to Peru after traveling with my family in Latin America at the end of the semester. I will participate in a social and environmental project called "Perú Puro." As I am writing this report in January and will start working in February, I cannot yet share my experiences. However, I am extremely thankful that PROMOS has provided me with this opportunity. I will be working in a very rural area, approximately 10 hours by bus from Cusco. I hope to participate in rainforest reforestation and the sustainable, fair production of coca products. I am very grateful for the chance to revisit Peru and its people, experiencing a different side of the country away from Lima in this unique setting.

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, my time in Peru was incredible, and I am really looking forward to my upcoming return. Spending an extended period abroad with so much freedom is a truly unique and enriching experience. Peru is an excellent destination, offering incredible experiences at a relatively low cost. In addition, receiving PROMOS has improved and still continues to

improve my stay abroad substantially. I came away with countless memories and many new international friends.

