Applying for Your Student Visa: Spain

What is a visa?
A visa is official authorization allowing you to enter a country and travel, work, live, or study there for a specific period of time. Generally, a visa is an elaborate stamp that is sealed onto one of the pages of your passport. Visas are issued to American citizens by a foreign country's Embassy or Consulate located in the United States. Every country has its own regulations governing the issuance of visas.

Do I need a visa to go to Spain?
A visa is required for students going to Spain through an officially registered organization or program such as ISEP or UM’s Partner University Exchange program, so you (and your dependents, if applicable) will need to obtain a National Visa for your period of study in Spain. All students must in all cases apply for a long stay student visa. The visa process could take 4 to 6 weeks from the day all documents are presented. Due to the quantity of applications received by this office in June, July, and November, we recommend to schedule an appointment as soon as you have all the documents required.

What do I need to apply for a visa?
►Attention: Visa requirements change constantly and vary by Consulate General Office! Please verify the information on the website of the Consulate General Office that has jurisdiction over the state of your permanent address:

You need the following documents to apply for a visa (also called a "residence permit"):

• **A valid passport** (original and 1 copy): valid for at least 6 months beyond the end of your stay in Spain and has at least one blank visa page.
  ♦ Please see page 1 in the Study Abroad Handbook for how to apply for a passport.
  ♦ Apply early for your passport! It may take 6-8 weeks to process your application.

• **Identification Card** (original & 1 copy): either a US driver’s license, US state ID card, voter’s registration card, or current student ID.

• **Completed visa application form(s)** available to be downloaded from the website of the Spanish consulate that has jurisdiction over the state of your permanent address:
http://www.maec.es/subwebs/Embajadas/Washington/en/MenuPpal/Consulares/Paginas/Consular%20Services.aspx You can also contact the consulate via phone or e-mail to request forms.

• **Printed confirmation of your appointment.** You must schedule an appointment to apply for your visa in person. Notify UM’s Office of International Programs before scheduling your appointment to ensure that you receive your acceptance letter in time.

• **Two passport-sized photos** 2x2 inches against a white background.

• **Original letters of acceptance** (original & 1 copy) from the Spanish host university that states you will be enrolled as a full-time student; the school’s name, address, telephone number, and fax number; your program start and end dates; subjects of study; hours of study per week; and the provision of tuition, room, and board benefits and additional letter of acceptance from UM’s Office of International Programs, which will be provided to you after the Pre-Departure Orientation.
  ➢ If the acceptance letter from your host institution has not arrived within three weeks prior to your appointment, please notify UM’s Office of International Programs.

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ISEP students: include “certification letter” from ISEP indicating that tuition, room and board are fully prepaid; included in your ISEP acceptance package. Also, ISEP will issue you a letter addressed to the Spanish consulate certifying your participation in the program as a full-time student, your program dates, the name and address of your host ISEP Coordinator, and the provision of tuition, room and board benefits as well as your enrollment in health insurance.

- **Planned itinerary/printout of round trip.** Do not purchase the tickets until your visa has been approved.
- **Visa fee of $160** in the form of a money order or cash (exact change); personal checks or credit cards will not be accepted.
- **Evidence of funds.** Provide either of the following:
  - Statement from the Spanish University or US program assuming full financial responsibility for room and board (commonly included in the “Letter of Acceptance”).
  - Proof of financial aid or scholarship of at least US$800/month for room and board.
  - Notarized letter from parents/guardians assuming full financial responsibility for at least US$800/month for room and board while student is in Spain (suggested wording: “I hereby certify that I, the [father, mother, etc.] of [student], will support her/him with a monthly allowance of US$800/month while she/he is in Spain and that I am financially responsible for any emergency that may arise.”).
- **Proof of health insurance: original letter** from your health insurance company of evidence, or medical/travel international accidental coverage for the intended period of stay in Spain for a minimum of €30,000 (or equivalent in US dollars).
- **Police Criminal Record clearance** (original & 1 copy). If you are going to spend more than 6 months in Spain, it must be verified by fingerprints and issued by the FBI. Contact the FBI at (304) 625-3878 or at [http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cjis/backchecksh.html](http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cjis/backchecksh.html). This certificate cannot be older than three months from the application date. The certificate must be either:
  - a) Have Department of State clearance. It must be legalized with the Apostille of the Hague Convention from the corresponding Secretary of the State. (original + 2 photocopies)
  - b) FBI Records for international purposes, issued by the US Department of Justice – Federal Bureau of Investigation. They must be legalized with the Apostille of the Hague Convention from the US Department of State in Washington DC. (original + 1 photocopy) For more information on this, see number 8 in the Frequently Asked Questions on the FBI website: [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/background-checks/faqs](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/background-checks/faqs).

You must get a police record from the countries where you have lived during the past 5 years.

- **Medical Certificate.** (original & 1 copy) If you are staying in Spain for over 6 months, you must obtain a M.D.’s statement no more than 3 months old verifying that “the student has been examined and found free of any contagious diseases according to the International Health Regulation 2005”.

- **A self-addressed USPS express mail envelope** with $19.95 in stamps is to be submitted with your application so that your passport may be returned to you. Be sure that the prepaid envelope is for USPS Express Mail service. No other courier service is accepted. If you wish to pick up your visa in person, you can do so from 1-2pm.

**How do I obtain a visa?**

- **In person** (Please note: You must apply for the visa in person by appointment only, and you must apply at the consulate with jurisdiction over your permanent address). Please notify OIP when you intend to make your visa appointment so that we can ensure you have received your acceptance letter.

  - Visit your Spanish Consulate’s website and schedule an appointment to apply in person for your visa.
  - Call the consulate before you visit to verify hours of operation, location, and paperwork requirements.
  - Take the above documents to the Spanish consulate that has jurisdiction over your state of residence.
  - **Residents of Montana will need to travel to the Spanish Consulate in San Francisco to apply for their visa.**

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• Avoid waiting until the last minute to apply for your visa, as omitting one document or failing to complete a form completely may delay the processing of your visa for weeks. Applications will not be accepted less than 40 days prior to departure.

B. Via mail (Please note: In most cases you will be required to appear in person at the consulate to apply for the visa. In exceptional cases, it may be possible to obtain the visa by mail or for a parent to present you application at the consulate. Call the consulate for details. Normal processing time is four to six weeks). If you receive permission to apply for your visa via mail rather than in person, you should:

• Send all documents, including your passport, in a FedEx, US Overnight Mail, or other express mail service that provides a tracking number for your parcel, to the consulate. Keep a photocopy of all documents, including your passport, for yourself.

• Enclose a postage paid US Overnight Mail envelope addressed to yourself.

• Apply early: normal processing time is four to six weeks and cannot be started until all paperwork is submitted.

• Be sure all documents are in order. Missing documents may cause delays in the processing of your application.

• Do not leave the country until you have received your passport and visa.

General tips for applying for a visa:
Foreign embassies and consulates in the US receive hundreds of inquiries every day so contacting them may be a trying experience. Have patience. Some consulates only receive visitors or calls during certain hours of the day or on certain days of the week; visit their website to learn their hours or call back at different times of the day. You may find that you are placed on hold or that your call is never forwarded to the appropriate person. Don't be discouraged: be persistent, but polite. Remember that US consulates in foreign countries operate in a similar fashion!

Spanish Consulates in the US: