

**HOUSING INFORMATION****FALL 2017**

On this sheet you will find the information you need in order to select your housing option for the semester.

**\*\*\*\*\*PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY\*\*\*\*\***

The document is structured in 2 sections:

1. Housing options
2. Housing tips to help you to make your choice

**IMPORTANT:** We need to receive your housing request by June 14<sup>th</sup>. Simply click on the link you have on the email (or copy and paste the address on your web browser) to submit your Housing Request.

If you decide to stay with a **HOST FAMILY**, it is also necessary that you fill out the “Family Stay Questionnaire” as soon as possible (no later than June 14<sup>th</sup>). Simply click on the second link you have on the email (or copy and paste the address on your web browser) to submit your Family Stay Questionnaire. Please bear in mind that family stay requests will not be processed until we get the completed questionnaire. Also, in order to help us find the best suitable family for you, please write a “Personal Qualities Statement”. Simply click on the third link you have on the email (or copy and paste the address on your web browser) no later than June 14<sup>th</sup>.

If you decide to stay at the **Residence Hall**, it is also necessary that you fill out the “Residence Hall Questionnaire” document as soon as possible (no later than June 14<sup>th</sup>). Simply click on the fourth link on your email (or copy and paste the address on your web browser) to submit the “Residence Hall Questionnaire” information.

**Please think about your selection very carefully before you let the CIDE Office know about your final decision. The selection of a specific housing option involves a commitment to that housing option. This commitment has the same effect as a contract signed by you. Therefore, failure to honor either this commitment or the housing contract (to be signed upon your arrival in Bilbao) will result in a fine.**

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# 1. HOUSING OPTIONS

You can choose between these different options (please see detailed descriptions below):

- Residence Hall** (limited space).
- Family stay** (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED).
- Room in shared apartment** with kitchen privileges.

We will try to satisfy the student's housing choice, always depending on the availability at the moment.

CIDE makes housing reservations, handles contracts between students and the Residence Hall, family or apartment owner, and processes payments.

**\*IMPORTANT\***: If you are a **strict vegetarian or have any special diet needs**, we recommend that you choose the apartment option, since we cannot guarantee your diet needs will be accommodated by either the residence hall or a host family.

## Descriptions of housing options:

### Residence Hall (with meal plans): (Limited space)

- ▶ Single room with private bathroom
- ▶ Internet Wi-Fi (and cable—may be borrowed at the Reception desk) connection in each room
- ▶ Pillow and blankets provided
- ▶ Bed linen and towels weekly provided
- ▶ Cleaning of room
- ▶ Use of washers, irons and ironing boards
- ▶ Three daily meals (according to the dining-room meal schedule)
- ▶ Library and study room (56 seats)
- ▶ TV room, lecture room, music room, exercise room, and fine arts room
- ▶ Computer room (free Internet connection)
- ▶ 24-hour Reception Service

### Family Stay

- ▶ In Bilbao or nearby areas connected by subway\* (Please read page 4, point 3 of this document)
- ▶ Single room
- ▶ Integration in family life
- ▶ Bed linen, towels and pillow provided
- ▶ Heating, hot water and utilities included
- ▶ Three daily meals
- ▶ Washing of clothes
- ▶ Use of telephone for incoming calls

### Room in shared apartment with kitchen privileges

- Please notice apartments can be co-ed.
- It is the Program policy to place just **one CIDE student in each apartment**. Applications for sharing an apartment with a program-mate will not be honored.

- ▶ Private, furnished apartments
- ▶ Use of shared spaces: kitchen, living-room, bathroom/s...
- ▶ Blankets included. Bed linen included only in some cases. Towels not included.

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## 2. HOUSING TIPS to help you to make your choice

Housing is a very important part of a study abroad experience. Whatever housing option you choose, you will need some time to adjust to the local culture. Overall, you should not expect things to be like they are back at home. Coping with different habits and standards will be part of your learning experience.

Our advice: **Try to be flexible, patient and open-minded!**

Please remember the program staff (housing officer and staff at the student office) can act as mediators and help you with questions about cultural expectations or misunderstandings.

The following tips are intended to help you to make the right housing decision:

### RESIDENCE HALL (LIMITED SPACE)

Please find below some tips and expectations that you should bear in mind when living at a Spanish residence hall:

1. Residence halls in Spain are different from what you know at home. You may be surprised by certain rules. You should bear in mind that they are part of a different culture, so what surprises you might not be surprising in the Spanish context.
2. Living in a Residence Hall will provide you with the opportunity to get to know Spanish students of your age. We recommend you to make an effort to meet local students and use your Spanish skills from the beginning. You should try to be outgoing and not isolate yourself. You will often need to take the initiative. This may seem very challenging at first, but it is a necessary step to make new friends.
3. Even though you are not staying for long in the Residence Hall you are expected to integrate in the social life of the dorms. Try to participate in the activities and student groups organized in the dorms.
4. Expect the staff working at the dorms to speak only in Spanish. Please try to be friendly and to keep an atmosphere of mutual respect.
5. Students staying in Spanish residence halls are required to keep their rooms tidy. They will be responsible for making their bed everyday. Furthermore, keeping your stuff off the floor is necessary in order to allow the cleaning staff to do their job.
6. Notice that hot water and power are expensive in Spain. Try to use them moderately and limit your showers to a maximum of 10 minutes.
7. Living in a residence hall with a meal plan means that you should expect Spanish food and Spanish meal times. All residence halls with meal plans for the students are designed according to the guidelines provided by local nutritionists, but are mainly based on Spanish eating habits. This means that you will need to make an effort to adapt to the differences.
8. All residence halls have **strict** rules about visitors and overnight friends. You are not allowed to have overnight friends in your room. If you expect visitors at some point, you can inquire about the availability of rooms and the cost per night, because staying at the residence hall may be more convenient (and most probably cheaper) for your visitors than staying at a hotel.
9. The bedroom area in the residence hall is divided in ladies' floors and a men's floors. The coed areas are the cafeteria, the dining room, the living room, the TV room, the library, etc. Male students are not allowed in the ladies' floors and rooms, and female students are not allowed in men's floors and rooms.
10. Please read the Colegio Mayor Norms Document ([goo.gl/ZPP0BH](http://goo.gl/ZPP0BH)) for a detailed description of rules at the Dorm.

<b>FAMILY STAY (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)</b>
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Please find below some tips and expectations that you should bear in mind when living with a Spanish family:

1. You will be living a cultural immersion experience that will require flexibility and patience as well as an effort to adapt to the new environment. Being open-minded and having a positive attitude is extremely important in that process of adaptation.
2. Living with a host family is not the same as living with your own family, but it is also very different to living independently. You should also take into account that home stay experiences can be very different (not necessarily better or worse, but different) depending on the family you are assigned.
3. The CIDE Program has families in **downtown Bilbao**, the **Deusto district** and **nearby areas**.

Some families live in the **Getxo** area. Getxo is located by the sea, about 9 miles from the Bilbao city center; it has an extraordinary landscape flanked by beaches and cliffs that make it an exceptional destination. Getxo offers unique outdoor activities and hikes.

You may find more information at <http://www.getxo.eus/en/turismo/>.

Getxo is connected to downtown Bilbao and the University of Deusto by subway. The metro ride takes around 20-25 minutes (Please remember that local travel expenses - estimate cost per/month: subway passes starting at 37.80€ - are not covered by program fees). **Because of this extra travel expense, students living in Getxo have a 40€ monthly discount in the Family Housing price.** [Please refer to the "Housing fees document also attached to the email"]

Housing assignments will be made on a **first come, first served** basis depending on **availability**.

Choosing the "**Bilbao area**" as your preferred option in the *Family Stay Questionnaire* **does not necessarily imply that you will be living within walking distance** from the university. In some cases it may be necessary to come to school using **public transportation**.

Remember that local travel expenses are not covered by program fees.

4. You should try to keep fluent communication with your host family. That way, you will also practice your Spanish and learn more about the local culture.
5. You will most probably be sharing the bathroom with the members of the family. You will need to be considerate about the time you spend in the bathroom. Notice that hot water and power are expensive in Spain. Use them moderately and try to limit your showers to a maximum of 10 minutes.
6. Try to adapt to meal times. Food is a very important part of the Spanish culture and a lot of social interaction takes place around meals.
7. Be prepared to adapt your diet to local customs. Let your family know about your likes/dislikes. In any case, you will also be expected to try many new things and to adapt to the host family meal plan.
8. Most families will have Internet access at home; however, it may be the case that a few of them do not. Overall, computer facilities are not as common in Spain as in the US, and they are not part of the services provided in the family stay option. Therefore, we recommend all students that they bring their laptop for their personal use. There is WIFI connection at the UD, and we can also provide you with a list of Internet cafés around the city.
9. You are not expected to spend all your spare time with the host family. However, you should plan to spend some of your time with them in order to enjoy all the integration opportunities that the family will offer you.
10. Let the family know about your class schedule. You should always inform them about your traveling plans. If you plan on spending the night out, they should also be informed.
11. If you wish to bring a friend home, it is very important that you first ask your family. If you plan to have visits from friends or family staying in Bilbao, the standard procedure is to arrange their accommodation at a hostel or a hotel.

## **DESCRIPTION OF “FAMILY TYPES”**

Regardless of the option you choose, you should be aware that “family” does not necessarily mean a married couple with children. Many times it consists of a divorced or widowed man/woman with grown children still at home or, as sometimes happens, a married couple where the husband works outside of Bilbao and is home only on weekends.

### **1) Family with young children:**

This is not a very common type of living arrangement, however it can be a very positive experience for certain types of students. You should realize that you will not have to baby-sit for families with small children (a common question of program participants). Those looking for a close-knit family environment and lots of family involvement may want to opt for this kind of living arrangement. Even when a couple has only one small child, the house is likely to be a place for impromptu social gatherings. There will likely be frequent visits from friends and family. They may have very little tolerance for students who sleep until noon and come home late at night.

### **2) Family with college-age children:**

This is the most frequently requested type of living arrangement. Students who participate in the Fall Semester program should be aware that at the time of their arrival Spanish students will probably not have started their university courses in Bilbao, as the Spanish academic year begins towards the middle of September. As for students who participate in the Spring Semester Program, they should be aware that Spanish students take their Semester exams in February, which means they will probably be studying hard in January. Nevertheless, living with Spanish students of your own age can be a wonderful cultural experience. The parents in these households will probably also be a bit more understanding of your late nights and even later mornings.

Students should be prepared for the possibility that their host brothers and sisters may have little time or interest in foreign students. They may simply be very involved with their own friends and not consider foreigners as “novelties.”

### **3) Single adult female / male:**

This arrangement is particularly suited to shy students, or those who are unsure of their level of spoken Spanish. When living with only one person, you may find it easier to ask for grammar or vocabulary explanations, repetitions of questions, or cultural information. Most of these women are divorcees or widowed, and may very likely make you the center of their attention! This is an ideal setting for students who are interested in speaking Spanish as much as possible outside the classroom, as your host father/mother will probably be more than likely be eager to talk and have someone keep him/her company.

<b>APARTMENTS</b>
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<p>Please note that it is the Program policy to place just <b><u>one CIDE student in each apartment</u></b>. Applications for sharing an apartment with a program-mate will not be honored.</p>
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Please find below some tips and expectations that you should bear in mind when living in an apartment:

1. In the apartment, your housemates can be Spanish or other international students. Therefore, you will be sharing responsibilities with housemates from different cultures. Tolerance is a must if you wish to have a good housing experience.
2. Student apartments are usually furnished in a very simple style. Please notice you may need to provide your own towels and bedclothes.
3. Please notice there is no meal plan for students living in apartments, so you will need to cook your own meals.
4. You will need to share the bathroom with your housemates. Please be considerate about the time you spend in the bathroom. Notice that hot water and power are expensive in Spain, so you will be saving some money if you use them moderately, and try to limit your shower time.
5. Most apartments do not have Internet/phone facilities, and computer facilities are not as common in Spain as in the US. Therefore, we recommend that you bring your laptop for your personal use. There is WIFI connection at the UD, and we can also provide you with a list of Internet cafés around the city.
6. Apartments have laundry facilities, but these do not include a dryer. In fact, dryers are not a standard facility in Spain. You will be able to line-dry your clothes outside.

**Most of your neighbors will be average Spanish families. Please respect them and try to avoid making loud noise. By law, noise must be kept to a minimum from 10 pm until 8 am. Remember that loud parties are not allowed.**

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