

TEFL IBERIA

SPANISH VISA GUIDE

CANADA

USE THIS GUIDE TO DIRECT YOU THROUGH
EACH AND EVERY STEP INVOLVED
IN STARTING A NEW LIFE IN SPAIN

2027 edition

tefliberia



WELCOME TO TEFL IBERIA

If you're reading this, you're thinking of starting a new adventure in Barcelona! We couldn't be more excited for you, and we hope you feel the same.

Before you set off, there are a few important pieces of paperwork to take care of. But don't worry, we're here to help. This guide walks you step by step through the student visa process, which is essential for your legal status in Spain.

If you have a question at any point, our coordination team is here to help:

Coordination team
coordination@tefl-iberia.com

We'll do our best to make the process as stress free as possible.

¡Hasta pronto!

UPDATED OCTOBER 2026

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Why a student visa?

Canadian citizens can visit Spain for up to 90 days without a visa. To live and work there for longer, you need a visa, like everyone else from outside the EU.

A work visa is hard to get: your employer has to sponsor you, which is expensive and complicated, and show that no EU candidate could do the job.

A far easier option is a student visa. You need a course of at least 20 hours a week, and once your employer gets a work permit for you, you can work up to 30 hours a week. We'll help you both with the paperwork.

Our student visa programme starts with the 4-week Trinity CertTESOL in Barcelona, followed by 6 or 11 months of Spanish, 20 hours a week (09:30 to 13:30), at our accredited partner Spanish school, with occasional teacher development workshops. Classes are in the morning, as most English teaching work is in the afternoon.

See our student visa programmes, and our **Dates & Fees page** for prices.

The next steps guide you through applying for a Spanish student visa and the documents you need.



STEP 1

Choose your visa type

There are 2 types of student visa. Which one you need depends on how long you plan to stay in Spain and whether you'd like to work.

Short-term (up to 180 days)

- Fewer documents and less paperwork.
- You can't work, or renew your visa from Spain.

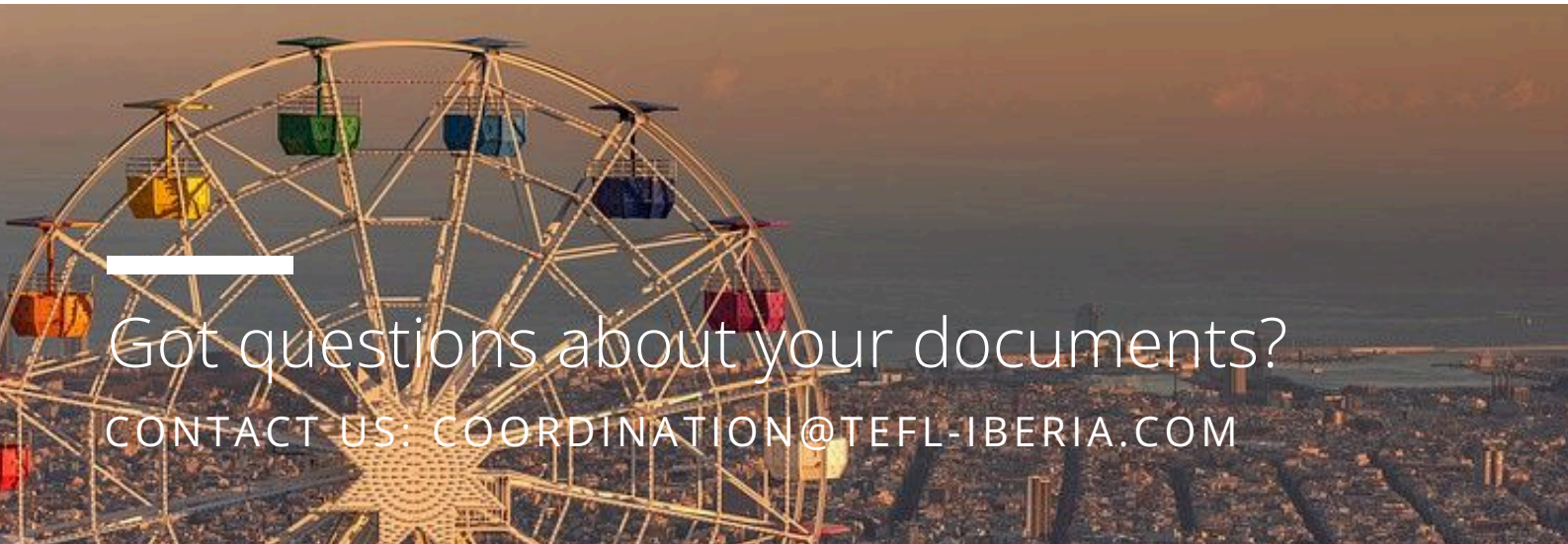
Long-term (over 180 days, so 7 months or more)

- You can work up to 30 hours a week once your employer gets a work permit for you.
- You can renew your visa from Spain.
- You also need an RCMP criminal record check.

Both our programmes (7 or 12 months) need a long-term visa. We strongly recommend the 12-month option, even if you're not sure you'll stay a full year: most of our students end up wanting to stay at least 12 months.

When to apply: at least 2 months before your course starts. In Ottawa, the Embassy says the average wait for an appointment is about 4 months, so book early. Some documents have a time limit (see Step 2).

Documents required	Short-term visa	Long-term visa
Passport	✓	✓
Visa application form	✓	✓
Visa fee	✓	✓
Enrolment letter	✓	✓
Passport photo	✓	✓
Proof of funds	✓	✓
Health insurance	✓	✓
Medical certificate	✓	✓
Proof of address	✓	✓
RCMP criminal record check		✓



Got questions about your documents?

CONTACT US: COORDINATION@TEFL-IBERIA.COM

STEP 2

Gather your documents

You hand in your passport with your visa application, and the visa is a sticker fixed to one of its pages. The consulate keeps your passport while your application is processed.

For any student visa

- **Visa application form** (download here) and a recent passport photo (no more than 6 months old). Here is an example of a completed form, and we'll help you fill yours in.
- **Your passport**, valid for at least 1 year, with at least 2 blank pages side by side and issued in the last 10 years, plus a photocopy of the page with your details.
- **Enrolment letter** from our accredited partner Spanish school for full-time study (20 hours a week), with proof that your course is paid in full. We send you the letter as soon as you've paid.
- **Visa fee** of CAD 145.50, paid at your appointment. Ottawa takes a Canadian debit card, cash, a money order or a certified cheque; Toronto a money order or bank draft; Montreal preferably cash, or a money order or certified cheque. The fee isn't refundable.
- **Proof of funds** of **€600 a month** for your stay (Spain's IPREM in 2026; Ottawa gives it as CAD 970 a month), for example €4,200 for 7 months. Montreal asks for your last 6 months of bank statements, originals stamped by your bank. Ottawa and Toronto ask for original documents proving the funds and give no number of months (Toronto: 3 months of stamped statements if your parents support you). Prepaid accommodation reduces the amount you need.
- **Health insurance** from an insurer authorised in Spain, with the same cover as Spain's public health system and no co-payments, deductibles or coverage limits, for your whole stay. Travel insurance isn't accepted. *For a quote, contact Lluís López at Atlantida, llopez@atlantida.net.*
- **Medical certificate** from your family doctor, stating that you have no illness that could have serious public health consequences under the International Health Regulations (2005), in your consulate's wording (see the next page). It needs an apostille and a sworn translation into Spanish.
- **Proof of address** in your consulate's area, such as a driver's licence, a provincial health card or a recent utility bill. Not Canadian? Add proof of your legal status in Canada.

STEP 2

Gather your documents

Applying for a long-term visa? You need one more document, and two of your documents have a time limit.

For a long-term visa (over 180 days)

- **All the documents on the previous page**
- **RCMP criminal record check** with your fingerprints (a local police check isn't accepted), plus a police check from any other country you've lived in for over 6 months in the last 5 years. Each one needs an apostille and a sworn translation into Spanish.
  1. Have your fingerprints taken by your local police or an RCMP-accredited company.
  2. Get the apostille from Global Affairs Canada (see the next page).
  3. Get it translated. Our sworn translator gives TEFL Iberia students a 10% discount (see Useful links).

RCMP certificate: issued no more than 6 months before you apply.
Medical certificate: issued no more than 3 months before you apply.
Ottawa and Montreal set the 6-month limit and Montreal the 3-month one: follow both, wherever you apply.

For a stay of over 6 months, Ottawa and Montreal issue a visa valid for 1 year and Toronto one valid for 90 days. Either way, within 1 month of arriving in Spain you apply for your foreigner identity card (TIE), which you then use for the rest of your stay. With our Premium Visa & Bureaucracy Service, we book the appointment for you.

Tips for your appointment

- **Check your consulate's own list** before your appointment: the requirements differ slightly from one office to another (see Step 3).
- **Bring the original and a photocopy** of every document.
- **Allow time for apostilles:** both the RCMP certificate and the medical certificate need one before they're translated (see the next page).
- **Don't book flights** until you have your visa.

Ask your doctor to write this sentence.
Toronto and Montreal:
"This medical certificate certifies that Mr. / Mrs. (your name) does not suffer from any of the diseases that may have serious public health repercussions in accordance with the provided in the International Sanitary Regulations of 2005."
Ottawa:
"This medical certificate states that Mr./Mrs. (your name) does not suffer from any diseases that may have serious consequences on public health in accordance with the provisions contained in the 2005 International Health Regulations."

The Hague Apostille

What is it and why do I need it?

An apostille is a certificate attached to a Canadian document so that it's recognised in Spain. Canada joined the Hague Apostille Convention on 11 January 2024, so a single apostille now replaces the old authentication and legalisation steps.

Who issues it

Your RCMP certificate: Global Affairs Canada. The apostille must certify the signature on the RCMP certificate itself, not a notary's signature.

Your medical certificate: Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan issue apostilles for documents from their province; Global Affairs Canada handles the rest of Canada. Some documents must be notarised first. Global Affairs Canada's online tool tells you where to send each document.

Applying to Global Affairs Canada

1. Submit your request online.
2. Post, courier or drop off your original document with your request number on the envelope, a copy of the request summary and a prepaid return envelope or prepaid courier label.
3. Follow your request online. The service is free, and a third-party company can't make it any faster.

Send your documents to:
Global Affairs Canada
Authentication Services Section
2421 Lancaster Road
Ottawa, ON K1B 4L5

Processing times

These are the official figures on 17 October 2026. Check the Global Affairs Canada page for the current time.

- **RCMP check:** 3 business days or less if there's no match to a criminal record, but up to 120 business days if it needs manual processing, plus time for the post.
- **Global Affairs Canada apostille:** requests received 25 business days ago were being processed, plus 5 to 10 business days for the post. There's no express service.
- **Provincial apostilles** have their own times and fees.

Take aways

The RCMP check and the apostilles take the longest, so start them as soon as you've booked your course. But not too early: your RCMP certificate must be no more than 6 months old when you hand in your application.

STEP 3

Submit your application

You apply in person, by appointment, at the Spanish office that covers the province or territory where you live. None of them accepts applications by post or online. Full list: consular areas (Spanish).

Ottawa, Embassy of Spain *(Ottawa and Gatineau)*

- 74 Stanley Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1M 1P4.
- Book online: appointments page. The Embassy says the average wait is about 4 months, so book as soon as you know your dates, and check the calendar for cancellations.
- Requirements: Embassy page.

Toronto, Consulate General *(Ontario except the Ottawa area; Manitoba; Saskatchewan; Alberta; British Columbia; Yukon; Northwest Territories; Nunavut)*

- 2 Bloor Street East, Suite 1201, Toronto, ON M4W 1A8.
- Ask for an appointment by email to cog.toronto.visnac@maec.es.
- Subject: *First name;Last name;STUDY VISA APPOINTMENT*
- In the email: your nationality, postal address (city and postal code), phone number and intended departure date from Canada (dd/mm/yyyy), with your passport, proof of residence in Canada and your enrolment letter attached as PDFs.
- Requirements: consulate page.

Montreal, Consulate General *(Quebec except Gatineau; New Brunswick; Nova Scotia; Prince Edward Island; Newfoundland and Labrador)*

- 1200 Avenue McGill College, Suite 2025, Montreal, QC H3B 4G7.
- Ask for an appointment by email to cog.montreal.vis@maec.es, sent from your own email address.
- Subject: *Visado de estudios - Solicitud de cita*
- In the email: your full name and intended travel date, with your passport, proof of residence in the consulate's area and your enrolment letter attached as files, not links (10 MB in total at most). The consulate doesn't answer emails that don't follow these rules.
- Requirements: consulate page.

Which office?

Ottawa
Ottawa and Gatineau

Toronto
Ontario (except the Ottawa area), the Prairies, British Columbia and the territories

Montreal
Quebec (except Gatineau) and the Atlantic provinces

What happens next?

Now your application is in the consulate's hands. The consulate needs approval from Spain before it can issue the visa. The legal deadline for a decision is 1 month, but it can be longer if they ask for more documents or an interview, and Toronto asks you to apply at least 60 days before you travel. You can follow your application online with the code on your receipt. The visa isn't posted back: you collect your passport in person, within 1 month of the decision in Ottawa (any working Friday, 9:00 to 13:00) and within 2 months in Toronto (Monday to Friday, 13:00 to 14:30, no appointment needed) and Montreal. Don't book flights until you have your visa.

Frequently asked questions

Do I have to go in person, or can I post my documents?

You go in person, by appointment: none of the three offices accepts applications by post or online. A representative can hand in the application for you, but Toronto and Montreal then ask you to collect the visa in person.

How long does it take to get an appointment?

It depends on the office. Ottawa says the average wait is about 4 months. Toronto and Montreal give appointments by email and don't publish a waiting time. Ask for yours as soon as you have your enrolment letter: you must apply at least 2 months before your course starts.

What is the appointment like?

It's short: you hand in your documents and your passport, and the staff may check them with you. Bring everything on your consulate's list: if something is missing, the consulate will ask for it, which slows things down.

What happens after my appointment?

The consulate needs approval from Spain before it can issue the visa. The legal deadline for a decision is 1 month, but it can be longer. When your visa is ready, you collect your passport in person at the consulate: it isn't posted back.

How long does it take to get my visa after the appointment?

Often around a month, but allow longer: Toronto asks you to apply at least 60 days before you travel, as the final decision is made in Spain. You can follow your application online with the code on your receipt. Don't book flights until you have your visa.

Which documents need to be translated?

Your medical certificate and your RCMP certificate each need an apostille and a sworn translation into Spanish. *See Useful links for our sworn translator.*



Frequently asked questions

How many hours can I work on a student visa?

You can work up to 30 hours a week once your employer gets a work permit for you. We'll help you both with the paperwork. The permit only covers work in Catalonia, the region that issued it.

Do I need to sign up for 7 to 12 months?

If you'd like to work in Barcelona, yes. A course of 7 to 12 months gives you a long-term student visa (legally, a stay of over 180 days, so 7 months is the minimum). That's the visa that lets you work with a work permit and renew from Spain.

You can study for less time and get a short-term visa instead, but you won't be able to work or to renew your visa from Spain.

How long does it take to get a student visa?

We recommend allowing 3 to 4 months to gather your documents, attend your appointment and receive your visa, so start about 5 months before you'd like to arrive. In Ottawa, add the wait for an appointment (about 4 months, the Embassy says). You must apply at least 2 months before your course starts.

Can I extend my student visa from within Spain?

Yes. If you have a long-term visa (7 months or more), you can renew it from Spain by signing up for another year of Spanish with us. A Spanish course visa can be renewed once, and for the renewal you'll need to have passed the DELE or SIELE Spanish exam, or be enrolled for the DELE. If you'd like to stay for 2 years or more, please get in touch.

Any other questions? Email our team at coordination@tefl-iberia.com.



Frequently asked questions

Can I leave Europe to reset my time as a tourist?

Canadian citizens don't need a visa to visit Spain, but you can only spend up to 90 days in any 180-day period in the Schengen area. Time outside Schengen (back in Canada, for example) doesn't count, but the 180-day window keeps rolling, so a short trip home doesn't reset it.

Can I work as self-employed on a student visa?

Not automatically. On a Spanish course, any work needs an authorisation first, whether you're employed or self-employed. Talk to us before you start.

Do I need a visa for the Trinity CertTESOL course?

No. Canadian citizens can stay in Spain for up to 90 days without a visa, and the CertTESOL takes 4 weeks.

Can I apply for a student visa from within Spain?

Not for a Spanish course: you need to apply from Canada. You can't arrive as a tourist and then change to a student visa.

I already have a student visa with a different school. Can I renew with TEFL Iberia?

Yes, as long as your previous course was a Spanish course at a school accredited by the Instituto Cervantes or at an Escuela Oficial de Idiomas. You'll need a certificate of completion (certificado de aprovechamiento) from your old school and an enrolment letter from our accredited partner Spanish school.

What happens if my visa is refused?

First you appeal the decision. If the refusal is confirmed, we refund your Spanish course minus an admin fee. Some refusals aren't refundable, for example if you don't meet the financial requirement. See our terms and conditions.

Any other questions? Contact our coordination team at

coordination@tefl-iberia.com



Useful links

- Ottawa Embassy: study visa
- Ottawa Embassy: book an appointment
- Toronto consulate: study visa
- Montreal consulate: study visa
- Consular areas in Canada (Spanish)
- Spanish visa application form
- Example of a completed form
- RCMP criminal record checks
- Global Affairs Canada: apostilles
- Global Affairs Canada: requirements
- Our student visa programmes

Consulate websites can differ between their English and Spanish versions, and the Spanish version is often more detailed and more up to date. If in doubt, use your browser's translation tool on the Spanish version.

Health insurance and translations

We've researched the market for good-value health insurance and sworn translators. Whichever insurance you choose, the insurer must be authorised to operate in Spain.

- Atlantida health insurance: contact **Lluís López** at llopez@atlantida.net
- Sworn Spanish translator: contact **Susana García** at info@traductorjurado.org for a 10% discount for TEFL Iberia students

Our Premium Visa & Bureaucracy Service

An optional extra to take the stress out of Spanish bureaucracy. See the student visa page for details.

Before you set off

Guidance on gathering your paperwork, help with the application form, a discount on health insurance, a quick enrolment letter, and access to an immigration lawyer (extra fee).

Once you're in Barcelona

We book your TIE appointment, check your documents, pay the local tax and go with you to the foreign office. Help with your padrón, social security number, bank account and a local SIM.



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Spanish Visa Guide: Canada, updated October 2026