

How to Teach English in Spain in 2026

Visas, qualifications, salaries & how to do it
legally





How to Teach English in Spain

Teaching English in Spain can be an incredible experience — a chance to live abroad, build valuable skills, and enjoy a high quality of life in one of Europe's most exciting countries. When it's done right, it can be genuinely life-changing.

This guide is designed to help you do exactly that. Inside, you'll find clear, up-to-date information on how teaching English in Spain works in 2026, including the legal routes available, realistic salary expectations, and how to avoid the most common pitfalls. We'll also help you understand what this lifestyle is really like, so you can decide whether it's the right fit for you.

This guide is written by a school with 14 years of experience in training teachers and supporting teachers on visas in Spain, working daily with students, employers, and immigration processes. We'd like to share that experience with you and help you make the right decision about teaching in Spain.

¡Nos vemos!



Richard Davie
Director, TEFL Iberia

Is Teaching English in Spain Right for you?



You enjoy working with people

Teaching English in Spain is people-focused, social, and rewarding, with daily interaction at the heart of the job.



You are proactive and resourceful

You're comfortable taking initiative, finding opportunities, and shaping your own experience.



You want to live abroad legally & independently

You're motivated to build a life in Spain the right way, navigating visas, work, and daily life with confidence.

You value lifestyle, learning and experience

You understand that while salaries are modest, the quality of life, personal growth, and experience more than make up for it.

You'd like to learn Spanish

You see language learning as part of the adventure and are happy to improve your Spanish through daily immersion.

You don't want to work 9-5

You prefer flexible schedules, varied work, and a less corporate approach to your working life.





English Teaching Jobs in Spain

Teaching English in Spain rarely follows a single, fixed schedule. Most teachers combine different types of work to build a full timetable, often teaching mornings, evenings, or split shifts. This variety offers flexibility, but also requires organisation and initiative.



Language Academies

Language academies are the most common employer for English teachers in Spain. Classes are usually held in late afternoons and evenings, and focus on general English or exam preparation. Work is typically hourly and follows the academic calendar. You can work with kids, teens and adults.



In-Company Classes (Business English)

In-company classes involve teaching professionals at their workplace, often early in the morning or at lunchtime. These classes are usually well paid and structured, but require punctuality, reliability, and confidence working with adult learners in a professional setting.



Private Students

Private classes are often arranged independently and can be taught one-to-one or in small groups. They offer higher hourly rates and flexibility, but require you to find students, manage schedules, and handle cancellations and payments yourself.



Online + In-Person Mix

Many teachers combine online teaching with in-person work to balance income and flexibility. Online classes can help fill timetable gaps and provide stability, while in-person teaching offers stronger connections and better integration into life in Spain.

Salaries & Cost of living in Spain, 2026

Teaching English in Spain offers a comfortable lifestyle rather than a high income. Understanding how pay, hours, and location interact will help you set realistic expectations and plan your finances confidently.

Salaries

| Type of work | Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia | Smaller Cities |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Language academies | 14-17€/hour | 10-12€/hour |
| In-company classes | 16-25€/hour | 16-22€/hour |
| Private classes | 18-25€/hour | 14-25€/hour |
| Online | 10-15€/hour | 10-15€/hour |

Note: all salaries are net, take-home salaries, after tax is deducted.

Most teachers work **20 - 25 hours per week**, doing a mixture of language academies, in-company and private classes. The average take-home salary is typically **1200 - 1600€ per month**, depending on how many hours you do, and what type of work. Please see our FAQs page for more information on salaries & cost of living.

Cost of Living

| Item | Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia | Smaller Cities |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Single room in shared apartment | 500€/month | 400€/month |
| Groceries | 200€/month | 120€/month |
| Phone | 25€/month | 25€/month |
| Transportation | 25€/month | 25€/month |
| Eating out & entertainment | 350€/month | 200€/month |
| Total | 1100€/month | 770€/month |



Eligibility: Passports, Visas & Age

The easiest and most popular way to live & work in Spain legally is via a **student visa**. This will allow you to live & work for 1 year, with the option to extend.



Do I need a visa?

If you are not from the European Union and wish to stay in Spain for more than 90 days, you'll need a student visa.



What are the requirements?

You'll need to enrol in a course with at least 20 hours of study per week. Additionally, you'll require a valid passport, a criminal background check, a medical report, proof of financial support for your stay, medical insurance, and an invitation letter from our school. There are **no age limitations and no university degree requirements**. For a detailed guide on the process and requirements, contact us at coordination@tefl-iberia.com.



What are the benefits?

- Stay in Spain legally for up to a year, with the option to extend
- Travel freely within the Schengen area
- Work legally up to 30 hours per week
- Obtain your NIE (identity number) and access local services

Read on for more detailed information on how to apply for a Spanish student visa!



How Do Student Visas Work?

The student visa process

01

Find your local Spanish consulate. Check list [here](#).

02

Book an appointment and gather all your documents. Allow 3 months.

03

Collect your visa then travel to Spain.

04

Pick up your student card in Spain & start working!

Getting Started with your Visa

Choose your visa type:

There are 2 types of visa you can choose for your trip to Spain. It will depend on how long you plan to stay in Spain and if you plan to work.

Short term (3-7 months)

- Less documents and paperwork.
- You are not allowed to work.

Long Term (7 +months)

- You can work up to 30 hours per week.
- Additional documentation required.

We strongly recommend applying for a 12 month long term visa, even if you are unsure if you want to stay a full 12 months. Most students we work with end up wanting to stay at least 12 months, and while it is possible to renew from Spain if you have a long-term visa, it is not always guaranteed. The extension application is a hassle, involving lots of paperwork and trips to the Spanish Foreign Office!

| Documents Required | Short- Term Visa | Long - Term Visa |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Passport | ✓ | ✓ |
| Visa application form | ✓ | ✓ |
| Visa fee to be paid | ✓ | ✓ |
| Enrolment letter | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2 x passport photos | ✓ | ✓ |
| Proof of funds | ✓ | ✓ |
| Health Insurance | ✓ | ✓ |
| Medical Certificate | ✓ | ✓ |
| Criminal background check | | ✓ |



Got questions about your documents?

CONTACT US: COORDINATION@TEFL-IBERIA.COM

Gather Your Documents

For a short-term visa (up to 7 months)

- Visa application form ([download here](#)) and 2 recent passport photos.
- Your passport, which must be valid for the whole duration of your stay. With photo copies of your details page.
- Enrolment letter from a recognised course provider for full time study (20 hours per week). [Our Developing Teacher & Spanish course is valid for student visas.](#)
- A non-refundable VISA FEE: *contact your consulate via email to confirm updated visa fees.*
- Evidence of funds: you must be able to prove you have enough money to cover your living costs for the duration of your stay. Living costs are calculated using a measure called the IPREM, which for 2026 works out as 600,00€ per month (7,200€ / year). You will need 3 months worth of printed bank statements.
- Health insurance: You must purchase health insurance from a provider recognised in Spain and include evidence of this in your application. We recommend Atlántida insurance. Contact us for more information: coordination@tefl-iberia.com
- Medical certificate stating that you have no serious illnesses (according to The International Health Regulations (2005). This document should be accompanied by a sworn translation into Spanish and be notarised. ([example document](#))

For a long-term visa (over 7 months)

- All of the above
- National Police Check for anywhere you have lived over the last 5 years. This document should be accompanied by a sworn translation into Spanish and notarised.

Keep in mind, even if you are applying for a visa for over 180 days, you will initially be issued a visa for 90 days. Once you have arrived in Spain you will need to obtain your foreigner card which will replace your visa for the duration of your stay.

Submit your application

You should book an appointment and submit your application at your nearest Spanish consulate. You can check their locations here: <https://www.exteriores.gob.es/en/EmbajadasConsulados/Paginas/index.aspx>

Note that the countries listed in Spanish, you should check:

- Reino Unido (United Kingdom)
- Estados Unidos (United States)
- Canadá (Canada)
- Sud Africa (South Africa)
- Australia

Student Visa FAQs

Why not just apply for a regular work visa?

Work visas for English teaching roles in Spain are extremely limited. Schools must prove they couldn't fill the position locally, which is rarely practical. For this reason, most academies are unable to sponsor work visas for new teachers.

Which courses are eligible for a student visa?

University courses, professional training courses in approved centre, and Spanish courses accredited by the Instituto Cervantes. For English teachers, the most affordable, practical and accessible are **Spanish courses at a school accredited by the Instituto Cervantes**. You must enrol in a course that is **20 hours/week**, but the amount of classes you end up doing could be less, in order to balance with your work schedule.

What documents are required?

Requirements vary slightly by country, but typically include a valid passport, proof of course enrolment, health insurance, evidence of financial means, and a clean criminal record. Longer visas also require a medical certificate and official translations. Please check the specific advice on your [local Spanish consulate](#) website

How long does it take to get the visa?

You should allow 3 months for the entire process. From the time you decide and enrol in a course to travelling to Spain with your visa, is about 3 months.

How many hours can I work on a student visa?

On a long-term student visa, you can work up to 30 hours per week alongside your studies. Many teachers choose to work fewer hours to balance classes, income, and life in Spain.

Can I renew or extend my student visa from within Spain?

Yes. In order to renew, you must pass an official Spanish language test to show that you have progressed, and enrol in another year of lessons.

Is the student visa a long-term solution?

As of 2026, you can do a maximum of 2 years. If you wish to stay longer, you will have to return to your home country and start again. However, the laws and rules change frequently, so this may change in the future.

How much does it cost to apply for a student visa?

This can vary from consulate to consulate, but typically you should budget about 180€ for visa application fees. You will also have to pay:

- Health insurance (about 600€ for one year)
- Criminal background check (costs vary by country)
- Translation and apostille of documents (about 200€)

Can I arrive on a tourist visa and switch later?

No, you must apply from your home country.

Do I really need a TEFL Course?

In short: **yes!** While it is technically possible to find teaching work without a TEFL course, you are doing a disservice to yourself and your students. One common misconception is that speaking English automatically means you can teach it, but effective teaching requires training and practice.

At TEFL Iberia, we offer the **Trinity CertTESOL qualification**, which is considered the most complete course for new English teachers and is recognized around the world. You'll be prepared and qualified to find work here in Spain, or wherever your travels may take you.



TRINITY
COLLEGE LONDON

Validated Course Provider 64165

Expert Instruction

Unlock advanced methodology tutorials, grammar and language awareness help, classroom management and other high-quality course content.

Guided Lesson Prep

Work with our experienced team to learn how to prepare effective lessons using the textbook and how to develop your own custom lesson plans from scratch.

Real Teaching Practice

In addition to standard coursework, we offer the chance to work with real students, then get valuable feedback from your peers and senior instructors.



How Much Does It All Cost?

Teaching English in Spain is an investment — not just financially, but in time, planning, and preparation. Understanding the main costs upfront will help you budget realistically and avoid surprises.

Course & visa costs

| Item | Cost (€) |
|---|------------|
| Accredited TEFL Course (Trinity CertTESOL or CELTA) | 1650-1800€ |
| 1-year of Spanish classes & student visa | 3300€ |
| Visa application fees | 100-200€ |
| Health insurance (1 year) | About 600€ |
| Criminal background check | 100-200€ |
| Document translations | 100-200€ |

Other / Optional Costs

| Item | Cost (€) |
|--------------------------|------------|
| 1 month of accommodation | 500-750€ |
| 1 month of living costs | About 650€ |
| Flight to Barcelona | Variable |
| Airport pickup | 70€ |



TEFL Accreditation

Why is accreditation important?

When you're investing time and money in training to teach English abroad, accreditation isn't just a detail — it's proof that your qualification is high quality, rigorous, and recognised internationally.

What does accreditation actually mean?

It means an official body independently moderates the course content, assessment, and teaching standards to ensure consistent quality and relevance. Ideally an external assessor will visit the school and moderate each student individually.

Not all accreditation is created equally...

Sadly there are many unrecognised or private accreditors that will accredit any course for a fee, and do nothing to monitor quality, ensure standards are met or visit the course provider.

There are a lot of providers out there but there are only two qualifications that are truly internationally recognised worldwide and considered the gold standard in TEFL: **CELTA** and **Trinity CertTESOL**. These are official because they are backed by the UK government and are part of the national qualification framework.

TEFL Acronyms & Terminology

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language. This is a broad term and can be used to describe lots of things: a TEFL course, TEFL school, TEFL qualification, TEFL teacher, etc.

TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. This is basically the same as TEFL, but is more commonly used in North America.

CELTA: Cambridge English Language Teaching Award. This is a TEFL course, accredited by Cambridge University.

Trinity CertTESOL: This is a TEFL course, accredited by Trinity College London.

ESL / EFL: English as a Second Language / English as a Foreign Language. These terms describe the context, not the qualification. ESL usually refers to teaching English in an English-speaking country, while EFL refers to teaching English in countries where English is not the main language.



What Our **Alumni Say**



I've been teaching English in Barcelona for nearly a year now and I've absolutely loved it. I've made so many good friends, had countless new experiences and done things I didn't think I was able to do. I work 20 hours a week in a language academy and teach groups of adults and teens, and have learned so much as I interact with them. I'm also really pleased with how much Spanish I can speak, it's really opened up a whole new perspective for me.

Jayde, Australia



Coming to Spain to teach English was one of the best decisions I ever made. The entire staff was so friendly and welcoming, and the classes were organised and super enjoyable. The location was also a great bonus! It was around a 5 minute walk to La Sagrada Familia, with many cafes and stores all around. I recommend this to anyone looking to spend time in Spain to teach English and learn Spanish.

Abhinav, USA



My experience taking part in the TEFL program surpassed all expectations. The teachers were so knowledgeable and helpful and Kaitlin was always so friendly and quick to reply. I particularly appreciated the focus on practical teaching skills and now I feel much more confident in the classroom. This course has opened my eyes to what is out there and I'm keen to come back after college.

Amy, USA



“

I'm so glad I decided to attend TEFL Iberia for my certification. The entire staff is incredible. The instructors are terrific and the faculty is so supportive. They help you every step of the way, from relocation to assistance in helping you find a job after the course is complete. I highly recommend them!

FAQs

When is the best time to find teaching work?

The main hiring periods are September–October and January, when courses begin at most language academies. That said, it is generally possible to pick up work year round, as teachers come and go and the demand is fairly constant. In August everything closes, and the only work available is summer camp and private classes.

Do I need to speak Spanish to teach English in Spain?

No — Spanish is not required to teach English. However, learning basic Spanish will make daily life easier and help you integrate more fully into Spanish culture.

Where should I do the course?

If possible, it's best to complete your training in the city where you plan to work. Doing your course locally helps you understand how teaching actually works in that market. Training in the same city also allows you to build connections, get practical advice, and start meeting schools and employers before you begin job hunting.

What level of English do I need?

You need a high level of English and clear communication skills. While many teachers are native speakers, non-native speakers with near-native proficiency and strong training are also able to secure teaching positions.

What age groups will I teach?

This varies by job. Many teachers work with adults and teenagers, while others teach young learners or professionals. Most teachers end up teaching a mix of age groups over time.

Is teaching experience required?

Previous teaching experience is not always required, especially for entry-level roles. A recognised training course with practical teaching experience is often more important than prior classroom work.

Will I have a fixed timetable?

Not usually at first. Many teachers build their timetable gradually by combining different classes. Over time, schedules often become more stable as you establish regular students and contracts.

What qualities make someone successful as a teacher in Spain?

Flexibility, reliability, a positive attitude, and good communication skills go a long way. Being open to different schedules and learning as you go makes the experience much smoother.

Is teaching English in Spain a career or a short-term experience?

It can be either. Some people teach for a year or two as an adventure, while others build long-term careers in education, training, or academic management.



The **tefliberia** Story

TEFL Iberia was founded in 2012 by Richard Davie, a graduate of Edinburgh University who came to Barcelona in search of adventure. What began as a simple journey quickly turned into a passion for teaching English and helping others find their own paths to success.

Motivated by a desire to make English teacher training accessible, enjoyable, and professional, Richard created TEFL Iberia to provide a world-class training experience in a supportive environment. The school's emphasis on small-group learning, modern facilities, and personalized support set it apart from the beginning.

TEFL Iberia's flagship course, the Trinity CertTESOL, is a college-level qualification accredited by Trinity College London. Since its inception, the school has trained thousands of teachers from over 60 countries, equipping them with transferable skills and the confidence to teach English professionally — whether in Spain or abroad.

Over the years, TEFL Iberia has evolved into more than just a teacher training center. With the addition of a variety of Spanish courses, students are now able to achieve Spanish fluency and earn the DELE qualification, enriching their experience in Barcelona. The program is further enhanced by cultural activities, job support, and a strong community network.

TEFL Iberia continues to be driven by its core mission: to provide exceptional teacher training, foster personal development, and help students thrive in a new culture. If you're ready to teach, learn, and grow, TEFL Iberia is your gateway to an exciting future.



Meet the Team

Richard Davie, Director

Originally from Scotland, Richard fell in love with Barcelona and decided to make it his home. He set up TEFL Iberia in 2012 and since then has built a successful business running teacher training and language courses in Barcelona.



Kaitlin Diaz, Admissions

Originally from New Jersey, Kaitlin has lived in Barcelona for two years. Passionate about helping others, she loves guiding students through their journey to Barcelona, ensuring they feel supported, confident, and excited about their adventure abroad.

Sasha Brykalina, Course Director

Meet Sasha, our powerhouse Course Director. Born in Saint Petersburg, Russia, she joined TEFL Iberia in May 2018 and has been sharing her passion for teaching ever since. A keen beach volleyball player, Sasha spends most weekends at the beach or with her very cute daughter.



Claire Stancliffe, Program Manager

Claire is from England and has called Barcelona home for the past 10 years. With a natural talent for student support, she ensures every student feels welcomed, supported, and empowered to make the most of their time in Barcelona.

Ready to Take the Next Step?

Book a Free 15-Minute Eligibility Call

Speak with a member of our team to talk through your situation, timelines, and goals. We'll help you understand your options and answer any remaining questions, with no obligation:
<https://calendly.com/tefliberia/administrative-support>

Complete the Trinity CertTESOL application form

If you're ready to take the leap you can complete the course application form here:
<https://tefl-iberia.com/apply/> From there we will contact you for an interview and get the ball rolling with the visa process.







Make an enquiry



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