

Studying in Greece

A guide for international students & families — how Greek higher education works, the national student visa, FREE public tuition if you study in Greek, growing English programs, and work rights.

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 IN GREEK, AND FAMOUSLY AFFORDABLE

Greece offers something rare: **public-university tuition is free for everyone, including international students, if you study in Greek.** A growing set of **English-taught programs** (fee-paying for non-EU students) now sits alongside them, and living costs are among Europe's lowest. Non-EU students need a **national (D) visa and a residence permit.** This guide walks it in **ten steps.**

General guidance, not legal or immigration advice. Greek rules changed recently (a 2024 higher-ed reform, still partly unsettled) and figures vary. The details here are recent examples and **must be confirmed with the Greek consulate, your university, and the immigration authorities.**

Understand Why Students Choose Greece

WHAT TO KNOW

Greece offers **free public tuition** if you study in Greek (any nationality), **very low living costs**, a **growing range of English-taught programs**, and an **unbeatable Mediterranean lifestyle** — with rich history and culture.

BY THE NUMBERS

Free in Greek

any nationality

Very affordable

low living costs

Mediterranean

lifestyle & culture

HOW TO HELP

Weigh Greece's **affordability and lifestyle** against the newer, fee-paying English programs and Greek bureaucracy — it's among Europe's most cost-effective destinations.

GOOD TO KNOW

With **free Greek-taught tuition and low living costs**, a full degree in Greece can total well under €10,000/year.

Understand the System

WHAT TO KNOW

Greek higher education is led by **public universities and polytechnics** — the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), Aristotle University (Thessaloniki), the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), and others. A 2024 reform also opened the door to **non-state universities** (still legally unsettled).

BY THE NUMBERS

Public universities

NKUA, AUTH, NTUA

Polytechnics

technical study

Non-state (new)

legally unsettled

HOW TO HELP

Choose among Greece's **public universities and polytechnics**, and be cautious with the new non-state institutions — verify any private/branch campus's licence status.

WATCH OUT

The new **non-state university sector is legally unsettled** (some licences were annulled) — stick to established public universities, or verify carefully.

Get the Visa & Residence Permit

WHAT TO KNOW

Non-EU/EEA students need a **national (D) student visa** from a Greek consulate, then must apply for a **residence permit (adeia diamonís)** within **40 days of arrival** at the Aliens and Immigration Department. It's renewed annually.

BY THE NUMBERS

National (D) visa

from the consulate

Within 40 days

apply for the permit

Renewed annually

for your studies

HOW TO HELP

Apply for the **D visa** with your acceptance, funds proof, and insurance, then apply for your **residence permit within 40 days** of arrival — missing this window makes your stay illegal.

WATCH OUT

The **40-day residence-permit deadline** after arrival is strict — handle it immediately to stay legal.

Apply to Universities

WHAT TO KNOW

Greece has **no single national portal for international students** — you apply **directly to each university/program**. Public universities reserve a special **international quota** (you're assessed separately from Greek students). The main intake is autumn, with spring–summer deadlines.

BY THE NUMBERS

Apply directly

no national portal

International quota

assessed separately

Autumn intake

spring/summer deadlines

HOW TO HELP

Apply **directly to each university/program**, note the **international-student quota** (which spares you the PanHellenic exams), and prepare apostilled, translated documents early.

GOOD TO KNOW

International applicants use a **separate quota** — you're not competing against Greek students' national exam scores.

Understand Tuition (the Free Route)

WHAT TO KNOW

The headline: **Greek-taught programs at public universities are free for everyone** (only small admin fees). **English-taught** programs charge non-EU students — typically **€1,500–7,000/year (bachelor's; less for master's)**. Private colleges and the Open University charge.

BY THE NUMBERS

Greek-taught

FREE (any nationality)

English-taught

~€1,500–7,000/yr

Private/Open

charge fees

HOW TO HELP

Decide between the **free Greek-language route** (worth learning Greek for) and a fee-paying English program — both cost far less than most of Europe.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you'll study **in Greek**, public-university tuition is **free regardless of nationality** — a rare and valuable option.

Meet the Financial Requirement

WHAT TO KNOW

For the visa you must prove funds — recently around **€400–700/month (~€4,800–8,400/year)**, separate from tuition. Accepted proof: a bank statement, scholarship (IKY, Onassis, university), or a sponsor letter. Health insurance is required.

BY THE NUMBERS

Funds

~€400–700/month

Proof

bank/scholarship/sponsor

Insurance

required

HOW TO HELP

Prepare **proof of funds** above the minimum where possible, plus **Greece-valid health insurance** — thin policies are rejected, so check your consulate's wording.

WATCH OUT

Present funds **conservatively above the minimum**, and buy a **Greece-compliant** insurance policy — thin coverage is a common rejection reason.



Meet Language Requirements

WHAT TO KNOW

For **Greek-taught** (free) programs you prove Greek; for **English-taught** programs you prove English (IELTS/TOEFL). Learning some Greek helps daily life and (better) part-time work in a country where Greek is widely expected.

BY THE NUMBERS

Greek-taught

prove Greek (free)

English-taught

IELTS/TOEFL

Some Greek

helps daily life

HOW TO HELP

Take the **right test for your program's language**, and learn some Greek — it helps daily life, and the free route requires it.

GOOD TO KNOW

The **free tuition route requires studying in Greek** — a real incentive to learn the language if budget matters most.

Prepare for the Move

WHAT TO KNOW

After arriving, get your **residence permit**, an **AFM (tax number)**, an **AMKA (social security number)**, a **bank account**, and a **student ID (Páso)**. Have documents **legalized/apostilled** and **translated into Greek**. Living costs are low (€500–900/month).

BY THE NUMBERS

Permit + AFM + AMKA

key numbers

Translate/apostille

documents

Low costs

€500–900/mo

HOW TO HELP

Handle arrival admin — **residence permit, AFM, AMKA, bank, student ID** — and bring **apostilled, Greek-translated documents**; Greek bureaucracy rewards a full document folder.

GOOD TO KNOW

You'll be asked for **certified translated copies repeatedly** — carry multiple sets, apostilled and translated into Greek.

Understand Work Rules

WHAT TO KNOW

Once you have your residence permit, non-EU students may work **part-time (an entitlement of at least ~15 hours a week, up to ~20)** outside teaching hours, and full-time during breaks — though English-only jobs are limited.

BY THE NUMBERS

Work

~15–20 hrs/week

After the permit

not before

Full-time

in breaks

HOW TO HELP

You may work **part-time after getting your residence permit** — useful for experience, though budget primarily from other sources and note that Greek helps.

WATCH OUT

A **student work arrangement can't convert into a standard work permit** after graduation — plan the post-study route separately.

Thrive & Work After Study

WHAT TO KNOW

Under a 2023 law, graduates holding a study residence permit can convert it into a **one-year permit to look for work or start a business** at their qualification level — a route to staying on in Greece.

BY THE NUMBERS

1-year permit

post-study

Work or business

at your level

Community

get involved

HOW TO HELP

Plan for the **1-year post-study permit** to find work or start a business, build networks during study, and target Greece's growing sectors if you want to stay.

GOOD TO KNOW

Greece's **1-year post-study permit** (Article 119, Law 5038/2023) is a clear route to staying — confirm current conditions.

Studying in Greece: The Essentials

A snapshot — rules changed in 2024 and remain partly unsettled, so confirm everything with the Greek consulate, your university, and the immigration authorities.

The system

Public universities and polytechnics (NKUA, AUTH, NTUA); a 2024 reform opened non-state universities (legally unsettled) and expanded English-taught programs.

Visa & permit

Non-EU students get a national (D) student visa, then apply for a residence permit within 40 days of arrival (renewed annually); apply directly to each university (international quota).

Tuition (the key)

Greek-taught programs at public universities are FREE for all nationalities; English-taught programs charge non-EU students ~€1,500–7,000/year; private/Open University charge.

Money

Prove ~€400–700/month funds (separate from tuition) plus Greece-valid health insurance; get an AFM and AMKA; living costs are low (€500–900/month).

Work & after

Work part-time (~15–20 hrs/week) after the permit, full-time in breaks; a 1-year post-study permit allows finding work or starting a business.

YOUR GREEK JOURNEY STARTS HERE

Find Your Community.

Explore our other Studying in [Country] guides, Top Universities by Country, and country guides — among **1,297 free resources**.

tools.k12academics.com →

