



SPIRU HARET UNIVERSITY

GUIDE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



WELCOME TO THE LARGE HARETIAN FAMILY!

**Universitatea *Spiru Haret*
Bucharest, Romania**

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1. Welcome! Bine ați venit!

Welcome to Bucharest, Romania! This guide is intended for both would-be international students and international students who have already been admitted to study at the *Spiru Haret* University, in Bucharest, Romania. It contains valuable information that you will find useful in the process of choosing a foreign university for starting your higher education studies and then while planning your stay, as well as during your studies in Romania.



(source: the Internet)

2. Romania in brief

Romania lies in south-eastern Europe and it is bordered by Ukraine and Moldova in the northeast, Hungary and Serbia in the west and Bulgaria to the south. Romania also has a sea coast on the Black Sea in the East.

2.1. Official facts:

Capital: Bucharest

Area: 238,391 km²

Climate: temperate-continental

Independence: obtained on 9 May 1877

National Day : 1 December

Currency: Leu

A NATO member since 2004

A EU member since 2007

International Phone Calling Code: +40

Form of government and administrative organization: a republic, divided into 41 *judete*, or counties, and the municipality of Bucharest (Bucuresti) - the capital.

Geography: A large part of Romania's borders with Yugoslavia and Bulgaria is formed by the Danube. The Danube is joined by the Prut River, which forms the border with Moldova. The Carpathian Mountains dominate the western part of Romania, with peaks up to 2,500 m, the

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highest, Moldoveanu, reaching 2,544 m. Major cities are the capital Bucharest, Brasov, Timisoara, Cluj-Napoca, Constanta, Craiova, and Iasi (Jassy).

Language: The official language of the country is Romanian, a Latin language member of the Romance group of the Indo-European family of languages.

Demographics and religion: According to the 2011 census, Romania has 19,042,936 inhabitants, of whom 10.5 % are ethnic minorities. Most Romanians are members of the Romanian Orthodox Church, which is one of the churches of the Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Catholicism is also represented, mostly in the areas inhabited by population of Hungarian descent, mostly in the western part of the country. In Dobrogea, the region lying on the shore of the Black Sea, there is a small Islamic minority, a remnant of the Ottoman colonisation of that province in the past.

2.2. EU Membership

Romania became a member of the European Union in 2007, following a long process of legislative harmonization which was mirrored into social and economic progress. The Romanian educational system is now part of the large and more and more qualitative European education. As a student and later as a professional, holding a diploma awarded by our university, you will fully benefit from the advantages offered by Romania's EU membership.

2.3. Official Holidays

New Year Days: 1st and 2nd January

Unification day: 24 January

Labour Day: 1 May

Easter Days: in spring, not a fixed date

Children's day: 1st June

Whitsundays: 23, 24 June

St. Mary's Day: 15 August

Saint Andrew's Day: 30 November

National Day: 1 December

Christmas Days: 25, 26 December

Traditional holidays :

24 February – Dragobete (similar to St. Valentine's Day); Martisorul Spring festival

1 March - Martisorul Spring Festival

2.4. Sightseeing

As a student of our university, you should not miss the opportunity to discover the magnificent and so different faces of Romania: the mountains with their ski slopes, resorts, caves and lakes, the Black Sea, the Danube Delta – a World Heritage and the second largest Delta in Europe – or the ancient Romanian regions: Moldavia with its religious architecture or Oltenia, famous for its embroideries and carpets. Maramures, famous for wooden sculptures or Bucovina are proud of their old traditions. The Irish author Bram Stoker based his horror novel *Dracula*, on the Romanian fifteenth century prince Vlad Dracul. The castle still lies in Romania, in a region called Bran, near Braşov and is a top tourist attraction. Vlad was also called the Impaler because he would punish people by impaling them!



(source: <http://www.romaniatourism.com/>)

3.

First time in Bucharest?



Take a visit to the capital! It is worthwhile!



BUCHAREST – The Capital

București is the capital city and the commercial centre of Romania. It is located in the southeast of the country, on the banks of the Dâmbovitza River, with a continental climate, with subtropical influences (*average* temperatures: -0° C in winter, $+28^{\circ}$ C in summer). First mentioned in 1459, the city became the capital of Romania in 1862. With a population of approximately 3 mil. inhabitants (plus the suburbs), it is the centre of the Romanian business, education, media and cultural events. Nowadays the city is experiencing an economic and cultural boom. The old city center has been restored to a great extent and it is now the most popular place for entertainment and leisure. Bucharest is also recommended for shopping, as the city with the highest number of shopping malls.

Romania is proud to be a full Member of the European Union since 2007.

3.1. History in a nutshell

First mentioned in 1459, the city became the capital of Romania in 1862. The town originated as a minor settlement on shepherd routes. The mythical founder of the first settlement is said to be the shepherd Bucur, from which its name was formed. It became a princely court and capital of Wallachia

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under Vlad the Impaler in 15th century and from then on developed for the next four centuries as a market town and administrative centre under the domination of the Ottoman Empire. The town was modernised and given a European face under the reign of King Carol I, toward the end of the 19th century, reaching a zenith in terms of glamour and sophistication during the inter-war period. Under the post-war communist regime the city grew in population and became highly industrialised at the expense of its heritage and traditions, suffering immense damage under the communist policies of social engineering and forced industrialisation. The intense economic development of the first decade of the 21st century is now radically transforming Bucharest, setting in motion a new influx of population and economic life.

3.2. Contemporary facts

Economy: Bucharest is the economic engine of Romania, a city that concentrates nearly 15% of the country's over 19 million population and produces about 20% of its GDP and a quarter of Romania's industrial output.

Society: Bucharest acts as a cultural melting pot for the country where people representing communities from all the regions of Romania came to live in search of prosperity. Bucharest is also a multi-ethnic and multicultural centre. For most of its history until the communist period, the town has been very cosmopolitan in its outlook, hosting large and diverse communities such as the Jewish community. The post-communist period marks the new cosmopolitanisation of Bucharest with expatriate workers arriving here and the emergence of new immigrant communities such as the Arabs, the Chinese and the Vietnamese people, followed as the economy develops by Indians, Pakistani and Africans.

Culture : Bucharest is the main cultural and educational centre of the country. Its residents benefit from the presence of numerous theatres – a State Jewish Theatre included – a National Opera House, hosting events in international languages as well, an Athaenaeum, cinemas located both in the centre of the city and in the large malls, within their entertainment areas, museums, foreign cultural centres, and libraries. The National Library of Romania has recently been relocated to new and highly modern premises in the city centre, with a splendid view on the Dambovita river, which crosses the city.

Bucharest is home to most Romanian music bands, of which some enjoy international recognition. The city hosts some of the best electronic music **clubs** in Europe such as **Kristal Glam Club** and **Studio Martin**. Some other notable venues are *Gaia, Bamboo, Fratelli, Kulturhaus* and *Fabrica*.

There are a number of cultural festivals in Bucharest throughout the year, among which the one enjoying a special visibility and fame due to its international guests is the **George Enescu Festival**, named after the most important Romanian composer. Since 2005 Bucharest has had its own **contemporary art biennale**, the **Bucharest Biennale**.



4. Romanian Educational System

The Romanian Educational System is regulated by the Ministry of National Education (www.edu.ro) and has experienced a deep process of modernisation and reorganisation after the fall of the Communism. As a result of this modernization and the infusion of European and World Bank funds, it now enjoys a strong infrastructure and a well-established set of competitive educational institutions at all levels.

4.1. Official Organization

The structure of the education system in Romania consists of two main levels:

A. Pre-university education – divided into 5 levels

1. **Preschool** (or kindergarten) - duration: 3 years (for children aged 3 to 6)
2. **Primary / Elementary School** – Preparatory grade and grades I-IV (for pupils aged 6 to 10)
3. **Secondary school (Gymnasium)** - grades V-VIII (for pupils aged 10 to 14)
4. **High school / college** - grades IX-XII / XIII (for pupils aged 15 to 18 /19) and Vocational education (school of arts and crafts) for secondary school leavers, as an alternative to comprehensive high schools, for pupils aged 15 to 17 (approximately).
5. **Post-secondary education** - can last between 2 to 5 years and usually offers a practical qualification (medical nurse, assistant manager, cook, mechanic, etc)

B. Higher education – was reorganized so as to comply with the Bologna process principles, whose purpose is the creation of the European Higher Education Area, by making academic degree standards and quality assurance standards more comparable and compatible throughout Europe.

The Romanian higher education system consists of 4 levels:

1. Undergraduate Studies: 3-6 years (3 years for most specializations)
2. Master Studies: 2 years
3. Doctoral Studies: 3 years
4. Lifelong learning (post-graduate courses, continuing education).

Universities

According to the information posted on the website of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, www.aracis.ro, there are 56 accredited public universities, 32 accredited private universities, and 23 institutions enjoying temporary authorization.

All universities enjoy autonomy and admission is granted according to their internal regulations. Most of them take into consideration the average grade in the “*Bacalaureat*” (high school graduation) exam; they may also require an interview. For fields like foreign languages, architecture, music or physical education, students may sit for an aptitude test.

Just like in the secondary education system, grades in the higher education system range from 1 to 10, where 10 is the highest, and 5 is the lowest pass. At the end of the undergraduate program, students take a final comprehensive exam called “*Licenta*” (Graduation Exam). They need to pass oral

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and written tests in their areas of studies. The higher education diploma is called “*Diploma de Licenta*” (Graduate Diploma).

4.3. Structure of the academic year

The academic year consists of 2 semesters. The first semester starts on the 1st of October and ends in February, whereas the second semester lasts from the end of February until the end of June. There are four holidays whose dates vary from one year to another: a winter holiday in December, an inter-semester holiday, a spring holiday and a summer holiday.

1st October – opening of the academic year

1st October – till the last week of January: courses (1st semester)

Last week of January – mid February: winter session

Intersemester Holidays (one week)

Last week of February – till the 31st of May : courses (2nd semester)

June: summer session

5. Spiru Haret University (USH)

5.1. Introduction

The Spiru Haret University was founded on 19th January 1991, as part of the *Romania de Maine* Foundation. Having as a model the Harvard Foundation and University, the academic staff of our university has initiated, organized and coordinated education and research activities in the spirit of Spiru Haret, the great scholar, reformer and founder of the modern education system in Romania.

Act no. 443 of 5 July 2002, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 491 on 9 July 2002, ratified the fact that *Spiru Haret* University, upon accreditation, is a ‘higher education institution, a legal person of private law and public utility, a part of the national system of education’.

Spiru Haret University has adopted the ideals and principles set forth by the *Magna Charta Universitatum*, ratified in Bologna in 1988, advocating for the transposition, in higher education and scientific research, of the regulations, standards and values voted during the Bologna Process. The University President and Rector signed the *Magna Charta Universitatum* in Bologna, in 2005 and pledged, on behalf of the University, to observe and promote academic autonomy, fundamental university values and rights, to effectively react to the challenges entailed by the transition to the knowledge-based society, by the globalization process.

The efforts constantly made by *Spiru Haret* University in order to secure its integration into the national and European area of scientific research have been steered to building its own strategy of research-development. All of these clearly mirror the present circumstances and define the set of strategic and

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specific goals of the research-development area, of designing the research-development plan and setting the instruments that are required for its achievement.

The University has always carried out various activities to promote its image, to make its performance more visible. The list of such activities includes, but it is not limited to, participation in important national and international events, establishing partnerships, agreements, relations of cooperation in various areas. The above-described brilliantly prove the wide openness of *Spiru Haret* University to the world, its desire to cooperate at various levels, in the European and international sphere of education and research. Likewise, it represents the expression of the prestige already acquired by our institution, an indisputable proof of its mission of promoting the values of Romanian education, science and culture worldwide.

5.2. International cooperation

Spiru Haret University is a member of European and international organizations:

Alliance of Central-Eastern European Universities (ACEU) – 2009
European Association for ERASMUS Coordinators (EAEC) – 2011
European Association of Career Guidance (EACG) - 2011
Alliance of Universities for Democracy (AUDEM), Tennessee - 1993
Magna Charta Universitatum, Bologna, Signatory party - 2005
Magna Charta Observatory- 2005
European University Association (EUA) – Associate Member- 2005
Balkan Forum for Communication- Founding Member - 2005
Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) - 2006
European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education (CercleS)- 2006
European Association for Architectural Education (EAAE)- 2008
International Association of Universities (IAU)-2008

5.3. Studies

Our University invites you to become a professional in one of the following specializations that welcome international students:

- Accounting
- Management
- Informatics
- Kinetotherapy
- Law
- Psychology
- Physical education
- Veterinary Medicine

5.4. Services

- network of libraries (on-line catalogue, digital library, access to valuable international research data bases)
- on-line learning platform (the Blackboard Learning Platform, offering access to all the information regarding academic programmes, courses, also used for communication with the teaching staff, for doing homework and sitting exams)

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- student dormitories at : Str. Moldovița nr. 5 - 10, Sector 4, București;
Underground station : Aparatorii Patriei;
Busses : 11, 34, 634, 102.

- medical assistance.

5.5. 10 Reasons to study at Spiru Haret University

- 1. Because you will become a professional holding a diploma that is recognized anywhere in the world.**
- 2. Because you will become a professional with a solid educational background, guaranteed by our top academic staff and infrastructure**
- 3. Because you will come to know an amazing land, situated at the border of two worlds, the Occident and the Orient**
- 4. Because you will discover a city once called ,the Little Paris', where the old and the new blend in the most original way**
- 5. Because you will make friends for a lifetime; the Romanian young people are friendly and ready to welcome you**
- 6. Because you will become a part of the large Haretian family – students , graduates, professors, researchers that share the same high values once stated by Spiru Haret, the founder of the Romanian modern educational system**
- 7. Because you will receive high quality education while enjoying the advantages of an accessible tuition fee**
- 8. Because you will learn a beautiful language which is the key to a millenium-old and rich culture**
- 9. Because you will find in our university a friendly, warm environment, with people open to new cultural experiences**
- 10. Because we would be proud to be your guides in the realm of knowledge, your partners in the realm of research and – why not – your fellows in the realm of fun and entertainment ... after the classes, of course!**

6. Your stay in Bucharest



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6.1. Student Visa

Once you get your letter of acceptance from the Romanian Ministry of National Education, you have to apply for Romanian student visa to your closest **ROMANIAN DIPLOMATIC MISSION ABROAD (embassy or consulate)**.

Students arriving from the EU countries, the European Economic Area, as well as from Canada, Croatia, Japan, Moldova, South Korea, Switzerland, USA and Serbia do not need a visa to enter Romania.

All other international students are required to apply for a Romanian student visa prior to arrival.

Student visas may take from two days to two months to process and one can only apply for a student visa once the Ministry of National Education in Romania has issued the letter of acceptance to study. It is best to apply early for the letter of acceptance.

Here are the documents needed to obtain a Student visa:

1. Letter of acceptance from the Romanian Ministry of National Education.
2. Visa application form (at the closest **Romanian ROMANIAN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS ABROAD**).
3. Proof of tuition fees payment for one year (payment must be done after getting the acceptance letter, transferring the fee to the bank account of Spiru Haret University).
4. Proof of sufficient funds for at least a 10 month period in Romania.
5. Original of all documents previously submitted with the application for inscription (admission).

The requirements to get through the passport control at the arrival in Romania:

1. The passport with a valid visa.
2. The copy of the official admission letter.
3. Proof that you are able to live in Romania on your own for the next year.

6.2. Housing matters

As a student of our University you may choose to live in our hostel/dormitories, located in Bucharest, at **Str. Moldovița nr. 5 - 10, sector 4** (see also <http://www.spiruharet.ro/en/cazare-studenti.html>) for about **100.00 EUR a month**.

If you decide to rent an apartment in the city, you may find it useful to know that in general, apartments in Romania come fully furnished, with TV, gas stove, fridge, and beds. Some more up scale ones come with a washing machine and microwaves etc. Cable TV with 24/7 Internet access is available for 15 EUR a month or even less. Apartments cost between €250EUR - 400EUR/month. Utilities for a single or two-room apartment do not exceed €80 a month per person.

6.3. Insurance

<http://www.internationalstudent.com/> is a valuable website, by means of which you can get a medical insurance as a foreign student in Romania.

6.4. Cost of Living

Student living cost in Romania is less expensive than in other European countries, but the monthly amount can vary depending on the lifestyle of each international student. Nevertheless, with 400 to 600 EURO/ month, an international student can live comfortably and enjoy affordable University education in our University.

Here are some approximate student living cost in Romania per month:

- Student hostel: 60 EUR/month
- Private apartment: 250 – 400 Euro/month,
- Food: 150 – 200 EUR,
- Clothes: you must take into account that you need at least winter and summer clothes,
- Medical insurance: 10 EUR/ month (students aged 26 or less do not pay an insurance. It is included in their tuition fee),
- Internet: 15 EUR,
- Transport: 20 EUR,

7. Once in Bucharest

7.1. Registering at the University

USH enrolls for Cycle I – Undergraduate – only high school graduates, holders of a Baccalaureate Diploma or an equivalent, which allows access to higher education. The candidates for Cycle II - Master Programmes should submit a Bachelor's degree, certifying the successful completion of a 3-year (at least) cycle of undergraduate studies. See admission requirements at <http://admitere.spiruharet.ro/> For registration, on arrival, you should submit all the documents in the original, duly certified by the Romanian Embassy or Consulate in your country or apostilled if the studies were completed in non-EU countries.

7.2. Opening a bank account

There are over 40 commercial banks operating in Romania, with about 6.500 banking units in total. Some of biggest banks are: Romanian Commercial Bank (657 units, 21.4% market share), Raiffeisen Bank (558 units), CEC Bank (1.380 units) and Alpha Bank (200 units).

Here is a list list of documents that are generally required in order to open an account, but please keep in mind that each bank has its own internal regulation, so they might ask you for some extra documents. We present you also some information that the bank has the right to check, according to Romanian Laws:

- if the applicant is legally eligible;
- the applicant's identity;
- the applicant's address;
- the registrations regarding undeclared insolvency.

Documents requested for opening a bank account in Romania:

Preliminary checking

According to Romanian laws, any bank has the right to check:

- if the applicant is legally eligible;
- the applicant's identity;
- the applicant's address;
- the registrations regarding undeclared insolvency.

Documents needed:

a) **For resident individuals:** *ID card.*

b) **For nonresident individuals:**

a. **nonresident individual** working for nonresident juridical persons that are authorized to operate in Romania: *Passport; Work Permit*, issued by Romanian authorities.

b. **any other nonresident individual:** *Passport*, or any other ID, according to residential country's laws; *Certificate of Fiscal Residential.*

7.3. Civil Registration

Once you arrive in Romania, and you have made the final enrollment at the university, you have to apply for the residence permit.

To apply for **resident permit, the following documents are required:**

1. Standard application (from the immigration office).
2. Proof of tuition fee payment issued by your University in Romania (so called 'adeverinta').
3. Copy of letter of acceptance for studies issued by the Ministry of Education.
4. Medical certificate issued by a public or private medical institution in Romania, proving that the foreign student does not suffer from any diseases that might endanger public health.
5. The proof of Medical Insurance for those who are over 26 years old.
6. House Contract (house contract is made between you and your landlord at a public notary's office).
7. Passport bio data page and the page showing the date of entry at the Romanian border.
8. Bank statement that prove your means of living for 6 month.
9. 2 recent passport photos.
11. Receipt (attached to your file) of the taxes paid at the Romanian CEC Bank:
 - a. Tax for residence permit = 259 lei (RON)
 - b. Tax for extension of the right to stay = 120 EUR (equivalent in RON)

7.4. Work Permit

Students can work for a maximum of 20 hours per week on regular days and 40 hours per week during holidays.

In order to obtain the work authorization, you need the following documents:

- a. Curriculum Vitae, also containing a personal statement that he/she has no criminal record, that he/she has a fit medical condition to be employed and has minimal knowledge of the Romanian language;
- b. A copy of the studies records necessary for the job or the profession requested for the work permit, translated into Romanian and authenticated by a notary public; the diplomas, certificates and scientific titles issued abroad should be accompanied by the certificate of recognition issued by the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research, in accordance with the field legislation;
- c. Copies of documents certifying the professional training acquired outside the education system or, where appropriate, certifying the professional experience, translated and with an apostille affixed in accordance with the law;
- d. A copy of valid border crossing document;
- e. Student's application to have a work permit issued;
- f. The valid border crossing document on which it is applied the long-stay visa for employment;
- g. Criminal record certificate from the student's country of origin or residence, certifying that he/she has no criminal record;

- h. Medical document attesting the state of health, issued by competent medical institutions, according to legal provisions showing that the person is fit for employment;
- i. 2 photos type 3/4;
- j. Medical health certificate and updated tax certificate, if between the date of filing for a favorable opinion and the date of filing for the work permit more than 60 days have passed.

8. Everyday life

8.1. Food

Romania has had influence from both invaders and neighbors where its traditional cuisine is concerned. Romania's traditional food sees touches of Turkish, Hungarian, Austrian, and other cuisines, but over the years, these dishes have become just as traditional as the oldest Romanian traditional foods.

Typical Dishes:

Romanian traditional foods heavily feature meat. Cabbage rolls (**sarmale**), sausages, **mici**, and stews (like **tocanita**) are popular main dishes. **Muschi poiana** consists of mushroom- and bacon-stuffed beef in a puree of vegetables and tomato sauce. You can also sample traditional Romanian fish dishes, like the salty, grilled carp called **saramura**.

Soups, appetizers, side dishes in Romania

Soups - made with or without meat, or made with fish - are usually offered on menus at Romanian restaurants. **Zama** is a green bean soup with chicken, parsley, and dill. You may also encounter **pilaf** and moussaka, vegetables prepared in various ways (including stuffed peppers), and polenta.

(source: <http://goeasteurope.about.com/od/romania/p/romanianfood.htm>)

8.2. Shopping

Bucharest's main and most popular shopping areas are the shopping centres and malls (AFI Palace, Sun Plaza, Baneasa Shopping Center etc), as well as B-dul Magheru and - increasingly - Calea Victoriei.

8.3. Cultural life, recreation and fun

Bucharest offers some excellent attractions, and has, in recent years, cultivated a sophisticated, trendy, and modern sensibility that many have come to expect from a European capital. Bucharest has been undergoing major modernization programs in recent years and is still going to continue with these projects in the years to come. Museums, theatres, art galleries, for sophisticated tastes or for student information alternate with clubs, malls, parks, restaurants, pubs for fun. See also <http://wikitravel.org/en/Bucharest> .

We wish you a nice stay and successful studies at USH!