K12 ACADEMICS — INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERIES

Studying in Brazil

A guide for international students & families — how Brazilian higher education works, the VITEM IV student visa, free public universities, Portuguese & English programs, and work.

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.

FREE PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES — FOR EVERYONE, INCLUDING INTERNATIONALS

Brazil offers something rare: **free public universities — constitutionally tuition-free for everyone, including international students**. USP ranks #1 in Latin America; UNICAMP and the federal universities are close behind. Admission is competitive (via the vestibular, ENEM, or the PEC-G/PEC-PG agreement programs). Students get a **VITEM IV visa** and register with the Federal Police after arrival. This guide walks it in **ten steps**.

General guidance, not legal or immigration advice. Brazilian rules, tuition, and the funds requirement change and vary by consulate. The details here are recent examples and **must be confirmed with the Brazilian consulate, the Federal Police, and your university**.

1

STEP 01 OF 10

Understand Why Students Choose Brazil

WHAT TO KNOW

Brazil offers **free public universities (for everyone, including internationals), Latin America's top university (USP), strong research, growing English-taught master's, and a rich, dynamic student life** — outstanding value in South America.

BY THE NUMBERS

Free	USP	Research
public universities	#1 in Latin America	+ growing English master's

HOW TO HELP

Weigh Brazil's **free public tuition and research strength** against fierce entry competition and the Portuguese requirement — for funded, high-quality study, the value is exceptional.

WATCH OUT

Public-university tuition is **free — constitutionally guaranteed — for everyone, including international students** once admitted; you pay only small administrative charges.

2

STEP 02 OF 10

Understand the System

WHAT TO KNOW

Public universities (USP, UNICAMP, UFRJ, UFMG, UNESP, and the federal system) are **free but fiercely competitive**; **private universities** (PUC, Insper, FGV) charge tuition but are easier to enter. Undergraduate teaching is mostly in **Portuguese**; English-taught master's are growing.

BY THE NUMBERS

Public	Private	Undergrad
USP, UNICAMP (free)	PUC, Insper, FGV	mostly Portuguese

HOW TO HELP

Choose between **free, competitive public universities** and **easier-entry private universities** — and note undergrad is mostly Portuguese, with more English at master's level.

GOOD TO KNOW

Public universities are **free but demanding to enter**; private universities charge tuition but admit more readily — weigh cost against competition.

3

STEP 03 OF 10

Get the VITEM IV Visa & Register

WHAT TO KNOW

After enrollment, apply for the **VITEM IV student visa** at a Brazilian consulate (with your acceptance letter, funds proof, and insurance; passport valid 6+ months). After arriving, get a **CPF (tax ID) and register with the Federal Police within 90 days** to receive your **CRNM/RNM residence card**.

BY THE NUMBERS

VITEM IV	Federal Police	+ CPF
the student visa	within 90 days	tax ID

HOW TO HELP

Apply for the **VITEM IV visa** at a Brazilian consulate after enrollment, then get your **CPF and register with the Federal Police within 90 days** for your residence card.

WATCH OUT

The **90-day Federal Police registration** (for the CRNM/RNM card) is essential — do it promptly, and get your CPF early.

4

STEP 04 OF 10

Apply to Universities

WHAT TO KNOW

Several routes lead to a place: the **vestibular** (entrance exam), **ENEM** (national exam), an **international selection process**, or the **PEC-G (undergrad) / PEC-PG (graduate) agreement programs** for partner countries. Prove **Portuguese (Celpe-Bras)** or English per the program; documents must be **apostilled and translated**.

BY THE NUMBERS

Routes	PEC-G / PEC-PG	Portuguese
vestibular, ENEM, international	agreement programs	Celpe-Bras

HOW TO HELP

Choose your route — vestibular/ENEM, an international process, or **PEC-G/PEC-PG** — prove Portuguese (Celpe-Bras) or English, and apostille/translate your documents.

GOOD TO KNOW

PEC-G/PEC-PG are the most accessible routes for many internationals — structured, agreement-based free public places (applied for through Brazilian missions).

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STEP 05 OF 10

Plan for Tuition & Scholarships

WHAT TO KNOW

Public universities are **free (constitutionally, for all nationalities)** — you pay only small administrative charges. Private universities charge **$2,000–8,000/year**. Scholarships mainly fund living/research: **PEC-G** (sometimes a living grant), **PEC-PG** (free tuition + a CAPES/CNPq stipend), and university grants.

BY THE NUMBERS

Public	Private	PEC-PG
FREE (constitutional)	$2,000–8,000/yr	free + CAPES/CNPq stipend

HOW TO HELP

Budget for **free public tuition** (or private $2,000–8,000/year) plus living costs, and pursue PEC-G/PEC-PG or CAPES/CNPq funding — which mainly cover living and research.

GOOD TO KNOW

Scholarships are **for living and research, not tuition** (public tuition is already free) — PEC-PG adds a monthly CAPES/CNPq stipend.

6

STEP 06 OF 10

Meet the Financial Requirement

WHAT TO KNOW

For the VITEM IV you show **proof of funds for living costs (~$500–1,000/month; separate from tuition)** — via a bank statement, a scholarship letter (PEC-G/PEC-PG/CAPES/CNPq/university), or a sponsor declaration — plus health insurance. There's no single fixed nationwide figure; present numbers conservatively above the minimum.

BY THE NUMBERS

Funds	Or scholarship	+ insurance
~$500–1,000/month	letter	required

HOW TO HELP

Prepare **proof of funds (~$500–1,000/month living)** or a scholarship letter, plus insurance — public tuition is free, so this covers living costs; present figures conservatively.

GOOD TO KNOW

There's **no single fixed figure** — consulates set expectations; show clear evidence above the minimum.

7

STEP 07 OF 10

Meet Language Requirements

WHAT TO KNOW

Undergraduate teaching is mostly in **Portuguese**, so you typically prove Portuguese via the **Celpe-Bras** exam; **English-taught master's programs are growing**. Even in English programs, Portuguese greatly helps daily life — start learning it early.

BY THE NUMBERS

Portuguese	English	Portuguese
Celpe-Bras (undergrad)	growing master's	helps daily life

HOW TO HELP

Prove **Portuguese (Celpe-Bras)** for undergrad or English for growing master's programs, and start Portuguese early — it's essential for daily life.

GOOD TO KNOW

Leaving **Portuguese too late** is a common mistake — start early, and schedule Celpe-Bras well ahead.

8

STEP 08 OF 10

Prepare for the Move

WHAT TO KNOW

After arriving, get your **CPF, register with the Federal Police (within 90 days), open a bank account, and arrange housing**. Formal student residences are limited, so most students find a **república (shared house) or kitnet (studio)**. Living costs run **$500–1,000/month** (São Paulo and Rio higher).

BY THE NUMBERS

CPF + Federal Police	Housing	$500–1,000/month
first tasks	república or kitnet	living costs

HOW TO HELP

Handle arrival admin — **CPF, Federal Police (90 days), banking, housing (república/kitnet)** — and budget $500—1,000/month.

GOOD TO KNOW

Formal student residences are **limited** — most students find a república or kitnet; the CPF is needed for banking and daily life.

9 STEP 09 OF 10

Understand Work & Internships

WHAT TO KNOW

VITEM IV holders may undertake **internships linked to their course (up to 20 hours per week during the academic period)** — the main practical route to experience. General employment isn't part of the student visa; internships and research/teaching assistantships are the norm.

BY THE NUMBERS

Internships	Assistantships	Not
up to 20 hrs/week (in-course)	research/teaching	general employment

HOW TO HELP

Use **course-linked internships (up to 20 hrs/week)** and research/teaching assistantships for experience — general employment isn't part of the student visa.

GOOD TO KNOW

Internships and **assistantships** are the practical career route on a VITEM IV — plan around them rather than general jobs.

10 STEP 10 OF 10

Thrive & Work After Study

WHAT TO KNOW

Brazil's research strength and dynamic economy offer opportunities, and the VITEM IV can **transition to a work visa after you complete your studies** (with a formal job offer from a Brazilian company). Confirm the current pathway, and use your Portuguese across the region.

BY THE NUMBERS

Research	Work visa	Portuguese
+ dynamic economy	after study (job offer)	regional edge

HOW TO HELP

Plan for the **transition to a work visa after graduation** (with a job offer), leverage Brazil's research and economy, and use your Portuguese across the region.

GOOD TO KNOW

The **VITEM IV can transition to a work visa** after you finish, with a formal job offer — a clear post-study route.

QUICK REFERENCE

Studying in Brazil: The Essentials

A snapshot — figures and the funds requirement vary by consulate, so confirm with the Brazilian consulate, the Federal Police, and your university.

The system

Free public universities (USP — #1 in Latin America — UNICAMP, UFRJ, UFMG, UNESP, and the federal system; competitive, mostly Portuguese) and private universities (PUC, Insper, FGV; easier entry, tuition-charging); English-taught master's are growing.

Visa & registration

Apply for the VITEM IV student visa at a Brazilian consulate after enrollment; on arrival, get a CPF and register with the Federal Police within 90 days for your CRNM/RNM residence card.

Admission & tuition

Routes: vestibular, ENEM, an international process, or PEC-G/PEC-PG agreement programs; public tuition is free (constitutional) for all nationalities; private universities charge $2,000–8,000/year.

Money & language

Show proof of funds for living (~$500–1,000/month; no fixed figure) or a scholarship letter, plus insurance; Portuguese (Celpe-Bras) for undergrad, growing English at master's level.

Work & after

Course-linked internships up to 20 hrs/week (plus assistantships) are the practical route; the VITEM IV can transition to a work visa after graduation with a job offer.

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