

# Es-Cultura:

Spanish Language  
and Cultural  
Immersion Program

A group of seven young adults, four women and three men, are standing outdoors in front of a building with a red corrugated metal roof. They are all smiling and posing for the camera. They are wearing traditional Costa Rican clothing, including white blouses with colorful geometric patterns, yellow and black patterned skirts, and a blue shirt with a colorful sash. One man is wearing sunglasses and a blue shirt. The background shows lush green foliage and a clear sky.

An experience that goes beyond language learning: the program is an immersion into the culture of Costa Rica and the vibrant cultural diversity of the EARTH Community



# Es-Cultura: Spanish Language and Cultural Immersion Program

Since its launch in 2011, the Spanish Language and Cultural Immersion Program at EARTH University (Es-Cultura) has provided Spanish language and cultural competence training to hundreds of students from more than 30 non-Spanish-speaking countries in Africa, the Caribbean, the Americas, Europe and Asia. Es-Cultura has been an invaluable support tool, helping students speak and understand Spanish fluently.

Five months prior to beginning their studies at EARTH, students travel to Costa Rica to learn Spanish. During this time, they live with a Costa Rican host family, immerse themselves in the country's daily life, deepen their understanding of the culture, and gradually establish a new sense of home. At the conclusion of this phase, they begin their studies in Agricultural Sciences while continuing Spanish instruction until reaching at least a B1 proficiency level. With these strengthened language skills, they gain a broader perspective on the world and are well-prepared to pursue a degree taught almost entirely in Spanish.

## Methodology

Guided by EARTH's philosophy of learning by doing, Es-Cultura adopts a dynamic approach where language comes to life in workshops, conversations, and hands-on activities. Beyond books and classrooms, students practice the language alongside Costa Rican families and within a diverse university community. The program also includes personalized tutoring that complements the cultural immersion, creating an environment where learning is natural and continuous.

Es-Cultura is divided into two phases:

### Intensive Phase

- ✓ Lasts 20 weeks before the official start of the Agricultural Sciences Program and includes two modules: Spanish and Intercultural Induction.
- ✓ Offers intensive Spanish classes (up to 24 hours per week), including field visits to farms, laboratories, and other academic spaces.
- ✓ Includes participation in multicultural coexistence workshops, university life orientation, socioemotional support groups, and various activities with host families.

### Regular Phase

- ✓ Takes place during the first semester of the program's first year and includes small-group Spanish workshops with weekly sessions connected to specific academic topics.
- ✓ Includes communicative and task-based activities where students use Spanish in real-life contexts such as interviews, forums, presentations, and daily interactions.





## Es-Cultura offers five courses:

01

### Course ELE001 (Level A1):

Introduces students to Spanish and enables them to communicate at a basic level in daily and academic situations. Focuses on simple descriptions, daily routines, and activities with the host family.

02

### Course ELE002 (Level A2):

Expands communication skills based on present and past events. Includes guided visits to academic spaces and encourages interaction within the university environment, such as offices and labs.

03

### Course ELE003 (Beginners B1 Level):

Develops the ability to give instructions and narrate in past and future tenses. Reinforces the use of polite language and encourages community interaction in cultural contexts.

04

### Course ELE101 (Mid B1 Level):

Introduces academic reading and writing, oral presentations, and participation in academic activities. Helps students reflect on their learning goals, such as the Professional Internship they will complete in their third year.

05

### Course ELE102 (Advanced B1 and Beginners B2 Levels):

Introduces more complex structures for fluent and natural communication. Also promotes the development of academic reports with formal elements like citations and references.

# Host Families

One of the program's most valuable pillars is the involvement of host families, who open their homes to international students. These families provide a safe and welcoming environment and enrich their own lives with new cultural experiences.

The program's impact extends to 12 neighboring communities around the Guácimo Campus, where students live with carefully selected families. To qualify, families must meet specific requirements to ensure a positive experience for the students. They are expected to show commitment by giving informed consent and completing an application form that provides general information about their household.

In addition to gaining cultural knowledge, host families become informal Spanish teachers and strengthen their own skills through training provided by the program. Topics include cultural diversity, coexistence, safety, basic emergency care, cooking, and more.

All families have shared that this experience has enriched their lives in many ways, and the financial incentive they receive has also been meaningful. This financial support not only covers the student's needs but also helps many families fund personal projects, such as their children's education or home improvements.

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*For me, the Spanish Program means gaining experience, acquiring knowledge, and putting that knowledge into practice. It's learning by doing. During the Program, the teachers made Spanish seem easy and accessible. They were patient with all of us. It was a beautiful time with classmates from different parts of Africa and the Caribbean. I discovered that I love learning languages. I didn't just learn Spanish, I also learned about culture, respect, and the different ways teachers share their knowledge.*

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