



# NORTH AMERICAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ASSISTANTS IN SPAIN

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## Frequently Asked Questions **2017-2018**

1.	THE PROGRAM .....	3
1.1.	What is the Language Assistant Program? .....	3
1.2.	What is the main goal of the program? .....	3
1.3.	What is the duration of the program? .....	3
1.4.	Can I start later than October? .....	3
2.	THE APPLICANT: ELIGIBILITY .....	3
2.1.	How do I know if I am eligible to apply? .....	3
2.1.	What is the age requirement? .....	4
3.	THE APPLICATION PROCESS .....	4
3.1.	How should I apply? .....	4
3.2.	Which documents do I need to submit for the application? .....	4
	Hard copies .....	4
	Documents to be uploaded in PDF .....	4
3.3.	Is there a deadline to submit an application? .....	5
3.4.	What is a notarized copy? .....	5
3.5.	Should I submit a medical evaluation? .....	5
3.6.	I don't currently have medical insurance, how can I get a physical evaluation? .....	5
3.7.	Who should provide you with a recommendation letter? .....	5
3.8.	What level of Spanish do I need? .....	5
3.9.	How can I ensure that the application registration is complete? .....	6
3.10.	What happens if a supporting document is missing or it doesn't meet the requirements? .....	6
3.11.	How are the assignments given? .....	6



3.12.	Who selects the applicants? .....	6
3.13.	How will the applicant be notified if they have received an assignment? .....	6
3.14.	I was not given an assignment last year. Should I submit a new application? .....	6
4.	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	7
4.1.	What roles and responsibilities do I have as a language and culture assistant? .....	7
4.2.	What are the working hours? .....	7
4.3.	Do language assistants replace teachers? .....	7
5.	TYPE OF SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT AND LOCATION .....	7
5.1.	What kind of education institutions will I be working in? .....	7
5.2.	How can I apply for specific locations? .....	7
6.	CONDITIONS.....	7
6.1.	What does the program cover? .....	7
6.2.	Does the salary include holidays/vacations? .....	8
6.3.	Where does the training course take place and how long does it last? .....	8
6.4.	What does the medical insurance premium cover? .....	8
6.5.	Who is responsible for travel costs? .....	8
6.6.	Is accommodation provided for? .....	8
6.7.	What kind of accommodation can language assistants look for? .....	8
7.	ACCEPTING OR REFUSING YOUR REGIONAL PLACEMENT .....	8
7.1.	Acceptance process for your regional placement .....	8
7.2.	I have just been granted a school assignment in Spain, but I have to resign after accepting. What should I do? .....	9
8.	RENEWALS .....	9
8.1.	How do I renew the grant more than one year? .....	9
9.	PREPARING FOR SPAIN: VISAS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS.....	9
9.1.	Do I need a visa? What Consulate should I contact? .....	9
9.2.	Can renewal candidates automatically re-enter the country? .....	9
10.	FOR MORE INFORMATION:.....	11



## 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, Culture and Sport of Spain. The program is primarily devoted to providing US and Canadian students and graduates -majoring in any subject- who are native speakers of English or French with the opportunity to assist foreign language teachers in a variety of schools in Spain and to learn about Spanish culture and society and also about its education system.

### 1.2. What is the main goal of the program?

Its main objective 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 a 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 Madrid, the duration of the program is from October 1 to June 30).

### 1.4. Can I start later than October?

In some cases, but only if positions become available. Get in touch with the program coordinator or with the regional education advisor.

## 2. THE APPLICANT: ELIGIBILITY

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

You will qualify if you comply with the following criteria:

- Be a holder of a US or Canadian passport.
- Hold a minimum of a BA or BS by the end of the academic year preceding the start of the program, be a junior or a senior, or have become a university graduate. Alternatively, you can



also be a 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.
- Be in good physical and psychological condition. It will be necessary to submit a complete medical evaluation signed by your doctor when it is time to apply for your visa.
- Have a clean background check. You will need to submit a background check when it is time to apply for your visa.

You should also have basic communicative skills in Spanish.

### **2.1. What is the age requirement?**

You must have been born not earlier than October 1, 1957. For your information, the average age of most participants ranges between 21 and 35.

## **3. THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **3.1. How should I apply?**

The whole application process will be done through the online system called PROFEX, accessible at <https://www.education.es/profex> . It is advisable to read through the Application Manual first, which is on the program website: [www.mecd.gob.es/eeuu/](http://www.mecd.gob.es/eeuu/)

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

#### **Hard copies**

- The PDF print-out (signed and dated), available after you submit your application online.
- [Checklist](#) for applicants, initialized in all areas, signed and dated.
- Only for the State of New York applicants, signed and dated Memorandum of Understanding.

#### **Documents to be uploaded in PDF**

- A copy of your valid U.S.A. or Canadian passport main page.
- A copy of your degree certificate(s) or diploma(s) or an academic record on letterhead.
- A cover letter or statement of purpose for participation in the program in no less than 250 words, preferably in Spanish, but also in either English or French (for Canadian applicants), addressed to the education advisor responsible for the office you will be sending your required documents to. Please, specify in the letter that English or French is your first language.
- A copy of a testimonial or reference letter from your university or workplace (see 3.7.). Letterhead, author's contact information and signature are required. See letter of [recommendation guidelines](#).



- If you hold dual citizenship and you are a European Union citizen, 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.

### **3.3. Is there a deadline to submit an application?**

The application period will probably be open from January to April, 2017. Check our website for specific dates.

### **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.

### **3.5. Should I submit a medical evaluation?**

If you happen to have a European passport on top of your US or Canadian passport and you will be using that passport to enter Spain, a medical certificate needs to be uploaded. It needs to be issued by your doctor. This needs to be on the doctor's letterhead, standard sized paper, verifying *you are free of drug addiction, mental illness or any disease that could cause serious repercussions to public health.*

Candidates requiring a visa to travel to Spain will have to submit this document at their consulate once the assignment has been given to the candidate.

### **3.6. I don't currently have medical insurance, how can I get a physical evaluation?**

Try getting in touch with your family physician, who will have a record of your health and see if you can get the medical certificate required without being charged too much. Alternatively, you may go to any doctor in your area whose fees you can afford and who is willing to provide the certificate you will need to apply for your visa later, if you eventually get a position.

### **3.7. Who should provide you with a recommendation letter?**

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

### **3.8. What level of Spanish do I need?**

It is advisable to have basic communicative skills in Spanish. If you don't have a language qualification, but you already have some fluency in Spanish, you may still be eligible. Official college transcripts, high school



records, Spanish language certificates or others may be uploaded as an extra proof of language competence.

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

Once you have completed your application, and before submitting it electronically, you must print and sign the *pdf* application form generated by PROFEX. Then, you have to send it together with the checklist to the corresponding Regional Education Office as it is indicated in the Application Guidelines.

An application is considered “fully submitted” (*Admitida*) when the required hard copies have been sent to your assigned office and their reception and clearance have been acknowledged on PROFEX. Access the application frequently to know your status.

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

The regional education advisor will contact you 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.

### **3.11. How are the assignments given?**

The priority of assignment for a given application will not be based on the number assigned to the application. It will depend on the date on which the application is eventually validated (i.e. considered *Admitida*) by our Office in the on-line system.

### **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 Manual 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 work from previous applications, 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. Your work will involve preparing activities that focus on language and culture, such as oral comprehension and expression activities, role plays or games for the students. You will lead these activities in class, working with either the teacher or a small group of students in a separate room.

### 4.2. What are the working hours?

The language and culture assistants will have to work a minimum of 12 class periods a week, depending on the region. The assistant and the classroom teacher or department chair may agree upon other tasks or responsibilities for the assistants to carry out, such as attending meetings and participating in extracurricular activities. They may also be asked to participate in all sorts of events the school organizes.

### 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 working in?

Most language assistants work in elementary or secondary schools; some work in state-run language schools.

### 5.2. How can I apply for specific locations?

Candidates may choose their preferred destinations in Spain by expressing their three regions of choice. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of Spain will make an effort to accommodate your preference, but it cannot be guaranteed.

## 6. CONDITIONS

### 6.1. What does the program cover?

- A stipend of €700 a month is awarded throughout the months of 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 salary include holidays/vacations?**

The program normally goes from the beginning of October until May 31 (October 1 to June 30 in Madrid) 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. It may be held at the end of September or early October and it 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 a 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. Is accommodation provided for?**

Participants in the program must provide for their own accommodation as well as food.

### **6.7. What kind of accommodation can language assistants look for?**

It 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 3 days** of receiving the placement notification email from PROFEX. Failure to submit your response in the due time will result in being withdrawn automatically from the program by PROFEX.





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

If the applicant has to withdraw from the program for any unexpected circumstance after having officially accepted the program, please notify at your earliest convenience by sending an email to [renuncias.auxnort@mecd.es](mailto:renuncias.auxnort@mecd.es), another one to your Regional Education Advisor in North America and a third email to your contact person in Spain.

Should any unusual or extreme situation arise preventing the candidate 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 local Education Advisor. (Note: “unusual and exceptional circumstances” means serious health issues or special family circumstances whose proof may be required.)

## **8. RENEWALS**

### **8.1. How do I renew the grant more than one 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 will have to contact the Ministry of Education in Spain.

## **9. PREPARING FOR SPAIN: VISAS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS**

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

Granted language assistants who hold a European passport on top of their American or Canadian passport do not need to apply for 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 application is a consular matter. Consulates General of Spain in the US or Canada are in charge of visas. For Consular jurisdiction, visa application and visa instructions, the most updated information will be posted on the website at the end of March. 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.



## 10. FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Please visit our website: <http://www.mecd.gob.es/eeuu/convocatorias-programas/convocatorias-eeuu/auxiliares-conversacion-eeuu.html> or send an email to [norteamericanos@mecd.es](mailto:norteamericanos@mecd.es)

You can also contact the following offices:

**Applicants from Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington State, Wyoming:**

Mr. Josu Baque Ugarteburu; Education Office, 5055 Wilshire Blvd. Ste. 204, Los Ángeles, CA 90036

Email: [josu.baque@mecd.es](mailto:josu.baque@mecd.es)

**Applicants from New York Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Wisconsin:**

Mr. Roberto García González, email: [asesoria.chicago@mecd.es](mailto:asesoria.chicago@mecd.es) ; Illinois State Board of Education; 100 W. Randolph St. #14300, Chicago 60601

**Applicants from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Ohio, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas:**

Mr. Félix Gaspar Koch, Student Achievement Through Language Acquisition (SALA); Florida Department of Education; 325 West Gaines St. Suite 444, TALLAHASSEE FL 32399; Email: [felix.gaspar@mecd.es](mailto:felix.gaspar@mecd.es)

**Applicants from, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Washington D.C. , West Virginia:**

Mr. Alberto García Salinero; Education Office, Embassy of Spain, 2375 Pennsylvania Ave. NW Washington, D.C. 20037-1710; Email: [alberto.gsalinero@mecd.es](mailto:alberto.gsalinero@mecd.es)



**Applicants from Canada:**

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