

Studying in Spain

A guide for international students & families — how Spanish higher education works, the student visa and TIE, applying, affordable public tuition, English programs, and new work rights.

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AFFORDABLE, SUNNY — AND MODERNIZING

Spain pairs **affordable public universities, a fast-growing set of English-taught degrees, and an unbeatable lifestyle** with a newly modernized student-immigration system. Non-EU students get a **Type D visa** and a **TIE residence card**, and (since 2025) can work up to **30 hours a week**. This guide walks it in **ten steps**.

General guidance, not legal or immigration advice. Spain's rules changed in 2025 (Royal Decree 1155/2024), and tuition and the IPREM funds figure vary and change. The details here are recent examples and **must be confirmed with the Spanish consulate, official sources, and your university.**

Understand Why Students Choose Spain

WHAT TO KNOW

Spain offers **affordable public tuition, a growing set of English-taught degrees, world-class business schools, and an outstanding lifestyle** — sun, culture, and low living costs by Western-European standards — plus new, more generous work rights.

BY THE NUMBERS

Affordable

low public tuition

English degrees

250+ and growing

Lifestyle

sun & low costs

HOW TO HELP

Weigh Spain's **affordability, lifestyle, and improved work rules** against learning some Spanish — for many, it's excellent-value European study.

GOOD TO KNOW

Spain's **2025 immigration reform** improved student work rights and authorization — a real plus over the old system.

Understand the System

WHAT TO KNOW

Spanish higher education includes **public and private universities**, offering **Grado (4-year bachelor's)**, **Máster**, and **Doctorado**. Only **official degrees** (listed in the RUCT registry) qualify for the student visa — verify your program is “official.”

BY THE NUMBERS

Public & private

universities

Grado + Máster

4+1/2 structure

Official degrees

check the RUCT

HOW TO HELP

Choose a program that is an **official degree** (in the RUCT registry) at a public or private university — official status is required for the study visa.

WATCH OUT

Only “**official**” **degrees** support the student visa — confirm your program’s status in the RUCT before committing.

Get the Student Visa

WHAT TO KNOW

Non-EU students staying over 90 days need a **Type D national student visa (visado de estudios)**, applied for at a Spanish consulate in your home country. Your **NIE (foreigner ID number)** comes with it. Documents must be **translated (sworn translator) and legalized/apostilled**.

BY THE NUMBERS

Type D visa

from your consulate

NIE

issued with the visa

Translate & legalize

sworn + apostille

HOW TO HELP

Apply for the **Type D student visa** 2–3 months ahead with your acceptance, funds proof, insurance, and **sworn-translated, apostilled documents**.

GOOD TO KNOW

Documents need **sworn translation and legalization** — a common cause of delays, so start early.

Get Your TIE Residence Card

WHAT TO KNOW

For stays over **6 months**, after arriving you apply for the **TIE (Tarjeta de Identidad de Extranjero)** — the foreigner ID card — at the provincial Oficina de Extranjería, generally within **30 days**. You need it for banking, renting, and daily life.

BY THE NUMBERS

TIE

foreigner ID card

Within 30 days

of arrival

Needed for

banking, renting, life

HOW TO HELP

Book your **TIE appointment promptly** after arrival (within ~30 days) — the card is essential for a bank account, rental contract, and much of daily life.

WATCH OUT

Without the **TIE**, everyday tasks (banking, renting, working) are difficult — apply as soon as you arrive.

Handle Admissions & Credentials

WHAT TO KNOW

You apply to your chosen university (undergraduate entry may require the **credencial de acceso** via UNED, or the EBAU/PCE exam). Non-EU qualifications may need **recognition (homologación/convalidación)**. Requirements are set per program.

BY THE NUMBERS

Credencial de acceso

via UNED (undergrad)

Homologación

credential recognition

Per program

requirements vary

HOW TO HELP

Handle **credential recognition** and any access exam early (UNED credencial de acceso for undergrad), and meet each program's specific requirements.

GOOD TO KNOW

Undergraduate entry often needs the **UNED credencial de acceso** — it takes weeks, so start early.

Meet Language Requirements

WHAT TO KNOW

Programs are taught in **Spanish** (requiring Spanish, e.g., **DELE/SIELE**) or, increasingly, in **English** (250+ English degrees; requiring IELTS/TOEFL). Some Spanish greatly helps daily life either way.

BY THE NUMBERS

Spanish-taught

DELE/SIELE

English-taught

250+ degrees

Some Spanish

eases daily life

HOW TO HELP

Take the **right test for your program's language**, and learn some Spanish regardless — it eases daily life, work, and integration.

GOOD TO KNOW

English-taught degrees are growing fast, but everyday life — and much bureaucracy — runs in Spanish.

Plan for Costs & Funding

WHAT TO KNOW

Public tuition is **affordable but region-set**: EU rates roughly **€750–2,500/year**; non-EU rates in some regions higher (~**€6,000–9,000**). Private and business schools cost much more. Scholarships come from the government and universities.

BY THE NUMBERS

EU

~€750–2,500/yr

Non-EU

~€6k–9k in some regions

Scholarships

govt & university

HOW TO HELP

Budget tuition (which **varies by region and residency**) plus living costs, and pursue government and university scholarships — Spain's living costs are relatively low.

GOOD TO KNOW

Public tuition is **set per region**, and some regions charge non-EU students more — check your specific university and region.

Meet the Financial Requirement

WHAT TO KNOW

For the visa you must prove funds — **100% of the IPREM**, recently about **€600/month (~€7,200/year)** (some advisers suggest €8,000–10,000/year). You also need **private health insurance** valid in Spain, with no copays.

BY THE NUMBERS

100% IPREM

~€600/month

~€7,200/year

for the stay

Health insurance

private, no copays

HOW TO HELP

Prepare **proof of funds** at 100% of the IPREM for your stay, and arrange **full private health insurance** (no copays) — both are required for the visa.

WATCH OUT

The IPREM figure is **set by law and updated periodically** — confirm the current monthly amount before applying.

Prepare for the Move

WHAT TO KNOW

After arriving, get your **TIE, empadronamiento (municipal registration), and a bank account**, and confirm health insurance. Housing in Madrid and Barcelona is competitive — start early. Prepare for a later daily schedule and a Spanish-speaking environment.

BY THE NUMBERS

TIE + padrón

register locally

Bank + insurance

set up

Housing

competitive in big cities

HOW TO HELP

Handle arrival admin — **TIE, padrón (local registration), bank, insurance** — and secure housing early in big cities, where it—s competitive.

GOOD TO KNOW

Housing in **Madrid and Barcelona** is competitive and rising — start your search before you arrive.

Thrive & Work

WHAT TO KNOW

Under the **2025 regulation (RD 1155/2024)**, students can work up to **30 hours per week** — more generous than before. Study authorization can now cover your **whole program**. After graduating, routes exist to job search and work permits.

BY THE NUMBERS

Work

up to 30 hrs/week (2025)

Whole-program

authorization now

After

job-search & work routes

HOW TO HELP

Take advantage of Spain's **new 30-hour work allowance**, and explore post-study job-search and work routes — confirming the current rules, which recently improved.

GOOD TO KNOW

Spain's **2025 reform** raised student work hours to 30/week and lets authorization cover the whole program — a real improvement worth confirming.

Studying in Spain: The Essentials

A snapshot — Spain's rules changed in 2025, so confirm everything with the Spanish consulate, official sources, and your university.

The system

Public and private universities; Grado (4-yr) + Máster + Doctorado; only "official" degrees (in the RUCT registry) qualify for the student visa.

Visa & TIE

Non-EU students get a Type D national student visa (with an NIE) at a consulate; for stays over 6 months, apply for a TIE residence card within ~30 days of arrival.

Applying & language

Handle credential recognition (homologación; UNED credencial de acceso for undergrad); prove Spanish (DELE/SIELE) or English (IELTS/TOEFL); 250+ English degrees.

Money

Public tuition ~€750–2,500 (EU) / ~€6k–9k (non-EU, region-set); prove 100% IPREM (~€600/month, ~€7,200/year); private health insurance with no copays; scholarships available.

Work & after

Under the 2025 regulation (RD 1155/2024), students may work up to 30 hrs/week and authorization can cover the whole program; post-study job-search and work routes exist.

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