
OLTS GUIDE 2026

Instituto Mediterráneo Sol

ORIENTATION FOR LONG-TERM STUDENTS



Instituto Mediterráneo Sol

CENTRO ACREDITADO Instituto Cervantes



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The **Orientation Guide for Long-Term Students (OLTS)** It is one of the three volumes of the Student Manual of Instituto Mediterráneo Sol:

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GUIDE TO
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1. COURSES WITH STUDENT VISA

1.1. Pre-employment issues

REGISTRATION PROCESS

Mediterranean Sun Institute After receiving the pre-registration, a copy of the valid passport and payment of the total reservation fee, the following documentation will be sent to the student:

- **Confirmation of your Spanish course booking**(and additional services, if applicable) showing the price breakdown and the total amount received by the school (must be 100% of the booking).
- **Letter of invitation addressed**to the Consulate (letter of admission) verified through ISIGMA, which includes:
 - ✓ Advanced electronic signature
 - ✓ Secure Verification Code (CSV)
 - ✓ QR code linked to our official platform

► This document can be validated through:<https://app.portasigma.com/fedele/login.jsp>

- Training program for the Spanish course that includes the certificates it can lead to (DELE/SIELE).
- iNMSOL's certificate as a center accredited by the Cervantes Institute.
- Complete iNMSOL Student Handbook (3/3: Student Academic Guide + Granada Practical Guide + Long-Term Student Orientation Guide)).
- Information on the steps to follow before starting the course: access to the level test and needs questionnaire.
- Information about the first day of class.

All documents will be digitally signed and emailed within 48 hours of receiving the student's documentation and payment. We will also need to receive the student's accommodation information to include in the admission document that the consulate will receive. Therefore, we advise sending this information to iNMSOL at the time of payment to avoid delaying the issuance of the admission letter.

BEFORE TRAVELING TO SPAIN

VISA APPLICATION STATUS

It is essential that the student commits to informing the school about the status of their visa process. This means that it is the responsibility of each student to inform whether their visa has been granted or denied, always in advance of the start of the course (minimum of 10 days before the start date of the course).

The courses have a start date that must be respected. The student chooses this date before making the payment (the course must always begin on a Monday and end on a Friday, except for public holidays), and it is flexible. Therefore, it cannot be changed once the course has been paid for and the school has issued the documents for the consulate.

The only reason to request a change of course dates Before the start of the program, students may be unable to obtain an appointment at the consulate of their country of origin. In such cases, the student must provide a document from the consulate clearly showing the appointment date and which student that appointment corresponds to.

This change of course or dates can only be done once free of charge (and only by providing the document that justifies it) If the student wishes to request additional changes, they will have to pay an additional €200 in administrative fees (provided that the request for a change of dates is accompanied by a document that justifies it).

We ask students to plan their dates carefully, and to start the visa application process at least 3 months in advance of the start of their desired course.

CANCELLATION OR MODIFICATION CONDITIONS

The course can only be cancelled if the applicant's visa has not been granted. In this case, the student may request a refund by presenting the school with the visa refusal document provided by the consular office. Without this document, no refund will be possible.

No other cause other than a document from the consular office stating that the student cannot take the course for legal reasons will be taken into consideration.

In the event that the student is not granted a visa, INMSOL's cancellation conditions are:

1. Students who have obtained any document (invitation letter for consulate, confirmation of full payment, etc.) from Instituto Mediterráneo Sol to apply for their visa may only request a refund if their visa has been denied, provided they have not started the course.
2. Instituto Mediterráneo Sol will refund all money paid, except for €200 in management fees, once the veracity of the documentation proving visa refusal has been verified, only if the student has not started the course.
3. **If a course has already started and the school has not received any notification, the course will be considered to have started and no refunds will be possible.** If the student submits a visa refusal document after the course has started, the first month of classes, at a minimum, or any portion thereof already elapsed (nor the €200 administration fee), will not be refunded. The student must notify the school of any late arrival at least 10 days in advance. Notification of late arrival between 10 and 3 days prior does not guarantee that the course will begin on the date specified in the booking. Less than 2 days prior (if the student has been granted a visa), the student will begin one week later, without making up any missed classes. If the student has not been granted a visa, the above rules will apply.

STUDENTS WHO ENROLL IN A COURSE WHILE ALREADY IN SPAIN

Students must ensure they meet all legal requirements for the course period they are enrolling in. In these cases, there will be no refund once the course has started.

CHANGE OF COURSE DURING THE STAY

You can always add extra (individual) classes, paying the corresponding cost, but you cannot request a reduction in the classes already contracted.

CONDITIONS ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE COURSES

The maximum number of students per class of the same level and course characteristics is 10, and the minimum is 3. If this minimum is not reached, the following conditions will apply:

1 student or 2 students: Participants will receive 50% of the contracted classes, either individually (1 teacher/1 student) or semi-privately (1 teacher/2 students), according to their level and needs. They will not be required to pay the price difference under any circumstances.

3 or more students: Participants will receive 100% of the contracted classes, in a group setting.

(*) Exceptions to the general conditions:

Different conditions will apply to the following courses:

- *DELE preparation courses (2 and 4 classes per day).*
- *Courses by theme and for specific purposes: Spanish and Latin American literature; Spanish and Latin American history; Spanish and Latin American culture; business Spanish; health Spanish and tourism Spanish.*
- *Training courses for teachers of Spanish as a Foreign Language (native and non-native).*

()Exceptions detailed in section (4.3.) of the Student Academic Guide.*

2. GENERAL ROUTINE FOR LONG-TERM STUDENTS

2.1. Class Development

The courses contracted with Instituto Mediterráneo Sol will be pre-defined by dates:

- Start date (must always be a Monday, except on public holidays)
- End date (must always be a Friday, except on public holidays).

Upon registration, students agree to attend the course on the stipulated dates, unless prevented by a duly justified legal impediment. Similarly, INMSOL agrees to deliver the course on the agreed dates.

It will only be possible to request a change of dates if it is supported by a visa whose dates are not compatible.

CLASS SCHEDULES

These courses are taught in groups, take place from Monday to Friday, and have variable schedules, depending on the needs of the groups each week.

The schedules (*) for intensive courses of 4 hours of instruction per day may be:

20-HOUR INTENSIVE SPANISH COURSE (ELE)

SUBJECT	GRAMMAR (2 CLASS HOURS/DAY)	CONVERSATION (2 CLASS HOURS/DAY)
Option 1	From 9:00 to 10:30	from 11:00 to 12:30
Option 2	From 11:00 to 12:30	from 12:45 to 14:15 hours
Option 3	From 12:45 to 14:15 hours	from 2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.
Option 4	From 2:30 PM to 4:00 PM	from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

These schedules cannot be chosen; they will be set by the school. The school reserves the right to make occasional changes to these schedules.

Each week the center will inform each student by email about their schedule and teacher for the following week.

If any student knows in advance that they will be absent from class on a particular day, they should inform the school as soon as possible, especially in the case of individual classes.

2.2. Attendance control protocol

Class attendance is a requirement of the Immigration Office in order to process applications for student visas and visa extensions; students must attend 100% of the contracted classes.

To this end, the school has an attendance tracking system and a protocol for notifying the Immigration Office in case of unjustified absences, which we detail below.

ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE CALCULATION

iNMSOL requires a minimum attendance of 80% of the classes contracted to obtain a certificate of attendance and achievement at the end of their course.

Students will find a weekly list in the Registrar's Office that they must sign each day:

STUDENT	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	
Student's name	1st HOUR: 10% (Signature and time)	1st HOUR: 10% (Signature and time)	1st HOUR: 10% (Signature and time)	1st HOUR: 10% (Signature and time)	1st HOUR: 10% (Signature and time)	TOTAL: 100%
	2nd HOUR: 10% (Signature and time)	2nd HOUR: 10% (Signature and time)	2nd HOUR: 10% (Signature and time)	2nd HOUR: 10% (Signature and time)	2nd HOUR: 10% (Signature and time)	

Guidelines:

- **Students must sign in twice each day.** They must sign in upon arrival (with signature and time) at the start time of the course, and after the break, as most courses are divided into 2 daily blocks.
 - ♦ If, after applying our terms and conditions according to the number of students in a group, on any given week the student has 10 classes per week, instead of 20, each daily block (2 classes) will count as 20% of attendance.
- **Absences may include the following:**
 - ✓ **F: absence.** A 10% discount will be applied to 100% of the tuition for each block that the student has not attended.
 - ✓ **R: delay.** A 5% discount will be applied to the total fee for each block the student arrives at 15 minutes after the start time (or 5 minutes for the second part of the class). A 10% discount will be applied if the student arrives 45 minutes after the start time.
 - ✓ **J: excused absence.** Students must provide a valid reason if their absence is due to a bureaucratic appointment related to their visa and legalization in Spain, or a health issue. If the absence is justified, no penalty will be applied; it will be counted as attendance.
- **Punctuality is required:** Students have 15 minutes from the start of class and 5 minutes after the break in the second block to sign in. After 15 minutes (for the first part of the class) or 5 minutes (for the second part of the class), signing will not be possible and will be counted as an absence (Tardiness). This tardiness will result in a deduction equivalent to one class (5% if there are 20 classes per week, or 10% if there are 10 classes per week).
- **Official school holidays on which there is no class will be counted as attendance.**

JUSTIFIED ABSENCES

Absences supported by a verifiable document (clearly showing the student's name, date, and time) may be considered excused. These documents may include:

- Appointments with the Immigration Office / Police
- Appointments for degree validation
- Medical appointments

Appointments must coincide with class time in order to be considered a reason for absence.

2.3. Vacation

The course booking documents that are sent before applying for the visa indicate the period and dates of the vacation that the student can enjoy.

These periods are regulated by the following calculation:

Spanish courses lasting up to 20 weeks

Students are entitled to up to 15% vacation weeks. For example, if the course is 16 weeks long, students may be entitled to up to two additional weeks of vacation beyond their regular course hours.

Spanish courses lasting 21 weeks or more

Students will be entitled to up to 20% more vacation weeks. For example, if it is a 30-week course, students may have up to 6 additional weeks of vacation beyond their regular course time.

The school is open year-round, except for local, regional, and national holidays. This means that each student will have their own vacation period, as agreed upon at the time of enrollment.

3. STUDENT REGULARIZATION ONCE IN GRANADA

IMPORTANT

This information is always for guidance only. Each student should request specific requirements from the consular office, as these may vary from country to country, or may change depending on the current socio-political situation.

Upon arrival in Granada, the student must begin the process of regularizing their situation in the country so that they can reside legally.

3.1. Registration in Granada.

This is a necessary step if the student will be residing in the city for more than 6 months. The following steps must be followed:

1. Prepare the necessary documentation

Prepare original and copy of:

- **Application form:** It is usually provided by the town hall or can be downloaded from their website. It must be signed.
- **Valid passport and visa:** The page with the entry stamp to Spain.
- **Foreigner Identity Card (TIE):** If you already have it, that's the main document. If you're still in the process of applying, bring the receipt (TIE application document) along with your passport and visa.
- **Proof of address (the most important requirement):**
 - **Rental agreement:** It's the ideal document. It should be signed by the landlord and the tenant (you).
 - **If you don't have a contract in your name** (e.g., you rent a room or the contract is with a roommate):
 1. **Contract holder authorization:** The holder (the one who signed the contract with the owner) must go with you to the town hall, with their ID/NIE and a copy of the contract, to authorize your registration.

2. **Coexistence agreement form:** Another option is for the owner and all cohabitants to go to a Police Station to request this document, which certifies who lives at the address.
 3. **Property:** If the apartment belongs to a family member or friend, that person (with their ID/NIE and property deed) must authorize you.
- In some cases they may ask for proof of studies (university or school registration).

2. Request an appointment

It is essential to make an appointment in advance. This is usually done online.

- **Web:** Go to the Granada City Council's appointments page (search for "Granada City Council Appointment Registration").
- **Office:** The procedure is carried out at the Citizen Service Office (usually located in the Town Hall Building, in Plaza del Carmen).

3. Obtaining the certificate

- At that time, if everything is correct, they will give you the "Registration Certificate" (valid for 3 months).
- If you request the "Certificate of Registration" (with a stamp, more formal), they may give it to you on the spot or send it to your home in a few days.

3.2. Open a bank account

It will be sufficient to provide the identity document, the NIE and a document that proves the student status (it can be a letter of certificate of enrollment in the course provided by the school).

Required Documentation (You will need ORIGINAL and COPY)

- **NIE (Foreigner Identification Number)**
- **Passport**
- **Proof of studies in Spain:** letter issued by the school at the students' request.
- **Proof of address in Spain:**
 - ✓ **Certificate of registration (registration slip).** It must be recent (less than 3 months old). In some cases, if you haven't yet registered your address, they may accept a rental agreement in your name. But registration is the standard.
- **Mobile phone number and email address.**

At iNMSOL we provide students with the contact information for one of the commercial executives at Santander Bank, one of the branches closest to the school, where many of our students have already received assistance:

Jorge Martín Gómez | Banco Santander
Casino Sidewalk 5. CP 18009 Granada
Tel. +34 625169484
E-mail: jhmartin@gruposantander.es

3.3. Apply for TIE (Foreigner Identity Card)

This procedure must be completed within the first 30 days of entering Spain, and is requested at the Immigration Office, by prior appointment:

STEPS TO APPLY FOR THE TIE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS

This is the Immigration website you can visit to get the necessary information for applying for a Foreigner Identity Card (TIE) and residency in Granada:

https://sede.policia.gob.es/portalCiudadano/fr/tramites_extranjeria_tramite_tarjetaestudiantesextranjeros_inicial_renovacion.php

The most important thing is to get an appointment. (sometimes it's quite difficult, you have to try several times), from this website:

<https://sede.administracionespublicas.gob.es/pagina/index/directorio/icpplus>

1. You must go to "Access the Procedure".
2. You have to choose the province (Granada) and "Accept".
3. Next, you must choose the office where you want to request the appointment (in this case in Granada, San Agapito street), choose the option "authorization request" and "Accept".
4. You have to accept again, press "Enter".
5. Finally, fill in the form with all the personal data requested.

You must bring the required documentation to the appointment, which is usually:

A) Application form:

https://sede.policia.gob.es/portalCiudadano/es/tramites_extranjeria_tramite_tarjetaestudiantesextranjeros_inicial_renovacion.php

https://www.inclusion.gob.es/documents/410169/2156469/17-Formulario_TIE.pdf?t=1674731356427

The image shows a screenshot of the 'Formulario de solicitud de Tarjeta de Identidad de Extranjeros (TIE)' (Form for the application of the Foreigner Identity Card). The form is titled 'EX-17 Solicitud de Tarjeta de Identidad de Extranjeros (TIE) (L.O. 4/2000 y RD 1517/2011)' and is issued by the 'GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA'. It is divided into three main sections: 1) DATOS DEL EXTRANJERO (Data of the foreigner), 2) DATOS DEL REPRESENTANTE A EFECTOS DE PRESENTACIÓN DE LA SOLICITUD (Data of the representative for the presentation of the application), and 3) DOMICILIO A EFECTOS DE NOTIFICACIONES (Residence for notification purposes). Each section contains fields for personal data such as name, date of birth, nationality, passport number, and address. There are also checkboxes for 'Extranjero en España' (Foreigner in Spain) and 'Representante legal en su caso' (Legal representative in this case). At the bottom, there is a section for 'ATENCIÓN' (Attention) with a note about the electronic submission of the form.

B) Valid passport (original and one copy).

C) Health insurance.

D) Census.

E) Passport-size photos (recent).

F) Justification of the reason for requesting the NIE / residence:

- In the case of students, it is usually necessary to provide a letter of admission from the university or a certificate of enrollment (or registration) to prove that you are going to study.
- You can also provide proof of income (e.g., bank statements, scholarships, etc.).

G) Form for payment of the fee (Model 790, code 012):

https://sede.policia.gob.es/portalCiudadano/es/tramites_extranjeria_tramite_tarjetaestudiantesextranjeros_inicial_renovacion.php

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

(Must be paid in advance at the bank - approx. €16.08 - at any bank)

!If you submit documents from your country (such as your acceptance letter or certificates), they may need to be translated into Spanish by a certified translator. Additionally, some documents will need to be legalized or apostilled, depending on the country of origin.

4. CERTIFICATES

Upon completion of the course, the student will receive two certificates issued by Instituto Mediterráneo Sol:

- **Certificate of attendance.** This certificate details the course characteristics, dates, level, and a summary of the objectives and content covered. A minimum of 80% class attendance is required to receive it.
- **Certificate of achievement.** This certificate contains information about the level tests taken throughout the course. It requires a final exam and shows the actual level achieved. A minimum attendance of 80% is required.

5. CULTURAL STRESS SITUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Cultural stress manifests as moments of anxiety, confusion, or psychological tension that a person experiences when interacting in a cultural environment different from their own. This can be the case for a Spanish student. But it's a normal process when facing an unfamiliar culture!

Therefore, at iNMSOL we want to offer some advice to students who may be affected. Below, we will outline some of the most common and problematic situations, and some recommendations for overcoming them.

CULTURAL STRESS SITUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In general, before arriving in Spain and Granada, we recommend some emotional preparation:

- **Research Andalusian culture** Granada has a specific rhythm and customs (schedules, food, traditions).
- **Learn local expressions** Beyond standard Spanish, familiarize yourself with typical Andalusian greetings.
- **Manage expectations** Come with an open mind; don't constantly compare yourself to your country.

The following table presents common situations of cultural stress and tips for coping with them:

Communication and dialect

- Difficulty understanding the local accent or the fast speech of the people of Granada**
 - **Active listening in real-world contexts** Spend time in traditional bars, markets (like San Agustín) and squares to train your ear.
 - **Ask for a repeat without shame.**
 - **Useful phrases:** "Could you say it more slowly?", "I'm Learning Spanish, can you repeat that?"
 - **Take advantage of local resources:**
 - ✓ Attend language exchanges in places like "La Tertulia" or "Sala Premier".
 - ✓ Listen to Radio Granada to familiarize yourself with the accent
- Feeling ignored or misunderstood because you don't speak fluently**

To feel understood:

 - **Communicate your process** "I am an international student, I am improving my Spanish."
 - **Use humor** People from Granada usually appreciate effort and respond with patience.
 - **Seek "linguistic allies":** Identify colleagues or neighbors willing to converse at a moderate pace.

Culture shock and everyday life

- Difficulty understanding the unwritten rules of "tapas" or social gatherings.**

Unwritten rules of book covers:

 - ✓ In most bars in Granada, a tapa comes with your drink, free of charge.
 - ✓ You can ask: "What tapas do you have today?", or, "Can we choose the tapas here?"
 - ✓ It's common to share space at the bar and chat with strangers.

Tips for social gatherings:

 - ✓ Punctuality is flexible (15-30 minutes of "polite delay" at informal events)
 - ✓ People from Granada value leisurely conversation and physical contact (kisses on the cheek).
- Adaptation to meal times and the closing of shops at midday (during siesta)**

Follow a gradual adaptation, taking into account the main schedules:

 - ✓ Breakfast: 8:00-9:00 (coffee and toast/pastries)
 - ✓ Lunch: 13:30-15:00 (this is the main meal of the day)
 - ✓ Dinner: 9:00-11:00 PM (lighter)

Strategic planning Do your shopping before 2:00 PM or after 5:00 PM, when shops reopen.

The siesta is cultural, not mandatory: Use it to rest or for quiet activities.

Academic and administrative clash

- Concern about the evaluation system or the relationship with teachers**

Teacher-student relationship:

 - ✓ More informal than in many countries, but maintain respect
 - ✓ Use "usted" initially until they suggest using "tú."
 - ✓ Attend tutoring sessions; they are key to understanding expectations.

Assessment:

 - ✓ Combination of final exams and continuous work
 - ✓ Class participation is usually valued positively.
 - ✓ Ask for examples of previous work to understand the expected format.
- Difficulty integrating into group work with local students**

Integration into group work:

 - ✓ Proactive initiative: offer yourself for specific tasks from the very beginning.

- ✓ Communicate your strengths: "I can handle the research/source finding/writing."
- ✓ Socialize outside of the academic setting: a coffee after class facilitates collaboration.

Understand work styles Local students may have a more relaxed approach initially, with intensification near the deadlines.

Isolation and emotional distance

1. Feeling nostalgic for the food, the weather, or the landscapes of my country

Create a "cultural bridge":

- ✓ Cook a typical dish from your country and share it with classmates
- ✓ Decorate your room with familiar items
- ✓ Maintain a regular, but not excessive, contact ritual with your home.

Find familiar flavors:

- ✓ International shops on Elvira Street or near the city center
- ✓ Farmers markets for fresh ingredients

2. Feeling alone despite being surrounded by people

Participate in structured activities:

- ✓ Flamenco, cooking or ceramics courses
- ✓ Hiking groups in Sierra Nevada
- ✓ Volunteering in local organizations

Establish comforting routines:

- ✓ Daily walks through the Albaicín or along the river
- ✓ Weekly visit to a favorite coffee shop
- ✓ Participate in cultural events

Find a community:

- ✓ International student groups at the UGR
- ✓ Religious or spiritual communities, if relevant to you
- ✓ Sports clubs (from football to climbing)

Granada is a city that has historically integrated diverse cultures. What initially seems like a barrier (the accent, the schedules, the customs) will soon become part of your Granadan identity.

Give yourself time! Cultural adaptation isn't linear and has its ups and downs. Most students look back fondly on these initial challenges by the end of their stay.

6. ACADEMIC GUIDANCE AFTER THE SPANISH COURSE

6.1. Taking official Spanish exams

Official exams are the formal accreditation of your language proficiency. They represent the successful culmination of your efforts during your months of studying Spanish.

Preparing for these exams provides a clear and structured goal:

- ✓ It helps to consolidate knowledge, fill gaps, and develop a balanced command of the language.
- ✓ It provides knowledge in all language skills: listening and reading comprehension, written expression, and oral interaction.
- ✓ It is key to your future in Spain if you decide to continue your higher education or look for a job.

DELE

Diploma of Spanish as a Foreign Language

SIELE

International Spanish Language Assessment Service

COMPARATIVE

If you're unsure which exam to choose, here's a comparison between the two:

DELE

SIELE

DESCRIPTION	DESCRIPTION
Diploma of proficiency in Spanish at a CEFR level (A1-C2)	Certificate of Spanish proficiency on a points scale with equivalencies to levels A1-C1 of the CEFR
OWNERSHIP	OWNERSHIP
Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. The Cervantes Institute has held academic, economic, and administrative management since 2002.	Cervantes Institute, National Autonomous University of Mexico, University of Salamanca, University of Buenos Aires
ORIGIN	ORIGIN
Spain	Spain, Mexico and Argentina
VALIDITY	VALIDITY
Indefinite	5 years
RECOGNITION	RECOGNITION
International recognition in formal education systems (e.g., Brazil, France, Italy), institutions, companies, universities, etc. In Spain: Spanish nationality, MIR, FIR, etc.	International recognition in formal education systems (e.g., Brazil, France, Italy), institutions, companies, universities, etc. In Spain: Spanish nationality, MIR, FIR, etc.
FORM OF ADMINISTRATION	FORM OF ADMINISTRATION
At exam centers, on paper	At examination centers, on computers, and through an appointment system.
NUMBER OF EXAMS AND LEVELS	NUMBER OF EXAMS AND LEVELS
6 for adult audiences: A1-C2. 2 for schoolchildren: A1-A2/B1	An exam for adults that integrates tasks from A1 to C1
EXAM TESTS	EXAM TESTS
Reading comprehension, Listening comprehension, Written expression and interaction, Oral expression and interaction	Reading comprehension, Listening comprehension, Written expression and interaction, Oral expression and interaction
QUALIFICATION	QUALIFICATION

Suitable or unsuitable for the level the candidate is being examined on

Result expressed on a scale of one thousand points with equivalence to the CEFR levels

TYPE OF CERTIFICATE

Electronic certification Officially recognized qualifications. Official diploma for eligible candidates

TYPE OF CERTIFICATE

Certificate(Complete exam) or Results Report (only some test(s)), depending on the contracted modality

DEADLINE FOR COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS

Approximately three months

DEADLINE FOR COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS

Maximum three weeks

6.2. The Spanish education system

The Spanish education system is organized into stages and is jointly managed by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training at the national level and the Education Departments of the 17 autonomous communities. Its main structure is as follows:

SPANISH EDUCATION SYSTEM



A) General requirements for university admission

The requirements vary depending on the student's country of origin (whether or not it belongs to the European Union), but all must follow these main steps:

- 1. Recognition or validation of previous studies.** This is the most important and time-consuming step (it can take 6-9 months). They must have their secondary education recognized as equivalent to the Spanish Bachillerato degree.
 - ✓ Official Channel: Through the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.
 - ✓ Alternative (common) route: Through UNEDassiss (National University of Distance Education), which issues an access credential that replaces the homologation process for admission. This is the quickest and most widely used route.
- 2. Passing the University Entrance Exam (EBAU/Selectividad):**
 - ✓ International students usually take the EBAU for foreigners (PCE) managed by UNEDassiss.
 - ✓ They are tested on specific subjects related to the degree they wish to study. I recommend taking at least two subjects from the optional phase to improve your admission score.

- ✓ Exam registration period: Usually from January to February for the May-June (main) exam sessions. There is a second session in June/July.

3. University Pre-registration Process:

- ✓ Once they have the UNED Credential and their EBAU grade, they must apply for a place at the desired university.
- ✓ General Timeframe: The first phase is usually from June to July. It is very important to participate in this first phase to increase your chances of winning.
- ✓ Process: It is done online through the portal of the autonomous community where the university is located (for example, in Catalonia through Accessnet).

B) Alternatives to University: Vocational Training (VT)

For students seeking more practical training, Higher Level Vocational Training is a very good option:

- ✓ Entry requirement: Hold a recognized high school diploma. Or pass a specific entrance exam (for those over 19 years of age).
- ✓ The pre-registration period is usually later than the university registration period, often between May and July, but it varies considerably by region. Classes begin in September.

6.3. Planning the procedures: deadlines for enrollment in higher education studies (UNIVERSITY)

One of the most important steps is the homologation/validation: you have to start processing it at least 9-12 months in advance, as it is the longest process.

PLANNING CHECKLIST

- ✓ **9-12 months prior (September-December):** Start the UNED accreditation/certification process. Define the field of study (sciences, social sciences, etc.).
- ✓ **6-9 months prior (January-March):** Registration for the UNED EBAU/PCE exams. Confirm language requirements (some degrees require a DELE B2 or equivalent SIELE).
- ✓ **3-6 months prior (April-June):** Taking the exams. Preparing documents for pre-registration (ID/passport, credential, grades).
- ✓ **Summer (June-July):** University pre-registration in the first phase. If they do not obtain a place, participate in the subsequent phases.
- ✓ **August-September:** formalize enrollment at the assigned university or vocational training center.

FOREIGNERS PHASE

This is an option that foreign students can try:

- **For the pre-registration process (ordinary/extraordinary phases)** You can consult the official portal of [Single Andalusian District](#). The exact dates of the extraordinary phase are published there after the completion of the ordinary phase.

COMPARISON: UNIVERSITY VS. VOCATIONAL TRAINING (Advanced Level)

	UNIVERSITY (Degree)	VOCATIONAL TRAINING (Higher Level)
Duration	4 years (240 ECTS).	2 years (120 ECTS). Includes a Work Placement module (FCT).
Primary Access Requirement	Homologation from secondary studies to the Spanish Baccalaureate + Admission Grade (EBAU/PCE).	Homologation from secondary studies to the Spanish Baccalaureate or specific Access Test (for those over 19 years old).
Usual Access Route	UNED credential + PCE tests (EBAU for foreigners).	UNED credential (certifies the Baccalaureate) or prepare for the Vocational Training Access Test (examines basic skills).
Focus and Objective	Academic and theoretical Generalist and research training. Access to master's and doctoral programs.	Practical and applied Specialized training for a specific profession. Direct job placement.
Key Advantages	• International recognition and a wide range of offerings. • A broad range of postgraduate programs. • Development of critical thinking and networking.	• Fast job placement (high demand). • Shorter duration and lower cost. • Very practical training (work placement in a company).
Disadvantages / Challenges	• Longer duration and total cost. • Less practical focus in many degrees. • Competitiveness in high-demand careers (cut-off score).	• International academic recognition may be lower (complex equivalencies). • Specific offerings by professional families (less varied). • More limited access to university postgraduate studies.
Language Requirement	For degrees in Spanish: DELE/SIELE B2 (or higher) required when enrolling at most universities.	Sufficient competence is required to follow classes (generally level B1 or B2).
Main Exit	Public sector, research, management, regulated professions (law, medicine, etc.).	Technical and specialized sector (IT, healthcare, administration, tourism, etc.).

Official resources for checking exact dates and requirements:

- ✓ **For Credential and Examinations (PCE):** [UNEDassis Portal](#)
- ✓ **For the Pre-registration Process:** Search for the portal of the destination autonomous community (e.g., Madrid): [universitiesmadrid.es](#).
- ✓ **For General Information and Homologation:** [Ministry of Universities](#) and [Ministry of Education](#).
- ✓ Ministry of Universities (general information and scholarships): [universities.gob.es](#)
- ✓ Visit the website of the specific university you choose: To find out their exact deadlines, degree programs, and language requirements.

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