

WELCOME TO VALENCIA!

You may already have seen all sorts of information about Valencia, its universities and its autonomous region: history, art, culture, cities and towns, gastronomy, social life etc. Perhaps you have also read something about the fact that, essentially, it is a society in which two languages live side by side.

In fact, the *Comunitat Valenciana* ('Valencian Community'), also known by the name of *País Valencià* ('Land of Valencia' or 'Valencian Country'), has its own language, Valencian, also referred to as Catalan, particularly in academic and international environments, which it shares with other regions in Spain and France, with Andorra, where it is the only official language, and with Alghero, an Italian town on the Island of Sardinia. In other words, you will hear the same language being spoken in Valencia, in Barcelona, in Palma de Majorca or in Ibiza. Nowadays, Catalan is spoken in areas covering a total of some 59,000 square kilometres, with around 11 million inhabitants, of which those who speak Catalan come to more than 7 million. To give you an idea in terms of other European languages, the number of Catalan speakers is roughly similar to those who speak Swedish, Portuguese or Greek, and is more widely spoken than other European Union official languages.

Catalan is a Romance language, which means that like French, Spanish, Italian or Portuguese, it has its roots in Latin. It developed in the north of Catalonia in the Middle Ages, from where was taken to the regions of Valencia with the conquest and repopulation from the 13th century onwards. Since then, Catalan has had its ups and downs as a result of nearly 300 years of prohibition, but has been the language of culture, of public administration, and of daily life in these communities. It has been employed by a wide range of prestigious classical and contemporary writers, such as Ramon Llull, Ausiàs March or Mercè Rodoreda. The present official languages are Catalan and Spanish (referred to as Valencian and Castilian). In 1982 a statute of autonomy was passed, the law of self-government of the Valencian people. As for the language, in 1983 the Act of Use and Teaching of Valencian established Valencian as the official language together with Castilian, and a set of measures for its promotion and normal use in all spheres of society. The *Acadèmia Valenciana de la Llengua* is the regulating institution for Valencian.

Currently both Valencian and Castilian are to be found, with somewhat unequal frequency, in all areas of daily life, from the political and academic, to businesses, communication and education. Both languages are a normal means of expression in university governing and representative bodies, as well as in teaching and other academic, administrative and cultural activities.

LEARNING THE LANGUAGE

The Universitat de València, as an institution with a commitment to spreading the culture of its environment, actively participates in the development of Catalan in all the socio-linguistic functions of a language of modern culture. To this end, you have the opportunity to use the facilities and resources of the

Servei de Política Lingüística (Language Policy Service), where, amongst other things, activities for learning Valencian are organised.

Knowledge of Valencian will enable you to become even more integrated and give you a deeper insight into our society. Don't miss out! The *Servei de Política Lingüística* offers specific courses for all students coming from outside the *País Valencià*.

COURSES ON OFFER

Basic Catalan for foreign students

The general aims of these courses focus on developing comprehension and speaking skills. At the end of the course, students will be able to deal with essential day-to-day situations in Valencian.

Cultural visits to Valencia's historic centre have also been programmed as extra course activities.

Courses are also backed up with specific conversation groups for exchange students. The conversation group consists of a small group of learners who meet specifically to talk, in order to improve their pronunciation and fluency, consolidate grammatical structures and widen their vocabulary.

All courses are free.

For more information visit: <http://www.spluv.es/intercanvi> or phone 96 393 71 60.

In addition, so learners can take their studies further, the *Servei de Política Lingüística* has a self-learning centre on each university campus. This is a type of specialised Catalan language library where you will find not only dictionaries, encyclopaedias, text books, literature, audiovisual material, newspapers and magazines, and everything to do with learning languages, but also specialist language tutors to help you with any problems and offer assessment and guidance. The self-learning centres provide you with a set of materials to help you study Catalan according to your own needs. You decide what resources to consult, when and how often, and set your own learning pace. Here are the addresses:

Self-learning Language Centre
Blasco Ibáñez Campus
Llengua Campus de Blasco Ibáñez
Aulari V, planta baixa
Carrer de Gascó Oliag, 5
Telefon: 96 393 76 08
46010 València

Self-learning Language Centre
Tarongers Campus
Aulari Nord. Ground floor
Telephone: 96 382 89 18

Self-learning Language Centre
Burjassot Campus
Science Library. Ground floor
Telephone: 96 394 32 00