



FAQs

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1. THE PROGRAM

1.1. What is the Language Assistant Program?

The North American Language and Culture Assistants Program (NALCAP) is an educational outreach initiative of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. The program provides U.S. and Canadian college students and graduates, majoring in any subject, with the opportunity of becoming teaching assistants to foreign language teachers in Spain while learning about the Spanish language, culture, and society. Program recipients must have native-like proficiency in English or French (Canada).

1.2. What is the main goal of the program?

The main goal of the program is to bring native-like speakers of English and French (Canada) into every classroom in Spain to enhance students' language skills. The language assistant serves as a linguistic model for students in Spain. Listening to the language assistant's pronunciation will better students' English language skills.

1.3. What is the duration of the program?

Students will spend a full academic year in Spain from the beginning of October until May 31. For those candidates selected for Madrid, the duration of the program is usually from October 1 to June 30. You are advised to carefully check the duration of your assignment in the *Letter of Acceptance* you will receive.

1.4. Can I start later than October?

No. The program runs from October 1 – May 31 within the school calendar year in Spain. Other starting dates could lead to disruptions in school planning, organization, and management.

2. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

2.1. What are the eligibility requirements?

- Have a valid U.S. or Canadian passport
- Have earned a BA or BS degree or be currently enrolled as a junior or a senior in a BA or BS program. Applicants may also have an Associate Degree or be a community college student in their last semester.
- Be a native-like speaker of English or French (Canada).
- Be in good physical and mental health. You will need to submit a medical certificate written by your doctor when applying for a visa stating that you are indeed in good physical and mental health.
- Have a clean background check. Also necessary for the visa application.
- Be 18-60 years old.
- Have a basic level of Spanish for your personal daily life and needs in Spain. In class, you will only be speaking English or French (the latter only Canadian citizens).

2.2. What are the age requirements?

You must be at least 18 years old and may not be older than 60 to participate in the program.



2.3. I am a sophomore. Can I apply to the program?

Unfortunately, the answer is no. You need to be at least in your junior year of college at the time of the application in addition to being 18 years old.

3. APPLICATIONS

3.1. How to apply?

The entire application process will be done electronically through our online portal called PROFEX. Applicants are advised to read through the *Application Guidelines* and the *How-to-Navigate-PROFEX Handbook* before beginning the application process, in addition to these FAQs.

3.2. Which documents do I need to submit for the application?

All documents are to be uploaded in PDF format onto the PROFEX application.

1. A **signed and dated Checklist**. Check off the boxes as you upload the documents to PROFEX. Then upload the checklist onto *Documentos Anexos* in PROFEX. You can find the checklist on our [website](#).

2. A copy of the main page of your valid U.S. or Canadian **passport**. (see RECAP for picture of page)

3. An **official college transcript** or a copy of your **diploma(s)**.

4. A **Statement of Purpose** explaining why you would like to participate in the program with the following requirements:

- It must not be longer than 250-300 words and must be signed and dated by you.
- It must be written in **English** (for U.S. applicants), or **English or French** (for Canadian applicants), even though PROFEX may ask you to write it in Spanish. You must also state that either English or French is your native-like language. (If you are a native-like speaker rather than a native speaker, please explain. For example, I was born in Colombia but moved to the States when I was 10 years old).
- Explain why you would like to be a language and culture assistant in Spain.
- It needs to be addressed to the Ministry of Education of Education and Vocational Training of Spain.

5. A **letter of recommendation** from a college professor/instructor/employer with the following requirements:

- Be on the **organization's official letterhead** stationery
- Include the writer's **name, job title, and contact information**
- Explain **how the writer knows the applicant and for how long**
- Assess **the applicant's qualifications and qualities** towards their success in the program
- Have a **final statement** where the writer speaks to the applicant's ability to be a language assistant in Spain
- Be **no more than 1 page** in length
- Be dated **no earlier than September 1, 2020**
- Be **addressed** to the Ministry of Education of Spain
- Be **signed and dated** by the writer

Please see the *Letter of recommendation Guidelines* on our [website](#).

6. **Only in the case that you may hold dual citizenship** for a country belonging to the European Union and in addition to your U.S. or Canadian citizenship, or if you already have a residence card (TIE).

- We require a medical certificate stating that you are in good mental and physical condition and have no limitations that would impair your ability to teach. This document must be written on the doctor's letterhead. You will need to upload it onto the “*Documentos anexos*” section.
- You will need to request a clean police background check in your country of origin and present it upon arrival at your assigned school in Spain.

3.3. Is there a deadline to apply?

The application period will be open from January 27th 12 am to April 6th, 2021 at 11:59 pm (local Madrid, Spain time). Applicants must complete the online application on PROFEX by this deadline.

3.4. When can I register on PROFEX?

Applications open at the end of January. However, you can start to register on PROFEX before the application period begins, if you wish, and start preparing the necessary documents. *PLEASE NOTE that you will NOT be able to upload documents or submit the application until the application period opens.*

3.5. Do I need to submit a background check with my application?

No, not with your application. But you will need this document later on, when you apply for your visa (once accepted to the program).

There is one exception. **Only if you are a dual citizen** of the US/Canada and a country in the European Union, and you plan on using the latter passport to enter Spain (thus **not** requiring a visa), then you will need to request a police background check in your country of origin and present it upon arrival at your assigned school.

3.6. Do I need to submit a medical certificate with my application?

No, not with your application. But you will need this document later on, when you apply for your visa (once accepted to the program).

There is one exception. **Only if you are a dual citizen** of the US/Canada and a country in the European Union, and you plan on using the latter passport to enter Spain (thus **not** requiring a visa), then you will need to submit a medical certificate with your application. Please upload it to the “*Documentos Anexos*” section under Curriculum on PROFEX. You will also have to present this certificate at your school.

3.7. What should the medical certificate state?

The medical certificate needs to be on a doctor's letterhead and on a standard sized paper. The certificate must verify that you are free of drug addiction and are in good mental and physical condition and have no limitations that would impair your ability to be in a classroom.

3.8. I do not currently have medical insurance. How can I get a medical certificate?

Contact your family physician, who should have your health record, and ask for the medical certificate required. You can also find a doctor in your area who can provide the certificate that you will need to apply for your visa.



3.9. Who should provide a recommendation letter for the applicant?

You should ask a college professor/instructor or employer. Please share the letter of recommendation guidelines with the person writing the letter for you. Remember that the program requires that all candidates upload a current letter of recommendation dated no earlier than September 1, 2020.

Please make the writer aware that they will not be able to upload the recommendation letter to our portal. Only applicants may upload application documents to the portal.

3.10. What level of Spanish do I need?

A basic level of Spanish is recommended. You will not need it for your internship duties, but it will be helpful on a personal level to navigate everyday life.

3.11. What happens if I am in the process of renewing my passport while applications are open?

Once you receive your renewed passport, you must send an email to profex.soporte@educacion.gob.es ASAP, asking them to change your passport number to the new one. Attach a copy of the main page of your new passport. They will make the appropriate changes on your application. Your application ID number matches your passport number, so it is extremely important to keep this information updated.

3.12. How do I know if the application registration is complete?

When your status is *Admitida*.

An application is considered to be entirely reviewed and complete only when ALL the required documents submitted to PROFEX have been reviewed and approved. If this is the case, your status will then change to *Admitida*. Once your status is *Admitida* you now qualify to receive a regional placement. Access the application frequently to check your status. Also, check your junk mail folder often.

This is the route to follow on PROFEX: **Auxiliares de conversación > Consultas solicitudes > Nombre y apellido.**

Terms used on PROFEX in reference to the submission of your application:

Inscrita: Your application has been electronically submitted and you are given an application number.

Registrada: Your application is being checked just to establish if all the necessary documents have been uploaded. If something is missing or does not meet the requirements, you will be notified by a reviewer via email.

Admitida: The application has been reviewed. Your application is officially confirmed and now eligible for assignment.

3.13. What happens if a document is missing or does not meet the requirements?

You will be contacted as soon as possible. Please note that you are responsible for uploading all the required documents to PROFEX correctly and in time. Unfortunately, failure to do so may result in delays in the final review of your application. Check your junk mail folder often.

3.14. How are the assignments given?

Priority in assigning a position for a given application will be based on your application number. No application will be assigned a position without having reached the status of *Admitida* on PROFEX.



3.15. Who selects the applicants?

The Ministry of Education of Spain and the regional education offices (*Consejerías de Educación*) in each of the regions of Spain (*Comunidades Autónomas*) select the language and culture assistants.

3.16. What is the timeline once applications have been submitted?

Here's a timeline of what to expect on your way to receiving an assignment. Please be patient. The program reviewers have numerous applications to process. Please check your email frequently and don't forget to check your junk email folder. TIA!

1. When you submit your application, your status will be *Inscrita*. Then it may change to *Registrada* and then change to *Admitida* or go directly to *Admitida*. This will depend on whether or not all the required documents have been uploaded correctly and/or if they meet the requirements of the program. You must go into PROFEX and check to see if there have been changes in your status.
2. You receive an email that your status is *Admitida*. This means that your application has been reviewed and approved. You now qualify to receive a regional placement.
3. You receive an email that you have been assigned to a certain region in Spain. You have 5 days to accept/decline the position. **You must accept/decline on PROFEX.** If you decline the position you will not be assigned another position for the 2021-2022 school year.

See 2.6 in the Application Guidelines for how to accept/decline a position on PROFEX.

4. If you have accepted the regional placement, an email will be sent to you confirming your acceptance.
5. Starting around **late May and through August**, regional education offices in Spain will begin to send out the **Letters of Acceptance**. This letter is of the utmost importance. On it you will receive all the pertinent information concerning your assignment. In addition, you will need it to apply for a visa before leaving the U.S or Canada and then for a residency card once you have arrived in Spain.

3.17. I applied last year but declined to enter the program. Do I have to submit a new application?

Yes. If you registered on PROFEX last year, you will be able to access the portal with the same username and password. However, you must submit a brand-new application with all the updated required documents.

3.18. How can I delete an application that has already been submitted?

To delete a submitted application, please contact profex.soporte@educacion.gob.es Send them the application number you would like to delete and ask them to delete it.

4. ACCEPTING OR DECLINING YOUR REGIONAL PLACEMENT

4.1. Accepting or declining your regional placement

Candidates **MUST** either accept or decline an offer **within 5 days** of receiving the placement notification email. If you do not answer or if you choose to decline the offer, you will not be considered for any other placement for the 2021-22 school year. You may apply again next year if you so wish.

Please see our Application Guidelines 2.6 for how to accept/decline a placement on PROFEX.



4.2. I have just been granted a school assignment in Spain, but I need to withdraw from the program after accepting. What should I do?

If you need to withdraw from the program after having officially accepted the offer and **only due to unexpected and extenuating circumstances**, please email the following contacts as soon as possible:

1. renuncias.auxnort@educacion.gob.es
2. Your school
3. Your regional education office.

Should any unusual or extreme situation occur preventing you from continuing in the program once in Spain, a written explanation should be provided to the Department Chair and Principal of the school and to your regional education office in Spain.

Note: “Unusual and exceptional circumstances” are defined as serious health issues or special family circumstances (proof may be required).

4.3. Do I have to email renuncias.auxnort@educacion.gob.es even if I have not accepted the position?

No. If you did not accept the placement, you do not need to email anyone.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. What roles and responsibilities do I have as a language and culture assistant?

Your role is to encourage students to broaden their knowledge of your language and culture. Therefore, you are expected to plan and conduct activities that focus on language and culture, such as listening and speaking activities, role plays, or games for your students. You will lead these activities in class, with either the teacher or a smaller group of students in a different classroom.

5.2. What is my teaching schedule?

NALCAP language assistants will carry out their activities during 12 to 16 class periods per week, depending on the region. The assistant and the classroom teacher or department chair may agree upon other tasks or responsibilities for the assistant to carry out, such as attending meetings and participating in extracurricular activities. They may also be asked to participate in a variety of events organized by the school.

5.3. Do language assistants replace teachers?

No. As a language assistant you will be a TA to an English (or French) teacher, but you will never replace the teacher. You should never be in charge of a class of students on your own on a continuous basis.

6. TYPE OF SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT AND LOCATION

6.1. What kind of schools might I be assigned to?

Most language assistants will be placed in public elementary, secondary, or language schools.



6.2. Can I apply for specific locations?

Yes. Applicants may choose 3 preferred destinations in Spain. Please note that you will be applying to a region, not a city or town. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training of Spain will attempt to accommodate your preferences, but it cannot be guaranteed.

6.3. Can I change my region of preference once I have submitted my application?

No. If you would like to change your region of preference once you have submitted your application, your only option is to delete your first application, and complete a new one. Keep in mind that this means that you will lose your first application number and thus, your position for assignments. To find out how to delete an application, see 3.17.

6.4. I would like to be assigned to the same region with a friend. Can I?

When applying make sure you write in on your application that you would like to be assigned to the same location with a friend. There is a section on the application where it asks you about locations and if you are going with a significant other. In that section, write in that you would like to go with your friend. There are no guarantees, but it could help. The regional education office will make a final decision.

7. CONDITIONS

7.1. What does the program cover?

- A stipend of €700-1000 per month is awarded from October through May (both months included).
- Medical insurance. If traveling to Spain with a dependent, please note that the medical insurance offered only covers the language assistant, not their dependents.
- An orientation course at the beginning of the school year.
- An official certificate of participation for a completed program issued by the regional education office.

7.2. Does the stipend include holidays/vacations?

Yes. You will have the same holidays and vacations as your school, and they are included in the stipend.

7.3. When do you receive your first stipend?

Even though you will receive a monthly stipend as an assistant, you will not receive it until the end of October or November. You should therefore have enough savings to cover the first months or so of living expenses in Spain, especially if you have to make a security deposit when renting an apartment. Having extra spending money will also allow you to take better advantage of your vacations and travel, and to have a cushion in case of an emergency. Most assistants leave for Spain with **at least** \$2,000. This sum really depends on your personal spending habits, lifestyle, and the region where you will be living (Madrid is very expensive; rural Spain is cheaper). It is your responsibility to create a realistic budget for yourself. Some assistants do just fine on the grant provided, while others need to supplement their stipends by other means.



7.4. Where does the orientation course take place and how long does it last?

Before starting your assignment, you will need to attend an orientation course scheduled by your regional education office in Spain. You will receive information about the course from this office. The orientation course may be held at the end of September or early October and does not normally last more than three days. Each regional education office offers its own orientation course.

7.5. What does the medical insurance cover?

Medical coverage varies depending on the region. Your regional education office will provide you with all the information. It can be found on your *Letter of Acceptance*. Please be aware that it might not cover pre-existing conditions that require medication, for example asthma inhalers.

7.6. If I travel with my spouse and children, do they get medical insurance too?

No, the medical insurance offered only covers the language assistant, not their dependents. So, you will have to make arrangements to cover medical expenses for your dependents if they go with you to Spain.

7.7. Who is responsible for travel costs?

Travel to and from the country of origin is at the language assistant's own expense.

7.8. Are room and board provided?

Participants in the program are responsible for finding housing and covering their housing and food costs.

Housing: You are responsible for finding your own housing in Spain. We recommend getting in touch with the contact person at your school before you leave, so that they may provide you with housing options in your area. They can recommend an inexpensive hotel or youth hostel where you can stay for the first few days or offer you other options.

We do not recommend securing housing until after you have arrived in Spain or have at least been in contact with your school. Reasons for this include:

1. It is not advisable to sign a lease without seeing the apartment and surrounding neighborhood first.
2. You will probably not know the region well enough before you arrive to know which areas are near or easily accessible to your school.

7.9. Who can provide me with a letter of recommendation once I have completed the program?

Only your school can provide you with a letter of recommendation once you have completed the program. Unfortunately, neither the Embassy, the Consulate or the Ministry of Education can do so as we are not privy to what your experience has been like during your stay.

8. RENEWALS

8.1 Who are considered to be renewal candidates? How can they renew their positions?

Renewals are those language assistants **who are currently in NALCAP** in Spain and would like to apply for another year.



Please contact your regional education office to renew for a second year in the same region in January. If you would prefer to move to a different region, you will need to contact the Ministry of Education in Spain at auxiliares.extra@educacion.gob.es. You can find further information on renewing, albeit in Spanish [here](#).

If you have been a language assistant in Spain but part of another program and would like to apply for a position in NALCAP, please be aware that you are **NOT considered a renewal**. You will need to follow the procedures for **first time applicants**.

8.2 Can renewal candidates automatically re-enter Spain? How do they renew their NIE/TIE?

No. The language and culture assistants approved for NALCAP renewal may apply for the renewal of their *Tarjeta de Identificación de Extranjero* (TIE) within 60 days prior to the expiration date of their TIE. To this end, the assistants must find out what the required documents for the TIE renewal are, at the *Oficina de Extranjería* in their region in Spain (*Comunidad Autónoma*) where they are assigned.

Please be aware that if your *“Tarjeta de Identificación de Extranjero”* expires, you must go back to the U.S. or Canada and apply for a visa at your local Consulate General of Spain in your home country. **TIE renewals are not automatic.**

9. VISA APPLICATION

9.1. Do I need a visa? Which consulate should I contact?

Yes, you do. The only exception is if you hold a passport issued by a country in the European Union, in addition to your US or Canadian passport (dual citizenship).

You will need to contact your local Consulate General of Spain in order to apply for a *Long-Term National Type Student visa* to live in Spain. **You cannot leave for Spain before obtaining a visa.**

We do not recommend purchasing your plane tickets until your visa is in your custody.

Visa applications are consular matters. The Consulates General of Spain in the U.S. or Canada are in charge of issuing visas. The most updated information regarding Consular jurisdiction, visa applications, and visa instructions will be posted on our [website](#). All questions regarding visa applications should be directed to your local Consulate.

9.2. Will my dependents get a visa?

Yes, your dependents will be issued a visa, but please note that they are not permitted to work under this visa.

10. FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please visit our [website](#) or send us an email norteamericanos@educacion.gob.es