

Studying in Uruguay

A guide for international students & families — how Uruguayan higher education works, the student visa/residency, free public university, Spanish study, and quality of life.

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FREE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY, SAFE, HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE

Uruguay is one of Latin America's most **stable, safe, and livable** countries, and its flagship **Universidad de la República (UdelaR)** is **tuition-free** — **including for many international students**. Add respected private universities (ORT, Universidad de Montevideo), rich Spanish immersion, and some English-taught postgraduate options. Students get a **student visa or student residency**. This guide walks it in **ten steps**.

General guidance, not legal or immigration advice. Uruguayan rules, tuition, and the funds requirement change (free public tuition for internationals can depend on nationality/program). The details here are recent examples and **must be confirmed with the Dirección Nacional de Migración, your university, and the Uruguayan consulate.**

Understand Why Students Choose Uruguay

WHAT TO KNOW

Uruguay offers **free public university (UdelaR, including for many internationals), a stable, safe, high-quality-of-life setting, immersive Spanish, respected private universities, and some English-taught postgraduate programs** — distinctive value in South America.

BY THE NUMBERS

Free public

UdelaR (incl. many int'l)

Stable & safe

high quality of life

Spanish

+ some English (postgrad)

HOW TO HELP

Weigh Uruguay's **free public tuition, stability, and quality of life** against a mostly Spanish-taught system — for affordable, secure, immersive study, it's excellent.

WATCH OUT

UdelaR is **tuition-free, including for many international students** (depending on nationality/program) — a rare, valuable benefit; verify your eligibility.

Understand the System

WHAT TO KNOW

The flagship is the public **Universidad de la República (UdelaR — free, ~85% of national enrolment, 21 schools, broad programs including medicine, law, engineering, and agriculture)**. Private universities include **Universidad ORT Uruguay (the largest)**, **Universidad de Montevideo (UM)**, **Universidad Católica del Uruguay**, and **UTEC** (public technology).

BY THE NUMBERS

UdelaR

public, free (flagship)

ORT / UM

private (some English)

UTEC

public technology

HOW TO HELP

Choose the **free public UdelaR** (broad, Spanish-taught) or a **private university** (ORT/UM — some English postgrad; UTEC for applied tech) by field and language.

GOOD TO KNOW

UdelaR offers **290+ undergraduate and 300+ postgraduate programs** across all fields, with a strong Montevideo presence.

Get the Student Visa or Residency

WHAT TO KNOW

You either apply for a **student visa (for programs over 90 days; fee ~\$54)** at a Uruguayan consulate, or — for many nationalities — enter visa-free (90 days, extendable to 180) and then apply for **student residency (Residencia de Estudiante)** via the **Dirección Nacional de Migración** in Montevideo. You'll show enrolment, funds, and a clean criminal record.

BY THE NUMBERS

Student visa

or student residency

Enter visa-free

then apply (many)

Via

Dirección Nacional de Migración

HOW TO HELP

Apply for a **student visa** or (for many nationalities) enter visa-free and apply for **student residency** via the Dirección Nacional de Migración — with enrolment proof, funds, and a criminal-record certificate.

GOOD TO KNOW

Every foreign document needs an **apostille (or legalization) and certified Spanish translation** — start this early, as it takes time.

Apply to Universities

WHAT TO KNOW

Apply **directly to each university** (or the national system where applicable). UdelaR is broad and Spanish-taught; ORT and UM offer some English postgraduate programs and require **Spanish (about B1)** for Spanish-taught study. Provide transcripts and apostilled/translated documents.

BY THE NUMBERS

Apply directly

to each

UdelaR

broad, Spanish

Spanish

~B1 (ORT/UM)

HOW TO HELP

Apply **directly** to your chosen university, with transcripts and language proof — UdelaR is Spanish-taught; ORT/UM offer some English postgraduate options.

GOOD TO KNOW

For Spanish-taught study, universities expect around **B1 Spanish**; language support is available — build Spanish early.

Plan for Tuition & Scholarships

WHAT TO KNOW

UdelaR (public) is tuition-free for many international students (small administrative fees only). **Private universities** run roughly **\$4,400–5,300/year**. ORT and others offer **postgraduate scholarships** (excellence, entrepreneurs, mobility support) — ask each institution.

BY THE NUMBERS

UdelaR

free (public)

Private

~\$4,400–5,300/yr

Scholarships

postgrad (ORT & others)

HOW TO HELP

Budget for **free public tuition (UdelaR)** or private fees (\$4,400–5,300), plus living costs, and pursue postgraduate scholarships at ORT and others.

GOOD TO KNOW

Confirm your **free-tuition eligibility at UdelaR** — it depends on nationality and program.

Meet the Financial Requirement

WHAT TO KNOW

For the visa/residency you show **proof of funds** to support yourself, a **clean criminal-record certificate** from your home country, proof of enrolment, and health insurance. Living costs run **\$600–1,000/month** in Montevideo. Confirm the exact requirements with the Dirección Nacional de Migración.

BY THE NUMBERS

Funds

+ enrolment proof

Criminal record

certificate

Living

\$600–1,000/month

HOW TO HELP

Prepare **proof of funds, a criminal-record certificate, enrolment proof, and insurance** — confirm the exact requirements with the Dirección Nacional de Migración.

GOOD TO KNOW

The **criminal-record certificate** (apostilled and translated) is required — arrange it early.



Meet Language Requirements

WHAT TO KNOW

Most programs (especially at UdelaR) are taught in **Spanish** (about B1+ expected); **ORT and UM offer some English or bilingual postgraduate programs**. Universities provide Spanish support, and Uruguay is superb for Spanish immersion.

BY THE NUMBERS

Spanish

most (B1+)

English

some postgrad (ORT/UM)

Support

Spanish courses

HOW TO HELP

Prove **Spanish (about B1)** for most programs, or choose **English/bilingual postgraduate** options at ORT/UM, and use Uruguay's setting to build Spanish.

GOOD TO KNOW

English-taught options are **concentrated at postgraduate level** (ORT, UM) — most study is in Spanish.

Prepare for the Move

WHAT TO KNOW

After arriving, complete your **student residency, arrange housing, and set up banking**. Most students live in **shared flats or student residences** in Montevideo — a calm, safe, laid-back capital. Living costs are moderate; Uruguay's high quality of life and safety make settling in easy.

BY THE NUMBERS

Residency + housing

first tasks

Housing

shared flats/residences

Montevideo

calm & safe

HOW TO HELP

Handle arrival admin — **student residency, housing (shared flats/residences), banking** — in calm, safe Montevideo; Uruguay's quality of life makes settling in easy.

GOOD TO KNOW

Montevideo is **calm, safe, and laid-back** — an easy, high-quality-of-life base for international students.

Understand Why Uruguay Stands Out

WHAT TO KNOW

Uruguay combines **political stability, safety, progressive social policies, the highest literacy in Latin America, and a high quality of life** — with a free public university option. It's consistently ranked among South America's most livable countries, a strong draw for students valuing stability.

BY THE NUMBERS

Stable & safe

progressive

Highest literacy

in Latin America

Livable

+ free public option

HOW TO HELP

Value Uruguay's **stability, safety, and quality of life** alongside its free public university — a combination few countries match.

GOOD TO KNOW

Uruguay is one of South America's **most stable and livable** countries — a genuine, distinctive advantage.

Thrive & After Study

WHAT TO KNOW

Uruguay's strong **IT and technology sector** (ORT, UTEC), stable economy, and your **Spanish skills** open regional opportunities — it's a notable Latin American tech and services hub. Confirm the current post-study visa/residency pathway if you want to stay.

BY THE NUMBERS

IT/tech

ORT, UTEC strength

Stable economy

+ Spanish

Post-study

confirm pathway

HOW TO HELP

Leverage Uruguay's **tech sector and your Spanish** for regional opportunities, and confirm the current post-study visa/residency pathway if you want to stay.

GOOD TO KNOW

Uruguay is a growing **tech and services hub** — strong for IT graduates; confirm current post-study rules.

Studying in Uruguay: The Essentials

A snapshot — figures change, so confirm with the Dirección Nacional de Migración, your university, and the Uruguayan consulate.

The system

The public Universidad de la República (UdelaR — tuition-free, ~85% of national enrolment, broad programs) plus private universities (Universidad ORT Uruguay — the largest, some English postgrad — Universidad de Montevideo, Universidad Católica, and public UTEC).

Visa & residency

Apply for a student visa (programs over 90 days, ~\$54) or (for many nationalities) enter visa-free and apply for student residency (Residencia de Estudiante) via the Dirección Nacional de Migración, with enrolment, funds, and a criminal-record certificate.

Tuition & scholarships

UdelaR (public) is tuition-free for many internationals (verify eligibility); private universities ~\$4,400–5,300/year; postgraduate scholarships at ORT and others; living \$600–1,000/month.

Money & language

Show proof of funds, a criminal-record certificate, and insurance (documents apostilled/translated); most programs in Spanish (~B1), with some English/bilingual postgraduate options at ORT/UM.

Why it stands out

Political stability, safety, the highest literacy in Latin America, and a high quality of life, plus a strong IT/tech sector (ORT, UTEC) — confirm the post-study pathway.

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