

# Italy

## CASTEL DI SANGRO



### British Council Assistantship

#### Accommodation

**Location(s)** – Castel di Sangro, Abruzzo.

**Price of rent** – €210 a month for a whole house.

**Price of monthly bills** – ~€50

**Organisation of accommodation/gas/electricity/internet/phones** –  
Tim – mobile, Tim Dongle – internet, landlady sorted out the rest.

#### Travel

**Local** – 4 busses a day between Naples and Pescara.

**National** – Trenitalia.

**International** – RyanAir, EasyJet, BA from either Rome or Pescara.

#### Tourism

**Where to go** – Abruzzo National Parks, Naples, Molise, L'Aquila, further afield for Rome, Bologna, Puglia, Pompeii.

**What to see** – Nature, old cities.

**Costs** – ~€60 for trains, ~€70 a night for accommodation.



## Social/Night life

Village had only 6000 people and was very remote so there were not many young people. Went to local bars most evening, a beer was around ~€2. Food also very inexpensive.

## Miscellaneous

The village was ok for one year but is really too remote and small to be worth visiting. There was nothing of special interest.

## Your Placement

### **Assistantship:**

#### **What age group did you work with? How did you find this experience?**

14-18 years old. Absolutely loved it! Very rewarding and had great kids to work with!

#### **How many hours a week did you work? (Teaching hours and preparation time)**

12-15 hours a week

#### **Did you receive teacher training? How did you find teaching for the first time?**

No teacher training, but found it very easy to get started with the support of the teachers.

#### **Any advice or tips on the types of activities your classes responded well to?**

Discussions, newspaper articles and things that relate to them

#### **How did you integrate with other native speakers?**

Always spoke Italian, went out in the evenings and accepted every offer to go out.

#### **Why would you recommend an Assistantship placement?**

A great trial run if you think you might be interested in teaching afterwards!

# Italy

**PADUA** (Padova in Italian)



## University

### Accommodation

**Location(s)** – Erasmus Halls of Residence, north of the city (but only 5 mins away), in a residential area.

**Price of rent** – 275 euros/month (about £235) inc. all bills (for a single room, with a shared bathroom, it's cheaper if you share a bedroom with someone).

**Price of monthly bills** – All bills included as it's a residence.

**Organisation of accommodation/gas/electricity/internet/phones** – The halls of residence has about 150 students, 1/3 Italian students, 2/3 Erasmus students from around the world, you can either have a single bedroom or share a bedroom with 1 other person, all bathrooms are shared between 2 or 3 people. There are three kitchens shared between the whole residence, a gym, a common room, a computer room and lots of parties! The hobs in the kitchen are electric, there are radiators in the bedrooms, as well as a fan for the summer (and a television!) Internet uses a wire to connect and a password to get onto the area's private network, the internet is slow and sometimes doesn't work for a couple days, but it's like that everywhere in Italy! There are phones in each bedroom for making internal calls, external calls can be made but they are costly. Most people buy a cheap phone and a pay and go sim card, the network WIND is usually the best, and you can buy top up cards from any tobacconist.

### Travel

**Local** – Everyone uses a bike to get around the city, you go to the main park and buy a bike that has been stolen from someone else, it's what everyone does, and is completely accepted out there. You're likely to have your own bike stolen at some point, and if you're lucky you can find it again in the park. The bikes are really cheap (around 20 euros) and don't often work too well! Watch out for the tramlines as they can be dangerous, and be prepared to use your bike all the time, even for going out in the evenings!

**National** – The train system is really efficient in Italy, you can get to so many places using the regional trains and they're very cheap compared to in England. Venice is only 2.50 euros and twenty minutes away. You should take advantage of the trains to see as many places as possible (Venezia, Vicenza, Firenze, Bologna, Verona, Milano etc. They're all reachable on the train.)

# PADUA



## Travel cont.

**International** – Ryanair flies to/from Venice-Treviso airport (it's not actually anywhere near Venice, it's just outside the city of Treviso (south of Padova), there is a bus that goes to/from the airport and Padova. The flights are not usually expensive. Easyjet flies to/from Venezia Marco Polo (just outside Venice), you can get there either by bus direct from Padova, or you can take the train to Venezia Mestre and then the bus. There are loads of cheap flights to nearby countries, such as Amsterdam, Malta, Portugal, Morocco, usually on Ryanair or Easyjet.

## Tourism

**Where to go/What to see** – In Padova there is La Cappella degli Scrovegni, a famous chapel with frescoes by Giotto, there is also La Basilica di Sant'Antonio, a massive Basilica dedicated to the Patron Saint of Lost Causes, where lots of people go on pilgrimages. Venice is very near by, as are the other cities mentioned above. I would also recommend San Antonio at Christmas time, it's beautiful and if reachable if you take the train to Rimini, then there is a bus to San Antonio. Though this trip is not possible in one day - there is a really nice hostel there.

**Costs** – You have to pay entrance to the Chapel, but the Basilica is free. For sights in other cities, they are mostly free, though the train fare will obviously cost something, but usually not too much.

## Social/Night life

The nightlife in Padua is quite good, the Erasmus society organizes loads of events, and though there are only a few clubs, they are generally quite good. The main two (LeQueen and FishMarket) often do 2-4-1 deals on their drinks. When you first go to the club you pay 10 euros entrance and get a membership card, you then never pay for entrance again so long as you show the card. LeQueen is outside of the city, about 15mins on bike but as long as you don't go alone it's mostly safe.

Every Wednesday evening students go to Piazza delle Erbe in the centre and socialize, this happens religiously in any weather and is a great way to meet people. I would recommend buying drink earlier and taking it with you. People don't tend to go out until after 11pm-12am as the clubs are empty before that, they're open until around 5/6am so most people return home around 4am



## Miscellaneous

The men in Italy are notorious, they prey on all females, particularly English girls! Don't give out your number and never let them give you a lift (I made that mistake, very nearly turned dangerous!). The girls in Italy don't tend to get dressed up when they go out (in comparison to English girls that is!), if you want to it's not a problem though wearing heels isn't a particularly good idea as all the streets are cobbled and it's hard to ride a bike in them.

The ESN (Erasmus) society organizes nights out multiple times a week, as well as weekend trips to other cities/countries.

## Your Placement

### University: Università degli Studi di Padova

#### **Were there any language courses available? If so, give details.**

There is a complimentary Italian language course given to all Erasmus students, you take a test at the beginning to place you in the correct level class and you then get about 6 hours a week for one semester. There is an exam at the end and you are awarded with a certificate, showing you gained 3 credits. The course only lasts 1 semester and if you want to take it for another you have to pay around 200 euros. There are similar courses in other languages but you have to pay for them.

#### **What sort of modules did/could you take? Any specific recommendations?**

If you study other languages, eg French or Spanish, there are university courses you can take though you should be aware the style of these is very different to the way Southampton teaches languages. Each course is either worth 9 or 12 credits and has various sections to it.

#### **How were you assessed and what sort of level of assessment was expected from you?**

There are exams at the end of semester 1 and 2, the exams work in a different way to in England, they are marked out of 30 points, you need 17 to pass. If you fail the exam the first time round you can retake it 2 weeks later. You only need to pass to earn all the credits for the course, if you get 19 or 29 it is still worth the same amount of credits.

#### **How did the university system work in your city? Were there points that confused you/how did you resolve them?**

When you arrive at the university you are required to choose which courses you want to take, the way you do this is by searching on the Internet for ones you like. Some have to be signed up for other you just turn up to. The system is not particularly clear but the coordinator (Katherine Ackerley) can help you with understand how to choose your modules. The credits system the university uses does not need to be converted, once you have passed a course you take your 'libretto' to your teacher and they sign it saying what you mark was and how many credits the course was worth.



## Your Placement cont.

### **Was there sufficient pastoral support? Where could you find this?**

The teachers themselves are extremely difficult to contact, they have office hours but do not always show up for these and they do not always reply to emails. The Erasmus coordinator in Padova for Southampton, Katherine Ackerley, is extremely helpful and will always guide you to someone else if she cannot help you herself. The Erasmus office in Padova can also help you with queries.

### **How did you integrate with other native students?**

By living in a residence you will easily meet many other students, including Italians as some do not live at home. The ESN society can also put you in contact with other native and non native students.

### **Why would you recommend a University placement?**

So long as you are aware that the university system in Padova is very slow and quite inefficient then it should not come as too much of a shock to you. The social aspect of the university is brilliant and you should take full advantage of everything they offer.