



NORTH AMERICAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ASSISTANTS IN SPAIN

Frequently Asked Questions **2020-2021**

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1. THE PROGRAM

1.1. What is the Language Assistant Program?

The North American Language and Culture Assistants Program is an initiative of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. The program is primarily devoted to providing US and Canadian college/university students and graduates (majoring in any subject) with the opportunity to assist foreign language teachers and to learn about Spanish culture and society, and about its education system. Students participating in the program must have English or French as their native language.

1.2. What is the main goal of the program?

The main objective of the program is to provide North American students with the opportunity to assist teachers in the English or French programs in elementary, secondary, or language schools in Spain (12 to 16 class periods per week).

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. In the case of Madrid, the duration of the program is typically from October 1 to June 30. However, you are advised to carefully check the duration of your effective assignment in the letter of appointment you will receive.

1.4. Can I start later than October?

In some cases, but only if positions become available. Please contact the regional education offices in Spain.

2. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

2.1. How do I know if I am eligible to apply?

You will qualify if you comply with the following criteria:

- Hold a US or Canadian passport.
- Have earned a BA or BS degree by the end of the academic year preceding the start of the program or be enrolled as a junior or a senior in a BA or BS program. Alternatively, candidates can also have earned an Associate Degree or be a community college student in their last semester of studies by the end of the academic year preceding the start of the program.



- Have English or French as your first language. If deemed necessary, our Office reserves the right to assess the applicant's proficiency in the particular language program.
- Be in good physical and psychological health. It will be necessary to submit a complete medical evaluation signed by your doctor when applying for a visa.
- Have a clean background check. It will have to be submitted when applying for a visa.

You should also have basic proficiency in Spanish.

2.1. What is the age requirement?

You must have been born no earlier than October 1, 1960. Candidates typically range in age from 21 to 35.

3. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

3.1. How should I apply?

The whole application process will be done through the online system called [PROFEX](#). Applicants are advised to read through the *Application Guidelines* document first.

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

Documents to be uploaded in PDF onto the *Profex* application. (Check [PROFEX MANUAL](#) on our webpage).

- A copy of your valid U.S. or Canadian passport mainpage.
- A copy of your degree certificate(s) or diploma(s) or official academic transcripts.
- A letter of intent or statement of purpose for participation in the program with the following requirements:
 - No longer than 250-300 words. Letter must be signed and dated
 - Must be in **English** (for U.S. applicants), or **English or French** (for Canadian applicants), even though PROFEX asks you to write it in Spanish
 - Addressed to the Spanish Ministry of Education
 - Specify that English or French is your first language
- A letter of recommendation from your university or workplace (see 3.7.). Letterhead, author's contact information, and signature are required. See [letter of recommendation guidelines](#).
- A signed and dated PDF scanned copy of the checklist, uploaded to "Documentos anexos".
- If you hold dual citizenship for a country belonging to the European Union, or you already have a residence card (TIE), we require a medical/physical evaluation stating that you are in good mental and physical condition and have no limitations that would impair your ability to teach. This document should be on the doctor's letterhead. You will need to upload it onto the



“Documentos anexos” section.

3.3. Is there a deadline to submit an application?

The application period will be open from **January 30 to April 15, 2020**.

3.4. What is a notarized copy?

A notarized copy is a copy that a notary public certifies to be a TRUE AND EXACT COPY of an original document. A notarized copy is as valid as the original itself. Search the web for a notary public near you.

3.5. Should I submit a medical evaluation?

If you happen to have a passport issued by a country in the European Union in addition to your US or Canadian passport, and you plan on using that passport to enter Spain, you should upload a medical certificate issued by your doctor. The certificate needs to be printed with the doctor’s letterhead on standard sized paper. The letter must verify that you are free of drug addiction, mental illness or any disease that could cause serious impact on public health.

3.6. I don’t currently have medical insurance; how can I get a physical evaluation?

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

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

You should ask university professors or college instructors. If you have not been in school for the last three years, use an employer as a reference. Please share the [letter of recommendation guidelines](#) with the person writing the letter for you.

3.8. What level of Spanish do I need?

Basic communicative skills in Spanish are recommended. If you have not taken a language qualification exam but have some fluency in Spanish, you may still be eligible. Official college transcripts, high school records, Spanish language certificates, or other records may be uploaded as proof of language competence.

3.9. How can I ensure that the application registration is complete?

An application is considered “fully submitted” (*Admitida*) when the required documents submitted to PROFEX have been reviewed and approved. Access the application frequently to know your status.



3.10. What happens if a supporting document is missing or doesn't meet the requirements?

You will be contacted as soon as possible. However, you are responsible for submitting the application form and uploading all the documents to PROFEX correctly. Please note that failure to do so may result in delays in the final approval of your application.

3.11. How are the assignments given?

The priority in assigning a position for a given application will be based on the application number assigned to the application. No application will be assigned a position without the status of “*admitida*” in PROFEX at the end of the application period. No applicants will be assigned to Andorra.

3.12. Who selects the applicants?

The Ministry of Education of Spain and the *Consejerías de Educación* at the *Comunidades Autónomas* select the Language and Culture Assistants.

3.13. How will the applicant be notified if they have received an assignment?

The applicant will receive an email with the regional placement. Check your *Application Guidelines* document on the [website](#) for extensive information on notifications and acceptance/refusal of assignments.

3.14. I was not given an assignment last year. Should I submit a new application?

Yes, you should. If you registered in PROFEX last year, you will be able to access the program with no further requirements. Nevertheless, it is impossible to process applications from previous years, so you are kindly requested to resubmit all documents and complete the process again.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1. 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 present activities that focus on language and culture, such as oral comprehension and speaking activities, role plays, or games for the students. You will lead these activities in class, with either the teacher or a small group of students in a separate room.

4.2. What are the assisting hours?

The language and culture assistants will carry out their activities a minimum of 12 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.

4.3. Do language assistants replace teachers?

As a language assistant you will usually support an English teacher, but you will never replace the teacher.

5. TYPE OF SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT AND LOCATION

5.1. What kind of education institutions will I be assigned to?

Most language assistants will be placed in elementary or secondary schools; some of these are state-run language schools.

5.2. How can I apply for specific locations?

Candidates may choose their preferred destinations in Spain by indicating their three regions of choice. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training of Spain will attempt to accommodate your preference, but it cannot be guaranteed.

6. CONDITIONS

6.1. What does the program cover?

- A stipend of €700-1000 per month is awarded from October through May (both included).
- Medical insurance.
- An orientation course at the beginning of the school year.
- An official certificate upon completion issued by the *Comunidad Autónoma* (region).

6.2. Does the stipend include holidays/vacations?

The program normally goes from the beginning of October until May 31 and it includes paid holidays.

6.3. Where does the training course take place and how long does it last?

Before starting your assignment, you need to attend an orientation course scheduled for your particular region in Spain (*Comunidad Autónoma*). You will receive updated information from your regional Department of Education. The training course may be held at the end of September or early October and doesn't normally last more than three days.

6.4. What does the medical insurance premium cover?

Medical coverage varies depending on the region. In most cases a wide coverage is offered, ranging from



primary health care to surgery or long-term treatment.

6.5. Who is responsible for travel costs?

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

6.6. Are room and board provided?

Participants in the program must find and pay for their own room and board (housing and food costs).

6.7. What type of housing may language assistants expect?

Housing may range from a room in a family's home to a shared apartment. In some cases, the schools offer the necessary help to find a place.

7. ACCEPTING OR REFUSING YOUR REGIONAL PLACEMENT

7.1. Acceptance process for your regional placement

Candidates **MUST** either accept or decline an offer **within 5 days** of receiving the placement notification email from PROFEX. If you do not answer or if you choose to decline the offer, you will not be considered for any other placement for that school year. However, you may reapply for the next academic year.

7.2. I have just been granted a school assignment in Spain, but I need to resign after accepting. What should I do?

If you need to withdraw from the program for any unexpected circumstance after having officially accepted the offer, please email the following contacts as soon as possible:

- renuncias.auxnort@educacion.gob.es
- Your contact person in Spain

Should any unusual or extreme situation arise 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).

8. RENEWALS

8.1. How do I renew after participating for a year?

Please contact your *Comunidad Autónoma* to renew for a second year in the same region. If you prefer to move to another *Comunidad Autónoma*, you need to contact the Ministry of Education in Spain.



9. PREPARING FOR SPAIN: VISA AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

9.1. Do I need a visa? What Consulate should I contact?

If you hold a passport issued by a country in the European Union in addition to your US or Canadian passport, you do not need a visa. However, in other cases you will need to contact a Spanish Consulate 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.

Visa applications are a consular matter. Consulates General of Spain in the US or Canada are in charge of visas. The most updated information regarding Consular jurisdiction, visa applications, and visa instructions will be posted on our [website](#). This information will help you process your visa application. However, all the questions regarding visa applications should be directed to your corresponding Consulate and not to your regional advisor.

9.2. Can renewal candidates automatically re-enter the country?

The Language and Culture Assistants selected for renewals may apply to obtain their visa in Spain within 60 days prior to the expiration date of their “*Tarjeta de Identificación de Extranjero*” (TIE). For that purpose, the assistants will receive all the necessary instructions and documents from the *Comunidad Autónoma* where they are assigned. If the “*Tarjeta de Identificación de Extranjero*” has expired, citizens from non-European countries must apply for a visa according to the instructions of the Consulates of Spain in their home countries. Bear in mind that renewals are not automatic.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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