



meddeas

MEDDEAS FACTS & FAQs 2019/20

LANGUAGE ASSISTANT
PROGRAMS IN
SPANISH SCHOOLS



**SPANISH
NOT
REQUIRED**



**NO
FEES**



**ALL
DEGREES
WELCOME**



**TEACH
ENGLISH**



**GET
PAID**



AN EXPERIENCE THAT
WILL CHALLENGE YOU,
TEACH YOU, AND CHANGE YOU

Program Requirements

Before applying, please, make sure you meet the following requirements.

You are:

- A native-level speaker of English (German or French)¹
- A recent graduate (graduation date within the last four years):
 - Undergraduate degree (any)² or
 - Postgraduate degree (only if related to Education or Linguistics)
- Taking a gap year before/from university³

You don't need:

- Previous teaching experience or training (but it is valued)
- Competence in the Spanish language

Other requirements:

- No criminal records
- A valid passport
(you don't need one to apply, but you will need one to accept a placement)

¹ Meddeas offers English, German, and French placements, but English is the official language and French and German native-level applicants should have at least a B2 level (CEFR) in English.
For bilingual placements (German or French + English): native level + C1 level (CEFR) are required.

² Any three or four-year degree. A two-year degree is accepted only to apply for our Speakers program.

³ In this case, your high school graduation date should be within the last four years.
If you need to complete a placement as part of your degree, please contact us for information on Undergraduate Placements.

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1. The Basics

Our grant programs in Spain are aimed at native-level English, German or French speakers from different backgrounds with little or no teaching experience. These programs provide you with the opportunity to gain experience while receiving valuable additional training and a monthly stipend that will allow you to cover your living expenses. And you will not have to pay any fees to join the programs!

This is an excellent opportunity, but at the same time it is a challenging experience that will without a doubt get you [out of your comfort zone](#). It will require serious **commitment, initiative and involvement** from you. If you are just interested in effortless paid tourism, this program is not for you.

So, This is Work Experience... What Does This Mean?

- The programs include university training (a 9 to 40 ECTS credits online certified course in [English](#)) and teaching practice (as a Language Assistant).
- Schools know and understand that you have no or very little teaching experience, but at the same time expect a serious commitment from you. They will expect you to involve yourself, as well as to show motivation, professional conduct, good interpersonal skills and to abide by their rules and traditions. After a few days, they will also expect you to be autonomous and to be able to plan and prepare your own activities.
- One of the school's teachers will be appointed as your tutor so you can ask him/her for advice when needed, but you will be expected to plan lessons, activities and games independently.
- If your attitude is poor (absences, tardiness, no class preparation, lack of initiative, motivation or respect...), you can (and will) be expelled from the program.

Will This Program Boost My Future Employability?

This international experience will be an impressive feat to list on your resume. Employers not only understand the importance of life skills that can only be acquired from leaving the comfort of your home country. Employers also appreciate the other transferable skills that you will add to your CV: intercultural skills, cultural awareness, creativity, language skills, team working, public speaking, patience, maturity, autonomy...

Moreover, while in Spain, the Language Assistant has a unique opportunity to learn Spanish in a native environment. Also, the program will issue a certificate of completion based on the participant's performance that can be used in the future as proof of experience.

Why Choose Spain?

From bustling cities to traditional villages, Spain is a developed country with an affordable cost of living that offers an amazing variety of lifestyles. Most capital cities have less than 300,000 inhabitants, but have a vibrant cultural offer and many leisure opportunities. Spain receives 82 million tourists every year thanks to its 42 UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Sites (more than the UK, Ireland, USA, and Canada all together!), not to mention its countless festivals and traditions, historical cities, beautiful shores, welcoming people and friendly culture. During your stay in Spain you can learn not only the language spoken by 450 million people in the world, but also discover many aspects of our culture, heritage, and [way of life](#).

Will I Improve My Spanish?

Yes, if you want to. Once you are in Spain you will have a lot of [opportunities](#) to improve your [Spanish](#), but it will be up to you to take advantage of them.

It is very common to arrange conversation exchanges with school teachers (free of charge!) but bear in mind that you are supposed to speak in English, German or French at all times when you are at school - if you speak to the children in Spanish, the school will consider it a huge offense.

How Long Will I Stay In Spain?

Our programs run from September/October to May/June and, alternatively, from January until June. If at the end of the first academic year the school's report is positive, you can apply for a second one, in the same school/program or in a different one.

What Happens If I Leave the Program before It Ends?

Successful applicants pay a deposit of €400 upon acceptance of their placement, which is kept until the end of the grant period, when this amount is given back. You will lose the deposit if you are expelled or don't complete the program.

Will I Have Holidays?

You will be entitled to the same holidays as the rest of the teaching staff. You will have a Christmas and Easter break, local/regional holidays and any long weekends (*puentes*) they might have during your time in the program. You will have a set school calendar and will not be allowed to take any days off outside the pre-established one –so trips/travel arrangements should be made around your class schedule and your school calendar. If there are unforeseen circumstances or special events, such as your graduation, that require you to take a day off, you will have to make a request in advance to the school principal. Any unauthorized absences can result in the loss of your student grant.

Funding the Program: Costs, Erasmus+ Funds & Deferring Student Loan Repayments

- a) The program itself will cost you no money.
However, there are some things which have a set and known cost you will have to pay for:
- * Student visa application fees (US\$160 or more)
 - * Translation of official documents for the visa application
 - * Apostille (around US\$8 per document. Express service via a Channeler: up to US\$200)
 - * Purchasing a private health insurance –[visa requirement](#) (around US\$20-28/month)
 - Obtaining a Certificate of Absence of Police Records, RCMP Criminal Record Check (CDN\$ 25), Enhanced DBS (GBP62), FBI records (US\$18. Express service via a Channeler: up to US\$65) or similar
 - Your travel expenses from/to your country (will depend on the distance and on how early you book your tickets)
 - One-day accommodation in Barcelona for the [induction meeting](#) (prices start at around €20/night in a hostel's shared room)
 - Travel expenses from Barcelona to your destination (will depend on distance and the means of transport used. Carpooling apps are a very popular option in Spain)
- *do not apply to EU citizens
- b) You might be interested in knowing that, as it is officially a training program, you might be able to defer repayments of student loans during your participation (this will depend on your loan company).
- c) Participants with a European passport who have studied at a European university could be eligible to apply for Erasmus+ funds up to 12 months after their graduation. For specific requirements and to apply, please consult your university.

Is Medical Insurance Included?

Yes, you will have access to the Spanish Social Security health care (upon registration). The public administration will deduct a small amount from your stipend (€8.49 in 2019) in order to pay compulsory social security contributions.

Non-EU passport holders: although you will be covered by the Spanish Healthcare system, in order to obtain your student visa you will have to purchase an additional private health insurance that should cover you during your time in the program.

2. Your Role at School

Am I Going to be a Teaching Assistant? What Will the School Expect of Me?

Not at all, the role of a Language Assistant is completely different. In fact, the role of a teaching assistant is almost non-existent in Spain.

The teaching assistant is only supposed to support the teacher delivering the lessons with a complementary task and is never independent while doing so. In contrast, Language Assistants work **mainly on their own**, will be expected to use their own [initiative](#) to find resources and prepare their own engaging and [fun activities or games](#) in order to motivate their students. They also focus primarily on speaking skills. Nevertheless, Language Assistants will have to follow their tutor's general indications and guidelines.

This distinguishing characteristic also applies to the Speakers program, in which Language Assistants sometimes lead the conversation practice while the teacher simply helps with classroom discipline.

If you want to know what your [typical](#) teaching day could be like, you can [read](#) a description by some former Language Assistants.

What Will be My Duties?

Depending on the program and placement, you might have to teach a group of students on your own most of the time, or lead activities alongside a qualified teacher or both. Possible duties:

- **Additional Support:** any kind of activity delivered by the teacher and/or by the Language Assistant, while both are present in the classroom. The school will expect you to take the initiative and prepare your activities, not just teacher shadowing.
- **Conversation practice with reduced groups or split groups:** activities delivered by the Language Assistant on his/her own.
- **Conversation practice with other teachers:** one-to-one or small group sessions.

Depending on the school and on your profile, you might be involved in extracurricular activities, as well as in teaching other subjects (such as P.E., music or science) in English, German or French.

How Old Will be the Children I Will be Teaching?

It varies depending on the school and the placement, but you will know in advance. The age groups range from 2 to 18 year olds, and we do our best to match the age range of the children in the placement with the successful applicant's preferences.

3. Our Different Programs

What Programs Can I Apply For?

Most of the answers to your questions can be found in this table... and if there is still something that is not clear, do not hesitate to ask!

	Name of the program		
	Advanced	Graduate	Speakers
The candidate must hold... (graduated in 2015¹ or later)	- Degree in Education, or - Degree in English Language ² , or - Any degree ³ + TEFL course ⁴	Any degree ³	Any degree/ university students/ gap years
The candidate will complete an online course paid by the program⁵	Expert in Bilingual Education certified course - 40 ECTS credits (480h), given and accredited by a Spanish university	TEFL or AMET certified course - 15 ECTS credits (190h), given and accredited by a Spanish university	
Teaching hours (minimum)	20h/week		
Teaching days per week	Five ⁶		
Groups Size (when alone)	Up to 28 students	Up to 14 students	Up to 3 students
Host family	Optional	Optional	Yes
Monthly stipend	€930 or Host family + €480	€880 or Host family + €430	Host family + €330

¹ Undergraduate graduation date. If your postgraduate studies are related to Education or Linguistics, we will take the latter into account.

² English Language for English Language Assistants, German for German Language Assistants and French Language for French Language Assistants.

³ Any three or four-year degree. Two-year degrees are only accepted to apply for the Speakers program.

⁴ TEFL (English)/DAEFLE (French) /DaF (German) Certificate requirements: 190 hours (online) course - you can apply and be accepted into the Advanced program even if you do not hold a TELF certificate yet, but you would need to complete a TELF course before you start the program.

Completing a TEFL accredited course will improve your prospects during the selection process, even when a TEFL certification it is not a requirement for the Graduate or the Speakers programs

⁵ All courses are given in English by the UIC (*Universitat Internacional de Catalunya*) and will be taken during your time in Spain. The course is a compulsory part of the program, providing you with practical tools to help you in your tasks as Language Assistant. The mentioned courses are for the 8 and 9 month-length program. Participants in shorter-length programs will take a *TEFL for School Teachers* course instead, worth 15 ECTS (190h).

⁶ If you are in a host family program and happen to be teaching less than 23 hours/week, the hours will be spread out over four days instead of five.

In Order to Have a Better Understanding of Wages in Spain...

- The [cost of living in Spain](#) for a student in a shared flat (budgeting the expenses) is around €500-650, depending on the city.
- The “minimum inter-professional salary” in Spain is €858/month (40 hours/week).
- An experienced Foreign Language teacher in a private language school gets paid around €1,200 for 30 teaching hours a week.

How Many Hours Can I Expect to be at the School?

Although you will be teaching around 20 hours/week, this does not mean you will only be at school 20 hours/week. You will have some gaps in between lessons and you will probably need it to meet with teachers to coordinate your activities (up to three hours/week). You can also use this time to prepare your lessons and follow the online course. It is normal for some Language Assistants to be in their assigned school from 9am until 5pm, with a two-hour lunch break in the middle.

The University Courses

The [courses](#) begin with a one-day-session in the [Faculty of Education of the Universitat Internacional de Catalunya \(UIC\)](#) in Barcelona and, after that, you will move to your destination and follow your course online, with the support of forums and a tutor. The completion and evaluation of the course will be based on the assessment of individual modules. The UIC recognizes your Language Assistant placement and around half of the credits for each course correspond to your teaching practice.

- Participants in the "Advanced" program take the 40 ECTS¹ credits *Expert in Bilingual Education* course. The typical workload² is of 480 hours (around 6 hours/week), so if you are *not* thinking about the possibility of making a career out of teaching, maybe you should consider applying for the "Graduate" or the "Speakers" program instead. This certified course intends to give a common base to people coming from different backgrounds, providing them with a sound base for TESOL and CLIL contexts, as well as practical tools to use in the classroom.
- Those accepted in the "Graduate" or the "Speakers" program will have to complete one of the 12 ECTS credits certified courses (workload of 180 hours: 3-4 hours/week). If you hold an acceptable *TEFL* certification you will take *AMET*³ course.
- Regardless of the type of program, if you are participating for less than 8 months, you will be taking a shorter course (9 ECTS – workload of 120 hours) called *TEFL for School Teachers*.

Are the Program's Courses Internationally Recognized?

¹ ECTS credits (European Credit Transfer System) is a standard for comparing the study attainment and performance of students of higher education across the European Union and other collaborating European countries.

² Workload: on top of the placement hours, the typical number of hours of individual study, plus some online tutorials.

³ TEFL: *Teaching English as a Foreign Language* - AMET: *Advanced Methodologies for English Teachers*.



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TEFL related courses are internationally recognized and certified as long as the organization that delivers the course is internationally recognized - in this case the course is delivered by the Faculty of Education of a renowned official university, so there is no doubt about it.

4. Lodging Options

There are two lodging options: full board accommodation with a host family or independently housing. If you can't quite decide, check out this [blog post](#) written by a former participant who repeated the program and experienced both.

In the host family program, if you happen to be teaching less than 23 hours per week, your teaching hours will be spread out over four days instead of five.

Staying with a Host Family: the Best Way to Improve Your Spanish Skills

Living in Spain is a good way to practice the Spanish language; however, staying with a Spanish host family will be the best way to make the most of this unique experience. There are many 'typical Spanish' family traditions that will help you improve your Spanish, discover a new culture and most probably, make friends for life.

The main idea of this cultural exchange is that, while out of the school, Language Assistants will spend half of their time interacting in the foreign language with the family and the other half interacting in Spanish, traveling or enjoying their spare time as they want. During the program, the family will cover meals and accommodation expenses.

A huge part of my life here in Spain is, of course, the family with whom I live. They are the people who keep me well fed and provide a roof over my head, but they are also my eyes and ears when exploring Spanish culture. The parents of my host mum invited us to have lunch along with the mum's 5 siblings with their spouses, and the children's 12 cousins. Being the only non-family, non-native-Spanish-speaker guest was a slightly daunting prospect, but the family's faultless generosity made it a really enjoyable day.

Juliet R., Language Assistant living with a host family: my weekends in Spain

Becoming another member of a Spanish family will ease your way into your new life. Also, as you will not have a rent to pay or groceries to buy, you will be able to save more money for your social life and trips around Spain.

When I went to stay with some friends in England for the Christmas holidays, I brought the leg of jamón with me on the plane. I remember looking in consternation at the box as I tried to decide what I would bring as a gift. My Spanish family quite firmly told me to bring the jamón, a proposition I initially laughed at. But after repeated encouragement from my family and further consideration, I eventually caved. In the end I decided it was entirely worth the pain of lugging around a big leg of pork so that others might have the opportunity to experience just how tasty jamón is.

Douglas T., Language Assistant living with a host family: [experiences with Spanish food](#)

However, this option requires Language Assistants to be mature and to give up part of their freedom for 9 months. Although meeting the family's expectations and the obligations detailed below will require an effort from you, this is a unique opportunity worth living, take it!

1. Families are always linked to the school and appointed by its principal. They host the Language Assistant on a volunteer basis to experience a cultural immersion and discover a new culture. Also, this is an opportunity for them to live with a native speaker, in order to improve the foreign language level of all family members, especially children.
2. The Language Assistant must understand that he/she is not residing in a hotel: the host family is taking in the resident guest as an additional family member, which implies basic obligations for both parties, such as helping out with everyday household tasks. These are similar coexistence rules as those you would have sharing a flat with other students.
3. If you join a program that includes a host family, **it is impossible to switch** to another program without a host family during the academic year. The Language Assistant can request to change host family once if there is a serious reason for it. The school and Meddeas will help you if this were the case.
4. The family has made the commitment to host the Language Assistant, and no one else. They will not host your relatives or friends.
5. Language Assistants will take on the following agreement with regards to the family:
 - Certain "Foreign Language Days" will be arranged (2 weekdays from Monday to Thursday + 2 out of every 4 Saturdays until 8.30pm). On these days, English, German or French will be the only language spoken and you will spend specific planned time with the family, interacting with its members through different activities, games or daily life tasks.
 - On "Regular Days" you can choose to practice Spanish with the family, travel around or do whatever you want. However, you do have to carry out/help with whatever tasks you have been assigned regardless of the type of day.
 - On Sundays and "Regular" weekdays there will be a curfew set at 11pm (12am on Fridays before a "Foreign Language Saturday"). There is no curfew on Saturdays or the other two Fridays.

If you are interested in knowing a bit more about this option, we can send you more detailed information during the selection process.

Important: we want to make sure all participants feel comfortable during their time in Spain. For this reason, if you happen to follow a special type of diet ([vegetarian](#), vegan, pescatarian, halal, kosher, gluten-free...), we would like you to think about the host family option carefully, as it is not such a big [problem](#) if you want to live independently, but it is difficult (and sometimes impossible) for schools to find volunteer families able to cater to specific types of diets.

5. Selection Process and Appointment

Where Will Applicants be Interviewed?

After a first interview with the candidate via Skype, face-to-face interviews take place in several locations throughout the UK, Ireland, Spain, Germany, Canada and the US. Travel expenses to attend the second interview are not reimbursed by Meddeas.

Please note that due to the high number of applicants, only successful candidates are contacted after the first and second interview.

Why Do We Ask about Your Preferences?

When offering a placement to a successful candidate, we take into account their background, the pupils' age range they feel more comfortable with, the kind of school, the kind of area where it is located, etc. Once we have a clear idea of their profile we try our best to find a well-suited placement – taking into consideration the location only when possible. Remember that our allocation process is, above all, profile based and not location based.

If one of your friends or your partner has also applied, please, bear in mind that our policy is not to place the two of you in the same town or even region, without exception.

When filling out the form and during the interviews, the more flexible you are, the better but please, be honest about what is really important to you. Do not try to tell us what you think we want to hear, it is extremely important for you to avoid polite answers when expressing your preferences - we will not feel offended! If later on we propose you what seems like a suitable placement for your profile, and you decline it because you were not frank enough with your preferences during the selection process, your chances to be appointed will be reduced dramatically.

What Will My School be Like?

Meddeas works with private and *concertado* (charter/grant maintained) schools only, and before accepting a placement, you will receive all the details: location, pupils' age group, school's characteristics and expectations etc.

If I am Selected, What is the Next Step?

Successful candidates will receive a placement offer and will have up to three calendar days (depending on the time of year) to accept/reject it. Upon acceptance, they will have three business days to transfer the deposit to officially accept it. The Welcome team will grant them access to a platform where they will be able to download detailed information about their role as Language Assistants, along with helpful step-by-step instructions detailing how to go about contacting your school and all the practical minutiae of moving to a new country: travel arrangements, insurance, visas, finding accommodation, looking after one self, etc.

Which Administrative Procedures Need to be Carried Out?

Meddeas will provide you with all the necessary documents required to come to Spain. All the administrative procedures are described in detail in the Welcome Document.

- A) **European** passport holders will need to obtain their Certificate of Absence of Police Records (Enhanced DBS in the UK, Police Certificate in Ireland and the equivalent clearance document elsewhere) in their country of residence in person.
- B) **Non-European** passport holders will need to apply for a long-term student visa (valid for over 180 days) in their country of origin in order to come to Spain.

Important dates and details to consider for programs starting in September/October:

March: apply for/ensure you have a valid passport.

April:

- Apply for a police background check.
If you are a US citizen apply for your FBI criminal history record.
If you are a Canadian citizen apply for you RCMP Criminal Record Check.
- Find out whether or not an appointment in the corresponding Spanish Consulate or Embassy is necessary.

June/July: appointment in the corresponding Spanish Consulate or Embassy.

- These procedures can only be carried out in person by successful participants (due to legal restrictions family members cannot be in charge of this process).
- If there are no issues, visa processing time (in the US) is generally six to eight weeks, depending on the consulate; during this time the Consulate will usually withhold your passport.

*Don't miss out!
Click on the links:*

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