K12 ACADEMICS — INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERIES

Studying in Bosnia & Herzegovina

A guide for international students & families — how Bosnian higher education works, the student visa and residence permit, affordable tuition, English programs, and student life in Sarajevo.

K12 ACADEMICS

Find Your Community

2026 EDITION

ABOUT K12 ACADEMICS

The world's largest education resource.

Online since 2004, K12 Academics has helped millions of families, students and educators **find the right school, college, camp, business and program in their community** — for every kind of learner.

AFFORDABLE, HISTORIC, ENGLISH OPTIONS

Bosnia and Herzegovina offers **affordable, Bologna-aligned degrees**, a growing set of **English-taught programs** (led by the International University of Sarajevo), and life in one of Europe—s most historic and welcoming settings. It's an EU candidate, not a member. Non-EU students need a **student visa and a temporary residence permit**, with a strict **48-hour registration** on arrival. This guide walks it in **ten steps**.

General guidance, not legal or immigration advice. Bosnia and Herzegovina is an EU candidate (not a member) with a complex, multi-level system; degree recognition abroad varies, so verify it. Rules, tuition, and funds change. The details here are recent examples and **must be confirmed with the BiH embassy, the Service for Foreigners' Affairs, and your university**.

1

STEP 01 OF 10

Understand Why Students Choose Bosnia

WHAT TO KNOW

Bosnia and Herzegovina offers **very affordable tuition and living, English-taught programs (especially at IUS), a rich multicultural history, and a safe, welcoming atmosphere** — with Bologna-aligned, ECTS-based degrees.

BY THE NUMBERS

Affordable	English programs	Historic
tuition & living	IUS, SSST	multicultural Sarajevo

HOW TO HELP

Weigh Bosnia's **affordability and English options** against its EU-candidate status and complex system (verify recognition) — for budget-focused students, it's an accessible, characterful choice.

GOOD TO KNOW

The **International University of Sarajevo (IUS)** teaches in English and actively recruits international students — the main English-medium route.

2

STEP 02 OF 10

Understand the System

WHAT TO KNOW

Public universities include the **University of Sarajevo** (the largest), **Banja Luka**, **Tuzla** (medicine/sciences), and **Mostar**. Private, English-medium options include the **International University of Sarajevo (IUS)** and the **Sarajevo School of Science and Technology (SSST)**. Higher education is regulated largely at the **canton/entity level**.

BY THE NUMBERS

Univ of Sarajevo	IUS / SSST	Canton-regulated
largest public	English-medium private	complex system

HOW TO HELP

Choose between **affordable public universities** (Sarajevo, Tuzla) and **English-medium private universities** (IUS, SSST), and note that rules vary by canton/entity.

WATCH OUT

Bosnia's system is **regulated at the canton/entity level** — rules (and recognition) can vary, so check your specific institution carefully.

3

STEP 03 OF 10

Get the Visa & Residence Permit

WHAT TO KNOW

Students from visa-regime countries apply for a **student visa** at a BiH embassy, using an **invitation/acceptance letter** from the university. After arriving, you must **register within 48 hours** and apply for a **temporary residence permit** (via the Service for Foreigners' Affairs / Ministry of Security).

BY THE NUMBERS

Student visa	Register	Residence permit
invitation letter	within 48 hours!	Service for Foreigners'

HOW TO HELP

Get your **invitation letter**, apply for the **student visa** at a BiH embassy, then **register within 48 hours** of arrival and apply for your temporary residence permit.

WATCH OUT

The **48-hour registration** after arrival is strict — missing it can mean fines or worse, so handle it immediately (your university often assists).

4

STEP 04 OF 10

Apply to Universities

WHAT TO KNOW

Apply **directly to universities**. Your prior **degree usually must be recognized/validated in BiH** (before master's/PhD), and documents **translated by a court translator** (into Bosnian or English) with a police-clearance certificate. Public universities often require **subject entrance exams**; visa-regime enrollment starts early (~July).

BY THE NUMBERS

Apply directly	Diploma recognition	Entrance exams
to universities	+ court translation	public universities

HOW TO HELP

Apply **directly**, arrange **diploma recognition** and court-translated documents plus a police-clearance certificate, and prepare for any subject entrance exam — start early if you need a visa.

GOOD TO KNOW

Foreign degrees usually need **recognition/validation before you can enroll** in a master's/PhD — begin this early.

5

STEP 05 OF 10

Plan for Tuition & Funding

WHAT TO KNOW

Tuition is **affordable**: international students typically pay **~€1,000–3,000/year** (public universities are cheapest; IUS charges international students in EUR, with PhD around €9,000). Scholarships, tuition waivers, and Erasmus+ opportunities are available.

BY THE NUMBERS

International	IUS	Scholarships
~€1,000–3,000/yr	EUR fees; PhD ~€9,000	+ Erasmus+

HOW TO HELP

Budget the **affordable tuition** (public is cheapest; IUS charges international students in EUR) plus low living costs, and pursue scholarships and Erasmus+.

GOOD TO KNOW

IUS charges **local/Balkan citizens in local currency (BAM) and international students in EUR** — check the exact fee for your citizenship.

6

STEP 06 OF 10

Meet the Financial Requirement

WHAT TO KNOW

For the visa/permit you must prove **sufficient funds** (a bank statement), plus **health insurance** (~€300–600/year), proof of accommodation, and a police-clearance certificate. The visa fee is around €50. Confirm the exact funds amount, as it varies.

BY THE NUMBERS

Funds	Insurance	Visa fee
bank statement	~€300–600/yr	~€50

HOW TO HELP

Prepare **proof of funds**, **health insurance**, accommodation proof, and a police-clearance certificate — and confirm the current required amount with your embassy.

GOOD TO KNOW

Confirm the exact **funds figure** with the BiH embassy — it varies, and complete, translated documents avoid delays.

7

STEP 07 OF 10

Meet Language Requirements

WHAT TO KNOW

Programs are taught in **Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian** (using Latin and Cyrillic scripts) or, at IUS and SSST, **in English**. For English programs you'll prove English; some local language helps daily life, but you can study fully in English.

BY THE NUMBERS

Local languages	English	Some local
Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian	IUS, SSST	helps daily life

HOW TO HELP

Confirm your program's language (English at IUS/SSST), prove English where required, and pick up some of the local language for daily life.

GOOD TO KNOW

You can study **fully in English** at IUS or SSST — elsewhere, instruction is in the local languages.

8

STEP 08 OF 10

Prepare for the Move

WHAT TO KNOW

Remember the **48-hour registration**, then complete your **residence permit, insurance, and banking**. Living costs are low (€300–500/month), and Sarajevo, Tuzla, and Mostar offer affordable housing and a rich cultural scene. (Note: some universities' rules don't allow accompanying family.)

BY THE NUMBERS

48-hour registration	Low costs	Historic cities
first!	€300–500/mo	Sarajevo, Mostar

HOW TO HELP

Handle the **48-hour registration and residence permit** promptly, arrange insurance and banking, and enjoy Bosnia's low costs and historic cities.

GOOD TO KNOW

Some universities' contracts **don't permit accompanying family members** — check before making family plans.

9

STEP 09 OF 10

Understand Work Rules

WHAT TO KNOW

International students may generally **work part-time** during their studies, subject to the applicable rules — useful for experience and expenses in a low-cost country. Confirm the current conditions with your university.

BY THE NUMBERS

Work	Helps	Studies first
part-time (confirm)	experience & costs	the priority

HOW TO HELP

You can generally **work part-time** (confirm the current rules with your university), which — given Bosnia's low costs — can meaningfully help with expenses.

GOOD TO KNOW

Confirm the **current student work rules** — they depend on your permit and can vary by entity/canton.

10 STEP 10 OF 10

Thrive & Work After Study

WHAT TO KNOW

As an EU candidate, Bosnia offers **Bologna-aligned degrees** that support mobility in the region and toward the EU. After graduating, explore local opportunities or further study — and, importantly, **verify how your degree is recognized** in the country where you'll use it.

BY THE NUMBERS

Bologna degrees	Verify recognition	Further study
+ regional mobility	before relying on it	or local work

HOW TO HELP

Plan your path with **degree recognition in mind** (verify it where you'll use the degree), and explore local work or further study — confirming current post-study rules.

WATCH OUT

As an EU candidate (not member), **verify degree recognition** in your target country before relying on it.

QUICK REFERENCE

Studying in Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Essentials

A snapshot — BiH is an EU candidate (not member) with a complex system; verify degree recognition, and confirm details with the embassy, Service for Foreigners' Affairs, and your university.

The system

Public universities (Sarajevo/largest, Banja Luka, Tuzla, Mostar) and English-medium private universities (IUS, SSST); Bologna/ECTS; regulated at the canton/entity level.

Visa & permit

Visa-regime students need a student visa (via an invitation letter) at a BiH embassy, must register within 48 hours of arrival, and apply for a temporary residence permit (Service for Foreigners' Affairs).

Tuition

Affordable: international students ~€1,000–3,000/year (public cheapest; IUS charges international students in EUR, PhD ~€9,000); scholarships and Erasmus+ available.

Money & language

Prove funds (bank statement) plus health insurance (~€300–600/year), accommodation, and police clearance; local languages or English (IUS, SSST); some family-accompaniment restrictions.

Work & after

Students may generally work part-time (confirm); Bologna-aligned degrees support regional/EU mobility — but verify recognition where you'll use the degree.

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