

For answers to questions regarding application procedures, program information, responsibilities of participants, pre-departure orientation materials, departure and post-departure information, registration, financial matters, grades, credits, withdrawals, cancellations and expulsions, please read THE HANDBOOK FOR STUDY ABROAD.

## **General Program Overview:**

Puerto Rico, known as the “Isla del Encanto,” is the eastern most and smallest of the Greater Antilles. Puerto Rico is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean on the north and the Caribbean Sea on the south. The island is 100 miles from east to west and 35 miles from north to south. It is a beautiful tropical island with a rich cultural heritage. The people of Puerto Rico are a mixture of three main cultures: the indigenous Taíno, Spanish, and African. Spanish and English are the official languages of the island, but Spanish is predominant.

The University of Puerto Rico (UPR) was established in 1903, making it one of the oldest universities of the island. Its Rio Piedras campus has an enrollment of nearly 25,000 students.

Rio Piedras is located within metropolitan San Juan. The university was admitted to membership in the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools in April 1946. The university has belonged to the Association of Hispanic American Universities since 1955. In 1965, the university became affiliated with the College Entrance Examination Board. The Rio Piedras Campus is also a member of the American Council on Education.

## **1) Can people with no language experience apply?**

Students without Spanish language experience cannot apply to this program. It requires an intermediate level of Spanish proficiency. Students who decide to apply to this program need to have a higher level of maturity and willingness to be independent. The University of Puerto Rico Office of International Relations does offer support services but they are limited thus students need to be self-reliable, self-motivated, and thrive in this direct placement program.

A direct placement program is a program where students are directly enrolled at the university. Students take their courses alongside Puerto Rican students with Puerto Rican professors teaching the courses. The majority of the courses the university offers are in Spanish. The University does have an English Department and students can choose to take one or two courses in English and the rest in Spanish. The university also offers courses in other languages.

## **2) What college/University will I be studying at?**

Students will be studying at the University of Puerto Rico – Rio Piedras campus which is located in the San Juan metropolitan area of Puerto Rico. The university is located in the town of Rio Piedras.

## **3) What is the required GPA to apply?**

You are required to have a 2.5 GPA.

#### **4) Does the University provide any trips?**

The Office of International Relations at UPR usually offers two excursions per semester. The students will be informed directly by the Office of International Relations at UPR. SUNY Oswego's Office of International Education and Programs is not involved in this process. You will be invited directly by UPR International Relations Office and you will be informed of the cost of these excursions directly.

#### **5) What are the exact dates of the program?**

For the fall, the dates are usually from about the second week of August until about the third week of December, and for the spring they are usually from about mid-January until late May.

#### **6) Will there be a pre-departure orientation/ orientation when I get there?**

There will be an orientation at SUNY Oswego. For more details on the orientation go to your page on the Studio Abroad website. You will be able to sign up for the orientation and let us know who will come with you to orientation. You may invite your Mom or Dad or both to join you or a family member or significant other.

Although orientation is not mandatory, we ask that you do your best to attend. If you are a SUNY Oswego student, I would definitely like to see you at orientation. If you are from very far away, I understand if you can't make it. All the students will receive a pre-departure packet at orientation and if you are not able to attend, a packet will be made available to you online or sent to your home address.

UPR offers a one day orientation program. It is mandatory that you arrive to UPR on the official day of arrival. The official day of arrival is the day prior to orientation. As UPR only offers only one day of orientation it is mandatory that you attend so that you may be prepared to get your semester started on the right path. Self-responsibility for this program is key to your success as there is not a lot of hand holding.

#### **7) What if I arrive earlier than the group or stay on after the end of the program?**

Yes, you may arrive early and stay after the end of the program. As it pertains to your arrival to UPR, you will only be able to move into the residence hall housing accommodations on the official date that will be provided by UPR's Office of International Relations. You will also need to leave the UPR residence hall on the official date provided by UPR.

#### **8) Is housing provided?**

Student participants for this program will be residing at the UPR Residence Hall "Plaza Universitaria." Students will need to complete the Plaza Universitaria housing form once accepted to study abroad in this program and submit a housing deposit directly to UPR. Information on how and when to submit the housing form and deposit will be provided by SUNY Oswego's Program Specialist upon acceptance into the program.

Address Residence Hall:  
Plaza Universitaria  
Avenida Universidad, No. 4  
Rio Piedras, PR 00925  
Phone: (787) 764-0000 ext. 81250  
(787)522-1302

## **9) Who will I be living with?**

You may request a single or double room at Plaza Universitaria. Single rooms are available but have a higher cost. If you choose a double, you will be assigned a roommate. The roommate could be a Puerto Rican, American, or international student.

## **10) Is the cost for housing included in the program fee?**

The cost for housing is not included in the program fee. The students in this program pay a housing deposit within 14 days of acceptance into this program directly to UPR. Upon arrival to UPR, you will be expected to submit the housing payment for the semester. Cost per month for housing at the residence hall is about \$220.00. See budget sheet for details online.

## **11) Are there phones in the residential facilities?**

Yes, there will be a phone in your room that you may use to make local calls. For long distance calls, you will need to buy a calling card. You may also bring your cell phone to Puerto Rico, just make sure to speak to your cell phone carrier about cell phone accessibility and cost in Puerto Rico.

## **12) Should I bring a cell phone, or buy one once I get there?**

Check with your cell phone company to see if you will be able to use your cell phone in Puerto Rico. If so, then you may bring your cell with you.

## **13) Do I make my own flight arrangements?**

Yes, for this program you will make your own flight arrangements. Once you make the flight arrangements (Flight Arrival Form on Studio Abroad), you are to inform the Program Specialist for the UPR program: Lizette Alvarado at [lizette.alvarado@oswego.edu](mailto:lizette.alvarado@oswego.edu).

## **14) Will I be met at the airport?**

Students in this program aren't met at the airport. Students take a taxi from the Luis Muñoz Marin International Airport to the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras campus. Ask the taxi driver to drive you through the Moscoso Toll Bridge to the Plaza Universtaria Residence Hall right in front of the main entrance to the Rio Piedras campus.

**15) Where are the classes held and how often per week?**

Classes are held at the UPR, Rio Piedras campus. Classes are Monday through Friday dependent on your course schedule.

**16) Are the classes different than those in the United States?**

You will take classes alongside Puerto Rican students and other international students with Puerto Rican professors teaching the courses. Only a few classes are taught in English.

**17) Will my credits be accepted at my home school?**

Meet with your academic advisor at your home school to get approval for the courses you plan to take at UPR. You may not get into every class that you choose, thus, choose at least 6 to 7 courses. Go to question #30 for further details on courses at UPR.

**18) How do I do my laundry?**

There is a laundry room in the residence hall.

**19) How will I get to class?**

Students will walk to the UPR campus and to their classes. The UPR campus is right across the road from the Plaza Universitaria Residence Hall.

**20) What are the public forms of transportation?**

Students will walk to downtown Rio Piedras as it is walking distance from the UPR campus. To go to other areas nearby such as Old San Juan, Plaza Las Americas Mall, or Condado Beach, students can take the bus (guagua) which makes a stop at the main entrance to the UPR campus.

**21) What form of currency should I bring?**

The U.S. Dollar is Puerto Rico's currency.

**22) How much money should I bring?**

The amount of money you bring depends on the lifestyle you want to have while you are in Puerto Rico and the amount of time you plan to stay in the island. We recommend on the budget sheet that you bring \$1,000.00 for spending money.

**23) Should I open a bank account?**

You are able to open a bank account in Puerto Rico if you would like. The UPR campus has a bank right on campus, Banco Popular.

**24) Are there internet facilities? Should I bring my laptop?**

It is highly suggested that you bring your laptop. You may also use the campus computer lab.

## **25) What happens if I get sick?**

If you get sick you will go to the campus health center or to the nearest hospital. During orientation you will be provided with the name of the hospital or clinic that you should go to when sick. We highly advise students that when sick or hurt to go to the hospital provided by the UPR staff.

Also, we request that you contact the UPR Office of International Relations when sick to inform them that you are going to the hospital.

## **26) How can my parents get a hold of me in case of an emergency?**

- a) Call Lizette Alvarado, Program Specialist for Puerto Rico at (315)312-5697 or (315)312-2118. If Lizette is not available ask to speak to Dr. Joshua McKeown, Director of the Office of International Education and Programs at SUNY Oswego.
- b) Call Alma Delia Ramos-Pizarro at the University of Puerto Rico, Office of International and Exchange Students at (787)763-7450, or (787)764-0000 Ext. 86204.

## **27) Will meals be provided for me? If so, how many per week?**

UPR-Rio Piedras campus doesn't have a meal plan. Students cook their meals at the residence hall, eat at the university cafeteria, or at nearby kiosks or restaurants.

## **28) Will I need a passport and a student visa?**

No, you will not need a passport or a student visa to study at UPR.

## **29) Can I receive financial aid for Study Abroad?**

Yes, you can receive financial aid for study abroad. If you're a student that receives financial assistance you need to meet with your financial aid advisor to discuss how much financial assistance is available to you for the program.

Start early! Once accepted for this program you will need to bring the Financial Arrangements Form, copy of the letter of acceptance, copy of program invoice, and program budget sheet to the Financial Aid Office at your home campus.

## **30) What kinds of classes are offered during the semester in Puerto Rico?**

Courses are available in the following schools and departments: general studies, business administration, education, humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, social work, art and sciences, Hispanic studies, architecture, public communication, aerospace studies, and military sciences.

Students will carry a minimum of 12 credits and a maximum of 15 credits per semester. To be considered a full time student you have to take 12 credits.

All courses are taught in Spanish except for those courses indicated in the UPR Catalog that are in other languages, including English. It is possible to take courses in English from UPR's English department.

Below is a link to the undergraduate catalog of all courses and descriptions available at UPR, Rio Piedras campus: <http://www.uprrp.edu/registrador/subgraduado.php>. For the actual courses that will be taught in the semester that you will be studying abroad, you will need to view the courses being offered at [http://www.uprrp.edu/registrador/horarios\\_cursos.php](http://www.uprrp.edu/registrador/horarios_cursos.php). Please note that the official courses being offered in a particular semester aren't posted until a month prior to start of program.

### **31) Is there an application process in addition to the SUNY Overseas Study Abroad Application?**

Yes, once accepted to the program by SUNY Oswego Office of International Education and Programs, students will need to complete within 14 days of acceptance the UPR-Rio Piedras campus application.

### **32) Are there UPR specific forms to complete?**

- 1) Solicitud de Admisión por Transferencia a la UPR (UPR application)
- 2) Registration Payment form and fee
- 3) Programa de Vivienda (Housing form) – All student participant in this program will reside at the Plaza Universitaria Residence Hall. The cost per month at \$220.00. Students also pay a deposit of \$220.00 which will be refunded at the end of the semester if there is no damage to the room. The deposit will be due within 14 days of acceptance.
- 4) UPR Medical forms
- 5) UPR Course Form

You can find these forms on our website at [www.oswego.edu/intled](http://www.oswego.edu/intled) under your Studio Abroad account. Forms will only become available to students who are officially accepted into the program.

### **33) Receive mail?**

There is a mail room in the residence hall, so students can receive mail at UPR. Any important mail should be sent via Express mail.