

Studying in Estonia

A guide for international students & families — how Estonia's digital-forward higher education works, the study residence permit, tuition, English programs, and the 9-month post-study window.

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DIGITAL-FORWARD, AFFORDABLE, EU

Estonia is one of the world's most **digital societies**, with much of the admissions and residency process handled online. It offers **100+ English-taught programs, low living costs, free Estonian-taught tuition**, and a generous **9-month window to find work after graduating**. Non-EU students get a **study residence permit**. This guide walks it in **ten steps**.

General guidance, not legal or immigration advice. Estonian rules, tuition (incl. recent waiver changes at some universities), and the funds requirement change. The figures here are recent examples and **must be confirmed with Study in Estonia, the Police and Border Guard Board (PPA), and your university.**

Understand Why Students Choose Estonia

WHAT TO KNOW

Estonia offers a **highly digital, efficient system**; **100+ English-taught programs**; **very low living costs**; **free Estonian-taught tuition**; and a **generous 9-month post-study window** — in a safe, tech-forward EU country.

BY THE NUMBERS

Digital & efficient

much done online

Free in Estonian

any nationality

270 days

to find work after

HOW TO HELP

Weigh Estonia's **efficiency, affordability, and post-study window** against its small scale (English hiring concentrated in Tallinn/Tartu) — it's an underrated, tech-forward pick.

GOOD TO KNOW

Estonia's **digital administration** makes many steps faster than elsewhere — a real convenience for international students.

Understand the System

WHAT TO KNOW

Estonian higher education is led by the **University of Tartu** (the best-ranked university in the Baltics), **TalTech** (Tallinn University of Technology), **Tallinn University**, and the **Estonian Academy of Arts**, among others. Degrees follow the Bologna/ECTS system.

BY THE NUMBERS

University of Tartu

top in the Baltics

TalTech

technology

100+ programs

in English

HOW TO HELP

Choose among Estonia's **universities** — Tartu for breadth and research, TalTech for technology — and note the (narrower than larger countries) English-program catalogue.

GOOD TO KNOW

The University of Tartu is the **highest-ranked university in the Baltics** — a strong, research-driven choice.

Get the Visa & Residence Permit

WHAT TO KNOW

Non-EU/EEA students need a **long-stay (D) visa** to enter, then a **temporary residence permit (TRP) for study** — issued by the **Police and Border Guard Board (PPA)**, not an embassy, and covering your whole study period. Citizens of ~60 countries can enter visa-free and apply for the TRP **from inside Estonia**.

BY THE NUMBERS

Long-stay (D) visa

to enter

TRP

from the PPA

~60 countries

apply from inside

HOW TO HELP

Apply for the **D visa** at an Estonian embassy (or, if visa-free, enter and apply for the **TRP from inside Estonia**) — the TRP covers your whole study period plus a buffer.

GOOD TO KNOW

The **TRP is issued by the PPA** (not an embassy) and covers your **entire study period** — a convenient single permit.

Apply Through DreamApply

WHAT TO KNOW

Many Estonian universities use the **DreamApply** portal for international applications. Deadlines cluster in **March–April** (master's mid-March, bachelor's and integrated medicine mid-April; TalTech non-EU around 1 April). Diploma recognition, if unclear, goes via ENIC/NARIC Estonia.

BY THE NUMBERS

DreamApply

the common portal

March–April

deadlines

Recognition

via ENIC/NARIC if unclear

HOW TO HELP

Apply via **DreamApply** (or the university's system) by the March–April deadlines, and prepare certified documents — the university usually decides equivalence, with unclear cases going to NARIC.

WATCH OUT

Non-EU deadlines fall **earlier (March–April)** — start early to leave time for the visa/permit.

Understand Tuition & Funding

WHAT TO KNOW

Estonian-taught programs at public universities are **free for any nationality** (if you carry a full 60 ECTS/year and finish on time). **English-taught** programs cost roughly **€1,660–8,000/year**. Note: the University of Tartu **ended full waivers for new non-EU students from 2026/27**. Scholarships exist (government, university).

BY THE NUMBERS

Estonian-taught

FREE (any nationality)

English-taught

~€1,660–8,000/yr

Tartu waivers

ended 2026/27

HOW TO HELP

Consider the **free Estonian-language route** or budget for English-program tuition (and note Tartu ended full non-EU waivers), and pursue government and university scholarships.

WATCH OUT

Some universities are **tightening tuition waivers** for non-EU students — confirm the current fee (and any waiver) for your specific program.

Meet the Financial Requirement

WHAT TO KNOW

Rules can differ by source: the **PPA minimum is modest** (recently around **€300–400/month**), but universities and embassies often expect proof closer to **€800–880/month** given the cost of living. You also need **health insurance** and proof of accommodation.

BY THE NUMBERS

PPA minimum

~€300–400/month

Often expected

~€800/month

+ insurance

& accommodation

HOW TO HELP

Prepare **proof of funds** — check both the PPA minimum and your university's expected amount (often higher) — plus health insurance and an accommodation document.

GOOD TO KNOW

The **official minimum and the practically-expected amount differ** — confirm both with your university and the PPA before applying.



Meet Language Requirements

WHAT TO KNOW

For **English-taught** programs you prove English (typically **IELTS 6.0–6.5** or **TOEFL**). Estonian-taught programs require Estonian (and are free). Estonian is famously difficult, but daily life is very English-friendly, especially in Tallinn and Tartu.

BY THE NUMBERS

English

IELTS 6.0–6.5

Estonian-taught

free, needs Estonian

English-friendly

Tallinn & Tartu

HOW TO HELP

Take an **accepted English test** for your program — you can study and live in English, though Estonian (hard as it is) is required for the free route.

GOOD TO KNOW

Estonian is **hard to learn**, but Tallinn and Tartu are very English-friendly — you can manage daily life in English.

Prepare for the Move

WHAT TO KNOW

After arriving (or on getting your permit), **register your address, arrange health insurance, and set up banking** — much of it digital. Living costs are low (€300–500/month), and universities often help with dormitory housing.

BY THE NUMBERS

Register + insurance

key steps

Digital services

many online

Low costs

€300–500/mo

HOW TO HELP

Handle arrival admin (much of it **online**) — address registration, insurance, banking — and take advantage of Estonia—s low living costs and dormitory options.

GOOD TO KNOW

Estonia's **digital services** make setup unusually smooth — many steps are done online.

Understand Work Rules

WHAT TO KNOW

Estonia is generous: international students **need no separate work permit** and may work — even full-time — **as long as it doesn't interfere with their studies**. This flexibility supports internships and part-time jobs.

BY THE NUMBERS

No work permit

needed

Can work

if studies come first

Flexible

internships welcome

HOW TO HELP

Take advantage of Estonia's **flexible work rules** (no separate permit; work allowed if it doesn't harm your studies) for internships and jobs, especially in tech.

GOOD TO KNOW

Estonia lets students work **without a separate permit**, even full-time, if studies come first — unusually flexible.

Thrive & Work After Study

WHAT TO KNOW

A standout feature: every non-EU graduate keeps **270 days (about 9 months) in Estonia to look for work, with no separate application to file**. Estonia's strong tech sector (it's a startup hub) offers real opportunities for those who stay.

BY THE NUMBERS

270 days

automatic post-study

No application

needed

Tech hub

startup opportunities

HOW TO HELP

Use the automatic **270-day post-study window** to find work, tap Estonia's tech and startup scene, and switch to a work permit once you have a job offer.

GOOD TO KNOW

The **automatic 270-day job-search window** (no separate application) is a genuine advantage of studying in Estonia.

Studying in Estonia: The Essentials

A snapshot — figures change (incl. recent waiver changes), so confirm everything with Study in Estonia, the PPA, and your university.

The system

University of Tartu (top in the Baltics), TalTech, Tallinn University, Estonian Academy of Arts; 100+ English-taught programs; Bologna/ECTS.

Visa & permit

Non-EU students need a long-stay (D) visa to enter, then a study residence permit from the Police and Border Guard Board (PPA); ~60 nationalities can apply from inside Estonia.

Tuition

Estonian-taught programs are free for any nationality (full 60 ECTS/year, on time); English-taught ~€1,660–8,000/year; some universities (e.g., Tartu) ended full non-EU waivers from 2026/27.

Money & language

PPA minimum ~€300–400/month, but universities often expect ~€800/month; health insurance and accommodation required; English programs need IELTS ~6.0–6.5.

Work & after

No separate work permit (work allowed if studies come first); every non-EU graduate keeps 270 days to find work, with no separate application.

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