

Spain Student Visa: Applying from the US

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spain-student-visa

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Free guide to the Spanish student visa for Americans: admission letters, IPREM funds, insurance, FBI check, consulate appointments, working while studying and getting your TIE.

Read the live guide: <https://www.ourmixedpov.com/guides/spain-student-visa>

IMPORTANT**Important: this is not professional advice**

This guide is what worked for us and the people we've helped - it is **not immigration advice**, and we are not immigration professionals. Rules change, every situation is different, and the cost of getting it wrong (denied visas, double taxation, fines, missed deadlines) is real.

Before you act on anything here, speak with a qualified immigration professional - an immigration lawyer (abogado de extranjería), a cross-border tax accountant, or a licensed gestor - who can review your specific facts. Use this guide to know what questions to ask, not as a substitute for paid advice.

8 SECTIONS

The guide

SECTION 1

Start here: do you need a student visa?

90 days or fewer: US citizens can study in Spain on visa-free entry, within the Schengen 90-in-180-day limit. No student visa is needed, but you cannot extend in Spain.

More than 90 days: you need a **student visa** issued by the Spanish consulate with jurisdiction over your US place of residence. This covers university degrees, master's programmes, semester abroad programmes, language courses meeting the hours requirement, research and some internships.

Since May 2025, the immigration regulation ([Real Decreto 1155/2024](#)) treats higher-education students as residents rather than short-term visitors, with renewals tied to the length of the programme. Check your consulate's page on the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs site](#) for its current checklist.

SECTION 2

1 - Get admitted to an authorised programme

You need an **official admission or enrolment letter** from a Spanish university, school or authorised centre showing the programme, start and end dates and full-time hours. Language-school courses must meet the minimum weekly hours set by the consulate.

US study-abroad programmes usually provide a letter from the host institution plus their own documentation; ask your programme for the consulate-specific packet.

If you're applying for a degree, check whether you also need recognition of your US diploma (homologación or equivalencia) - that is a separate academic process with its own timeline.

SECTION 3

2 - Show you can support yourself

Students must show monthly means of at least **100% of IPREM** - about **?600/month** at the 2025 value - for the length of the stay, plus additional amounts for family members joining you. Confirm the current

figure with your consulate.

Accepted proof includes personal bank statements, a notarised parental support letter with the parent's bank statements, scholarship or financial-aid letters, or a programme letter stating that housing and meals are covered.

Convert balances into euros and leave a margin. Prepaid tuition and housing receipts help show the remaining funds cover living costs.

SECTION 4

3 - Insurance, background check and medical certificate

Health insurance: coverage from an insurer authorised in Spain, or a US policy the consulate accepts that explicitly covers Spain, without copays for the full stay. Many programmes include a compliant policy - get a certificate stating the coverage and dates.

Criminal record (programmes longer than six months, adults): FBI Identity History Summary with an **apostille** from the US Department of State, typically valid for three months.

Medical certificate (programmes longer than six months): a physician's letter confirming you do not suffer from diseases with serious public-health implications under the International Health Regulations (2005). Use the consulate's Spanish wording if provided.

Translations into Spanish may be required; check whether your consulate insists on a sworn translator.

SECTION 5

4 - Application checklist and appointment

Typical pack: **(1)** national visa application form; **(2)** passport valid for the whole stay with blank pages; **(3)** passport photo; **(4)** proof of residence in the consulate's jurisdiction; **(5)** admission letter; **(6)** proof of funds; **(7)** insurance certificate; **(8)** FBI check and medical certificate where required; **(9)** visa fee and, for stays over six months, Modelo 790 code 052 if requested.

Apply in person, usually **no earlier than 90 days before** your programme start. Book early - August and January starts create backlogs. Bring originals and copies in the order listed.

Processing often takes several weeks. Don't buy non-refundable flights until the visa is in your passport.

SECTION 6

5 - Working while you study

Under the 2025 regulation, students may generally work **up to 30 hours a week** in activities compatible with their studies, as long as the work does not replace the programme. Your employer handles the registration with Social Security.

Remote freelancing for US clients still counts as work in Spain once you are resident. Ask the immigration office or an adviser before taking on income, and keep studies as your main activity.

Once your studies finish, you may be able to change status to job-seeking or work authorisation. Plan this well before your card expires.

SECTION 7

6 - Your first 30 days in Spain

Register your address at the town hall ([empadronamiento guide](#)) if your stay is long enough or your office requires it.

Get your TIE within one month of arrival if your stay exceeds six months: book fingerprints, pay Modelo 790 code 012 and bring your visa and passport. See our [TIE appointment guide](#). Your NIE is already on your visa - no separate NIE application is needed ([NIE guide](#)).

Open a bank account ([guide](#)) and consider a [digital certificate](#) once you have your TIE - it makes renewals and later paperwork much easier.

SECTION 8

Renewals, family and staying on

Renew in Spain before your authorisation expires by showing progress in your studies, continued funds and insurance.

Spouses and children may be able to accompany you on linked family authorisations, with extra funds for each person.

Time on a student authorisation counts differently toward long-term residence than other statuses; ask before relying on it. To move to living on savings later, see our [Non-Lucrative Visa checklist](#); for remote work, the [Digital Nomad Visa guide](#).

0 ENTRIES

Latest updates

No live updates recorded for this guide yet.

0 CLAIMS REVIEWED

Fact check

No validations recorded.

3 REFERENCES

Verified sources

Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Visas

<https://www.exteriores.gob.es/es/ServiciosAlCiudadano/Paginas/Visados.aspx>

BOE - Real Decreto 1155/2024

<https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2024-24099>

Policía - Modelo 790 código 012

https://sede.policia.gob.es/Tasa790_012/

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