

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS PROGRAMME
SPAIN 2018/19

SPAIN COUNTRY NOTES

VERSION 1, 08 JULY 2018

Document compiled by British Council: Information correct @ 10 August 2018. We are aware that information can change throughout the year. Please inform us should you discover any errors.

NOTES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS APPOINTED TO SPAIN IN 2018-2019

This document is version 1 Spain Country Notes for the 2018/19 English Language Assistants Programme. Any previous country notes relating to previous years should be ignored for the 2018/19 academic year.

FOREWORD

Congratulations on your recent allocation to a post as an English Language Assistant in Spain. Every year, around 2,500 Language Assistants from the UK support the teaching of English in 14 countries around the world. Every Language Assistant is taking part in a programme that traces its heritage back to 1905. It began as an exchange programme to allow graduates from France to help English students learn French, with 'young Masters in English secondary schools' heading to France to perform a similar role. Shortly afterwards, a similar agreement was reached with the government of Prussia.

Since those early days, the programme has endured major global events, two World Wars, and the Great Depression to name a few. But while the global political, social and economic landscapes may have changed over the years, the Language Assistants initiative has remained committed to increasing language skills across the world.

This document contains important information and advice regarding a variety of practical and administrative matters affecting UK assistants in Spain. This document should be read carefully, retained for reference and considered in conjunction with any papers issued by the Spanish authorities. It is important that you take this information with you whilst undertaking your year abroad in order to be able to consult it at all times when problems/questions arise.

If your permanent (UK) home address, personal e-mail or phone number should change at any time from now, please inform us immediately by sending an e-mail to languageassistants.uk@britishcouncil.org. We may need to contact you during the year with urgent messages, invitations to events or to add updates to these notes, so please ensure that you have given us the correct contact details.

We hope that you find the following information useful and that you enjoy the year ahead

Best wishes,

British Council Language Assistants Team

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1. CO-OPERATING PARTNERS

1.1. BRITISH COUNCIL

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.

We work with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of [arts and culture](#), [English language](#), [education](#) and [civil society](#). Each year we reach over 20 million people face-to-face and more than 500 million people online, via broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body.

Our work in English aims to bring high-quality language materials to every [learners](#) and [teachers](#) across the world. In developing and post-conflict countries, we teach English and train teachers through radio, web and TV broadcasts. We offer more than three million UK [examinations](#) worldwide, helping people gain access to trusted qualifications to support their career and study prospects.

Our work in [education](#) and [society](#) helps transform national education systems, builds more inclusive and open societies and increases opportunities for [young people](#). We encourage international students to come and study in the UK, and help British students to gain experience abroad. We bring [schools](#) around the world together, so young people and teachers from different countries can learn from each other.

Our work in the [arts](#) involves the very best British and international artistic talent. We help increase audiences for international work in the

UK and for UK work globally. We bring artists together and support the development of skills and policy in the arts and creative industries. Through this work, we ensure that culture in its broadest sense plays a vital role in connecting with others and promoting friendly understanding.

In these ways, the British Council builds links between UK people and institutions and those around the world, helping to create trust and lay foundations for prosperity and security.

1.2. PARTNER ORGANISATIONS IN SPAIN

Language assistants are either employed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (MECD) or directly through the local education authorities (Comunidad Autónoma). It is important that you understand if you belong to the Ministry group or the Comunidad group so you know who to address for information or queries. You can find out in your appointment letter if you are part of the Ministry or the Comunidad group.

Ministry Posts

E-mail: auxiliares.conv@mece.es

Subdirección General de Promoción Exterior
Educativa

MINISTERIO DE EDUCACIÓN, CULTURA Y
DEPORTE

Paseo del Prado, 28, 5ª planta, 28014 Madrid

Tel: +34 91 506 5594 Fax: +34 91 506 5704

www.mece.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano-mece/catalogo/general/educacion/998188/ficha.html

Comunidad Posts

Please note that all those posted to cupo comunidad posts (IND posts) should contact whoever has contacted them from the local education department in relation to the post.

2. ROLE OF THE LANGUAGE ASSISTANT

The role of a language assistant is a very important one and one that we hope you will enjoy. Please remember that you are considered a **member of staff** with the responsibilities and required professionalism that this entails. Please refer to [our website](#) for more information on your role as an English Language Assistant:

As a language assistant you are also an **ambassador for the UK and its culture**. The way you behave will influence how those around you view the UK and you should endeavor to be a positive example. If you set a bad example, you could damage the reputation of the programme and adversely affect the experience of future assistants.

“Realise that you are going to work, and not be on holiday. Certainly some tourism is understandable but often school years run from autumn to spring when your neighbours and peers will not be sightseers but rather ordinary working people and not tour guides.” (ELA Spain 2015-16)

Your first-hand experience of life in the UK is an excellent resource and you should draw on this during your lessons. We provide a lot of advice to help you incorporate cultural content into

your lessons – please see chapter 10 of this document.

“It would also not be a bad idea to prepare some presentations/activities about your home country before leaving.” (ELA Spain 2015-16)

2.1. TEACHING ENGLISH

It is important to be resourceful and use your initiative. If you do not think that you are being used sufficiently, make suggestions of topics that you could discuss with the students or activities that you could get involved with. This document contains a whole chapter about teaching English but to get started the following links are useful.

- www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/whole_manual.pdf
- www.teachingenglish.org.uk/language-assistant/essential-uk

It is also very important to make sure that you are familiar with the education system in Spain as it will help you know what to expect when you start teaching at your school(s). Please see the Eurydice webpage for specific information:

- <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/spain/information-on-assistance/spanish-education-system>



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3. POSTING INFORMATION

Each region differs as to when they organise appointments and send out information. The British Council is involved in allocating assistants to a region and sometimes age group, but has no control over choice of town, size of town, school environment or when information is sent out. We encourage each region to send information out as early as possible. You should also write immediately to your school(s) confirming acceptance of the post. If you do not receive a reply by mid-September it is a good idea to ring the school(s) to ask about accommodation and give them an idea of your anticipated arrival date.

You should also ask them for some information about the school(s) that you will be working in. For example, it may be useful to know the age range of pupils, the average class size, the general level of ability, the social background of pupils, the facilities available and if you should bring any specific materials from home. It is also important to enquire about the dress code for teachers and any other general school information.

3.1. SCHOOL ALLOCATION

The maximum number of schools to which you can be appointed is three. Please contact us if you have been appointed to more than three schools. If the different schools are several miles apart and you have to travel between two on the same day, you are entitled to ask for help towards travel expenses. Under no circumstances should an assistant be required to buy a car just to get to their schools. If following contact with your school you establish that there is no regular public transport serves your school(s) and there are no lifts available to your school(s) please inform us of the situation. Please do not contact us without contacting your school first.

3.2. DATES OF APPOINTMENT

The period of appointment for UK assistants in Spain will be **1st October 2017 – 31st May 2018**. **The only exceptions** are appointments to cupo Comunidad posts in Madrid which run from **1st October 2017 – 30th June 2018**.

Assistants are expected to work 12 hours a week (posts in Madrid and Valencia Comunidades are for 16 hours, with some posts in Murcia 15 hours) with some posts in other regions varying slightly.

Those who have been appointed to more than one school will be asked to divide their time between the schools concerned. You can request information regarding how your timetable will be arranged from the head of the host school which is usually the first one mentioned when you are sent details of your posting in the **Nombramiento**. If you have been appointed to two or three schools you should write to all of them confirming your acceptance of the post.

3.3. HOLIDAYS

Assistants are entitled to the usual school holidays. You should be able to obtain the dates from the school secretary or your mentor teacher. You should not be absent on other occasions without prior permission. Attending the induction course does not give assistants the right to take leave at a later date.

3.4. STAYING A CONSECUTIVE YEAR

English Language Assistants who wish to apply to stay at the same school or go to a different area in Spain for the academic year 2019/20 must apply through the British Council. Further information will be posted via our website in due course: www.britishcouncil.org/language-assistants/become.

3.5. PREDECESSORS

Unfortunately due to recent GDPR rules, we are unable to provide the contact details of assistants from the 2017-18 year. We do however hope to provide you with the information of other assistants due to work in your area in September / early October. In the meantime, you may wish to look for previous / future assistants in the many **unofficial** Facebook groups online. Search 'Auxiliar de Conversación (name of location)'.

4. PRE DEPARTURE INFORMATION

4.1. FOREIGN & COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Before travelling to Spain you should ensure that you check the Foreign and Commonwealth (FCO) travel advice pages: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice and ensure that you have subscribed to updates so that you receive any important changes to the FCO's advice. During a crisis, advice for British nationals will be published on the travel advice website and updated regularly, so by subscribing you will ensure that you are aware of any updates. You can register for emails using this link: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/spain/email-signup.

We also recommend that assistants read the 'Advice for Travelers' documentation provided by the FCO, which can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/policies/supporting-british-nationals-overseas/supporting-pages/advice-for-travellers.

4.2. PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Assistants must be in possession of a standard 10-year passport before leaving the UK and are advised to ensure that it will not need to be renewed before **October 2019**. Those who are not in possession of a passport, or need a new one, should complete the application procedure as soon as possible either through a regional Passport Office or online at: www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports.

Holders of a UK passport and nationals of other EU countries do not require a visa to enter Spain. If you have dual nationality (UK/other) you should ensure that your UK passport is valid and you should use this one to travel while in Spain. This will save you considerable complications with the local authorities (Social Security etc.). This does not apply if one of your passports is Spanish.

Assistants should carry photocopies of their passport at all times as a form of identification, but ensure that this information is kept safe and out of sight.

4.3. TRAVEL TO SPAIN

“Travel around Spain is cheap - flights with RyanAir, Easyjet, buses and trains all good price, but some timetables are not frequent. Avoid travel on a Sunday.” (ELA Spain 2012-2013)

You are responsible for the cost of your own travel and any travel to and from your place of appointment during the year. Booking in advance for all forms of transport is highly recommended. Past assistants have warned to check the baggage allowance for outward and return journeys when travelling by plane as sometimes the cheaper airlines have quite a low baggage allowance. The following websites may help you when booking your travel.

- www.skyscanner.net
- www.eurostar.com
- www.raileurope.co.uk
- www.directferries.co.uk
- www.eurolines.co.uk
- www.britishairways.com
- www.easyjet.co.uk
- www.flybe.com
- www.thomsonfly.com
- www.opodo.co.uk
- www.expedia.co.uk
- www.ryanair.co.uk
- www.interrailnet.com
- www.iberia.com/gb



4.4. TAKING A CAR ABROAD

You will need to research the laws on driving in Spain, including adapting your head lights for driving on the right. The website www.gov.uk/driving-abroad provides useful information about motoring abroad.

If you plan to take a car to Spain for the period of your assistantship, please ensure that you take out adequate insurance for the full period and **be aware that many insurance companies will only insure you for periods of up to 90 days.** Past assistants have advised looking into insurance well in advance in order to have the time to shop around for a suitable policy. All UK motor insurance policies offer the minimum legal protection required by EU countries and Switzerland. This gives third party cover for bodily injury or damage to property. The British Council is unable to recommend specific insurance companies.

Many insurers offer 24-hour UK telephone numbers in case you need help in an emergency. Make sure you have these details with you when you travel abroad.

The website of the Association of British Insurers www.abi.org.uk has general information on driving abroad, including the document 'Motoring Abroad' which has useful information on Motor Insurance cover and Green Cards. A Green Card is an internationally recognised document that provides evidence that the policyholder has minimum insurance cover.

If you require information on driver licensing you should contact Drivers Customer Services (DCS), Correspondence Team DVLA, Swansea SA6 7JL (Tel: 0300 790 6801, or using the online email service which can be found here: www.gov.uk/contact-the-dvla/y Information on vehicle licensing or registration can be obtained from Vehicle Customer Services (VCS), DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1AR (Tel: 0300 790 6802) There is also a website at www.dvla.gov.uk. UK licenses are recognised in all EU countries plus Switzerland, for as long as they remain valid.

4.5. TAKING PETS ABROAD

There are a variety of rules assistants must follow to ensure that they are compliant when taking pets abroad / returning them to the UK. Please check the FCO and Spanish Government website for more information. You may also wish to consider pet travel insurance to ensure that any pets are covered for emergency treatment whilst in Spain.

- www.gov.uk/take-pet-abroad/pet-passport
- www.mapama.gob.es/en/
- www.mapama.gob.es/es/ganaderia/legislacion/animales-compania-normativa-zoosanitaria.aspx

4.6. GRADUATES WITH STUDENT LOANS

If you will be overseas for more than 3 months, you will need to let student finance know, complete an **Overseas Income Assessment Form** to enable the Student Loans Company to calculate how much you need to repay. On the Overseas Income Assessment Form you should provide them with details of your circumstances and prospective income.

Whilst in Spain the money you receive is considered a monthly allowance or grant, rather than a salary. This means you are officially taking part in a grant funded mobility programme rather than formal employment. Last year assistants who declared their Language Assistant role as formal employment rather than a grant funded mobility programme faced challenges with the student loans company, who requested copies of employment contracts. Your Nombramiento is a contract of enrolment in the programme, not an employment contract.

You will be required to provide evidence of income or means of support. They will then send you a repayment schedule showing how much you need to pay each month. Your monthly payments will be based upon the earnings threshold for your destination country. More information can be found online [here](#). Please note that the British Council cannot advise further on student loans matters.

4.7. INSURANCE

Whilst it may seem like an inconvenient cost at this stage, **it is highly recommended to take out appropriate insurance for your time abroad.** You will not be insured under the Spanish National Health system because you will not be paying contributions from your monthly allowance. When choosing cover, please think carefully about what you would like to happen in the event of sickness / accident / death. It is also advised to discuss insurance options with partners, family members or a close friend.

Insurance whilst in post

You are strongly recommended to take out Personal Accident Travel insurance for the period between leaving home and taking up your appointment, **time during your appointment**, and also the period between ending your appointment and your return to the UK. This should include the following standard elements of cover:

- Medical costs for treatment in case of illness or accidental injury
- Benefits for permanent disabling injuries, e.g. rehabilitation and living costs
- Benefits for death and costs of repatriation
- Cover for loss or damage to your personal belongings
- Cover for cancelled flights, e.g. if the airline goes out of business or on strike
- Personal Liability cover. This provides legal support and covers financial costs if you cause injury or property damage to others and are found personally liable.
- 24hr emergency assistance helpline.

Many policies also have legal expenses cover, which is recommended in case you need legal assistance while overseas.

The British Council is unable to advise on private insurance packages. You are recommended to consult an insurance broker for professional advice and to check whether you are covered by your parents' or family insurance policy. Undergraduate assistants may find that a "study abroad" policy purchased online is an option. Please be aware that some insurance policies, usually 'backpackers' insurance, do not allow for

trips home during the year and it is important to check the small print of your policy to make sure that you are covered.

Personal Accident Travel policies are readily available on price comparison websites, or by using a search engine to search for 'travel insurance'. The UK Foreign & Commonwealth website offers additional advice on taking out Travel Insurance: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-insurance.

The British Council will not be responsible for you while you are in Spain, although we will offer support when necessary. You are therefore required to take out comprehensive insurance to cover you **during your whole time abroad.** We recommend you research the various options available and consult other/ former assistants before purchasing a suitable policy. However any insurance you purchase should include cover for emergency treatment and repatriation. Please note that it is unlikely that insurance companies will cover you in the event of a natural disaster or the outbreak of war.

Any package should cover medical expenses, air ambulance, repatriation, personal accident & civil liability, luggage & valuable items, and cancellation in extreme cases. **Please note that you should organise your insurance before you leave the UK.**

Insurance for travel outside of Spain

"Remember that normally your health insurance only covers you within your host country during your allocated time there therefore if you travel outside that country during or after that period, you may need additional insurance" (ELA Spain 2015- 16)

Experience from Previous language assistants has told us that holidays provide the possibility for travel around or outside of Spain. If you do leave Spain at any point, it is highly advised to take out insurance for the country / countries that you visit.

5. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Please see the Foreign Commonwealth Office website for more information regarding healthcare in Spain: www.gov.uk/healthcare-in-spain.

There is a short video highlighting the importance of [thinking about healthcare before moving to Spain](#) and further information is available on the FCO [healthcare in Spain website](#).

For information in **insurance** please see section 4.7 of this document.

5.1. EHIC CARD

The EHIC gives you access to medically necessary, state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in Spain. When you show your EHIC, you will receive treatment under the same conditions and at the same cost as people insured in Spain. There is a short video explaining [how to use the EHIC card in Spain](#) and further information is available on the [Healthcare in Spain website](#).

For the time before, during and after your official period of appointment as an assistant, you will need a UK-issued European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). The EHIC card will also be useful for any trips to other EU countries. To apply for a card please use the following link: www.ehic.org.uk. You can also obtain an application form from the post office. If you're planning to go abroad as part of your university degree, you can apply for a time limited student EHIC. More information is available online [here](#).

Residents of the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands are not eligible for the European Health Insurance Card. Residents of the Isle of Man need to take out fully-comprehensive insurance (which should include repatriation by air ambulance) before travelling to another country. Applicants from Guernsey should contact the Health and Social Services Department for advice. Applicants from Jersey should contact the Employment and Social Security Department for advice.

“A simple thing like carrying your EU health card with you at all times. I was away one weekend and sprained my ankle and luckily had my health card with me but if not it could have caused some complications.” (ELA 2015 - 2016)

Be aware that each country's healthcare system is different. Services that cost you nothing at home might not be free in Spain (for example, prescriptions).

The EHIC is not an alternative to travel insurance. It does not cover any private healthcare or costs such as a return flight to your home country or lost/stolen property.

5.2. MEDICATION

If you take regular medication, please ensure that you have a supply before you leave. It is also important to find out where your nearest doctor, dentist and hospital are as soon as you arrive. You should ask your school for information about the facilities in your area and always advise staff and your landlord of any medical conditions.

“Bring medicines that are hard to get in the place you're going to (E.g. your specific contraceptive pill, branded things like day nurse / your preferred hay fever tablets - the brands I wanted were unavailable)” (ELA Spain 2014-2015)

In addition to health insurance, it would be wise to consider insuring your personal possessions. You should also check your parents' household insurance as this sometimes covers possessions away from home. **Furthermore, cover for personal liability is often overlooked but it is extremely important.** If you were the cause of an accident of any kind – e.g. cycling on the road – the resulting costs, practical and legal, could be prohibitively high.

You will need to take your National Insurance Number. Language Assistants in Spain have **student status** and the money you receive each

month is actually a grant or *beca*, rather than a salary.

5.3. MENTAL HEALTH

Although working abroad can be enjoyable, it can also be challenging. Lack of familiar support systems, disrupted daily routines, language barriers, culture shock and unexpected situations can intensify stress levels rather than alleviate them.

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. **It is advised to read this information even if you are not currently suffering from mental health problems.**

The Foreign Commonwealth Office provides information about mental health and travel via the following links.

- www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health
- www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-advice-for-people-with-mental-health-issues

The leaflets hyperlinked below contain guidance on travelling abroad and mental health, and information about how the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) is able to assist British nationals with mental health needs abroad. The leaflets detail the type of assistance you may find in the country. The leaflet also explains some of the differences between English law and practice and that of other countries.

Mental Health: Travelling Abroad

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584029/FCO_MentalHealth_web_130117.pdf

Mental Health: Travelling Abroad Checklist

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/466425/Mental_Health_Checklist_-_Final.pdf



6. ARRIVAL

6.1. INDUCTION MEETING

“In Spain the Ministry of Education sets up an orientation event in Madrid at the beginning of the placement. I didn't meet anyone from my area there but made some good friends who I then went to visit during the year - I wouldn't have travelled out to Gran Canaria otherwise.” (ELA Spain 2015-2016)

Induction courses are organised by the Spanish Ministry of Education or the local education authorities at the *comunidades autónomas*. The induction you are invited to will depend on who your post is funded by. If you are unsure, please check to see which organization issued your Nombramiento to you.

Please follow any information/advice that is given from the Comunidad/Ministry about your induction course. Please follow their instructions on how to confirm your place. If you do not confirm your place before the date stated, there may not be accommodation for you (if provided) during the course. Please **do not** send your confirmation to the British Council.

While these courses are not obligatory you are strongly advised to attend. You will receive essential information regarding your assistantship and also meet previous assistants and language assistants of other nationalities. If you choose not to attend the briefing you should inform the relevant contact for your region's induction course once you arrive in Spain so that arrangements can be made for any important documents to be posted to you.

The Ministry of Education in Spain is not usually able to arrange separate courses for assistants in the Canarias or Baleares (if you are an assistant in cupo MECD), Ceuta or Melilla. You are welcome to attend the course in Madrid, but it is understandable if you are not able to attend considering the travel costs involved.

6.2. TRAVEL ONWARDS FROM THE INDUCTION COURSES

We recommend planning your onward journey from the induction course to your placement prior to leaving the UK, as time during the induction course is limited. Please remember that we only pass on the following information. It is up to you to carefully research and compare each company before booking travel.

RENFE www.renfe.com is the national railway company and runs several types of trains, but fares and journey times can vary:

- **Cercanías** provide regular services from major cities to surrounding suburbs
- **Regionales** are trains that stop at all stations
- **InterCity, Alvia, Euromed** and **AVE** (high speed) trains stop at most major cities
- **Carnet joven**: Invest in this young person's rail card equivalent for cheap rail fares

Booking train travel in advance online can also sometimes be cheaper. Assistants in the past have recommended bus travel over train as train travel can be slow apart from the high-speed links.

Different bus stations within Madrid cater for different parts of the country. A useful website is www.alsa.es which offers a national coach service where tickets can be purchased online in advance.

The bus company “Bilman Bus” www.bilmanbus.es operates within the regions of Cantabria, Vizcaya, Álava, La Rioja, Guipúzcoa y Navarra, la Comunidad Valenciana and Murcia.

For long distance journeys please see www.movelia.es and www.avanzabus.com. www.damas-sa.es has also been recommended by former ELAs as a bus company in the South of Spain. Other assistants have recommended www.tmb.cat/ca/home/ for transport in Barcelona and surrounding area.

7. SETTLING IN

“Stay positive through any adversity at the beginning. It may be tough to initially adapt but it soon gets easier!” (ELA Spain, 2014-2015)

7.1. ACCOMMODATION

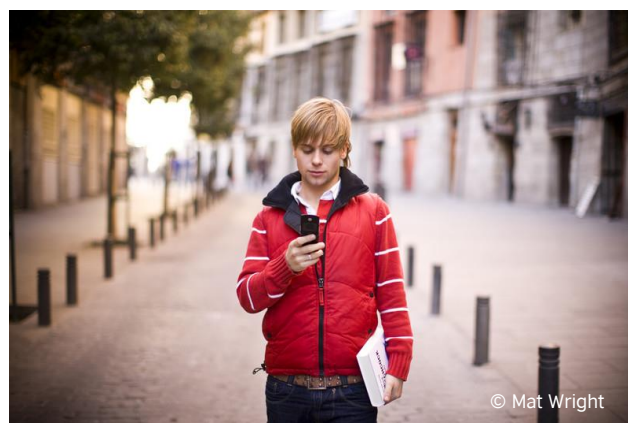
“Be ready for anything and ask local people for advice - even if it's when you arrive! Something will come up, and don't be afraid to introduce yourself to people in cafes, schools, churches etc. and ask for help, to pin up notices. (ELA Spain, 2015-16)”

The British Council is not in a position to provide or to help find accommodation. Equally your school(s) are not obliged to provide or find you accommodation, but they may be able to offer you somewhere temporary to stay for the first few days or weeks, thus giving you some time to look for permanent accommodation. You should however not assume that your school will do this and should discuss your arrival and initial accommodation arrangements with them in advance. Please note that if your school does offer you accommodation you are not obliged to accept it but remember, if you do accept it, you will have to abide by the school's rules.

The first thing to do when looking for permanent accommodation is to ask your mentor teacher if they can recommend anything. For example, they may know a local family with a room to rent, or already have somewhere in mind for you to stay. If your school cannot help, your best contacts are your predecessors at the school or in the area. Previous assistants are also often able to offer advice on how to find accommodation locally.

Consider going to your teaching location to arrange accommodation in advance of the induction course or of starting your job. Past assistants have emphasised the need to look for accommodation as early as possible. The first weeks of your assistantship will be busy as you will be finding your way around an unfamiliar town, dealing with bureaucracy and trying to

make a good impression at school. Having accommodation lined up can make this easier. For temporary lodgings while you look for something permanent, investigate the possibility of staying in a youth hostel. Remember that you will need your passport to check into hotels/hostels. **Do not** take out a contract on your accommodation **until** you know the location of your schools.



“I know of people who organised accommodation without seeing it before they arrived in their placement country and sometimes it did fall through - in one instance the flat didn't even exist! Before you leave the UK I'd recommend you to book a week in a hostel (ideally before your placement starts) to give you time to view accommodation and get used to the area.” (ELA Spain, 2015-16)

You may find the publication **Segundamano** (also online at www.segundamano.es) useful when searching for accommodation. Try searching for agencies or rooms for rent on the internet. See www.idealista.es, www.loquo.es and www.easypiso.com and take a look at the property pages in the local **diario**. Outside of Madrid and Barcelona, assistants in the past have had relatively few problems finding suitable accommodation, but be prepared to spend about a week looking after arrival if you haven't arranged anything in advance. For this reason,

you may wish to pre-book a hostel or hotel before you arrive. Some previous assistants recommend going out to your region a week earlier in order to find accommodation, get settled and sort out getting your NIE (Número de Identidad de Extranjero).

Once you get to Spain the following suggestions may be of interest:

- advertise on the school/staff notice board and ask around the staff; do NOT advertise in local papers or public places
- buy the local newspapers early in the morning and telephone likely numbers immediately
- ring the local university halls of residence or check their flat share adverts and notices, or advertise on their notice board that you are looking for a room
- ask local friends'/acquaintances' landlords if they have any further accommodation to let
- write to or visit as soon as possible any student or youth organisation in the area that might have details of available lodgings: the local tourist office may have a list of such organisations
- find out about local religious organisations as they often know of rooms to let
- accommodation agencies may be able to help but you should **be very wary** of paying large fees and deposits, and always read the small print in any leases or agreements to be signed; **look for small agencies as often their fees are lower**
- search for a room or flat on the internet

Some websites you may find useful are:

ACCOMODATION TYPE	USEFUL LINKS
Temporary accommodation:	www.hihostels.com www.hostelbookers.com www.hostelworld.com
Permanent accommodation:	www.segundamano.es www.loquo.es www.easypiso.com www.lingobongo.com www.idealista.es www.fotocasa.es

If you are living in a large town or city, you are likely to have to sign a contract. In case you decide to change your accommodation during the year, **you are advised not to sign a contract for the duration of your contract unless there is a notice period included in the contract.** If you are in a smaller town, landlords do not usually bother with contracts. However, we strongly recommend that you ask for one.

Assistants in Barcelona are advised that finding accommodation can be difficult. They are recommended to look at www.bcn-housing-students.com/ or www.loquo.com for assistance. Please make sure you are aware of notice periods for moving out, or any fees you may need to pay before you sign any agreement. Former assistants have recommended www.kalea.es/fotokaleacasa/n for accommodation for ELAs appointed to Alava, Vitoria, Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa and Cantabria y Burgos.

We recommend that you take photos of your room and the flat when you move into your long-term accommodation and when you leave to help you get back any deposit you may have to pay, which is usually dependent on the accommodation being in the same condition as when you first arrived. When you leave your accommodation, remember to cancel any personal contracts e.g. internet or utilities. Ensure that you have checked health and safety issues in your accommodation (temporary and long term) such as fire alarms and exits, gas leaks, electrics, water etc.

For assistants assigned to **Madrid, Barcelona, Málaga, Seville** and **Mallorca**, looking for accommodation with Spanish families you can find the following programme useful: www.babelbridges.org/programme/. Please note that the British Council is in no way recommending or endorsing this offer, we are simply passing on the information. You should research the following before agreeing to anything:

- Location;
- Suitability; and
- Contractual arrangements.

When looking for accommodation please follow the advice given in our [Personal Safety leaflet](#). When you have found somewhere to live, even if it has been arranged for you, do not live anywhere or sign any agreement you are not comfortable with and make sure that there is a period of notice written in the contract to avoid problems should you decide to change your accommodation during the year.

7.2. NÚMERO DE IDENTIDAD DE EXTRANJERO (NIE)

“The process to gain the legal documents varies greatly in Spain, what happens in one town will be totally different to another. If you are in a smaller town you may have to travel the neighbouring larger town to obtain such document, this is not always an easy process, but don't worry once it's done it's done.” (ELA Spain 2014-15)

N.I.E. is an abbreviation for Número de Identidad de Extranjero, which translates as Identification Number for Foreigners. Foreigners having a relation with Spain for economic, professional or social interests are required to obtain a personal, unique and exclusive sequential number, for identification purposes. **Without an NIE number the Spanish authorities will be unable to pay your ‘ayuda mensual’ / ‘beca’.**

“The process varies from region to region, so just stick to what you are told from the officials and not what somebody else has said in another part of the country.” (ELA Spain 2014-2015)

It's very difficult for the British Council to provide comprehensive advice as every region / city has different processes for obtaining a NIE, however we hope that the information below can assist you to prepare somewhat before departure to Spain. Useful information can be found on the Spanish Government website **here**:

www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/en/ServiciosAlCiudadano/InformacionParaExtranjeros/Paginas/NIE.aspx

N.I.Es can be obtained at the Directorate-General of the Police, either directly or through Spain's Consular Posts abroad. Feedback from previous assistants has highlighted the difference in processes across Spain. **Some areas operate an on the day que system, other regions allow online appointment booking in advance.** It is worth trying to research this before departure, or asking your school as there can sometimes be a wait for bookable appointments.

“In Spain, apply for your NIE appointment a month before you leave ... I booked mine at the end of September when I arrived in Spain and did not get an appointment until November, making it harder to set up a bank account, therefore if you book early you might be able to book an appointment for the week you arrive and you will be able to open a bank account easier.” (ELA Spain 2015- 16)

It is highly likely that you will need the following (and potentially additional) items when applying. You may wish to prepare some of these items before leaving the UK so that you have them available should they be needed.

- Passport and a number of photocopies of all pages
- Completed [EX-15 formula](#) (English instructions for completing the form are available [here](#))
- Recent Passport photos
- Document proving why you need a Spanish NIE number. In most cases you should be able to use your Nombramiento.

“When registering for the NIE (in Spain) be sure to have EVERYTHING with you - passport, accommodation contract, nombramiento etc. Each office seems to handle the NIE differently and at different speeds so it's handy to have all documentation with you when applying.” (ELA Spain 2015 - 2016).

Aside from accommodation, obtaining the NIE could be one of the first challenges you face

when relocating to Spain. We do advise that you try to start the process of obtaining a NIE as quickly as possible once you arrive in Spain. Some assistants will find obtaining the NIE easier than others, however at all stages we advise you to be **proactive** (don't leave things until the last minute), **patient** (things might not be processed as quickly as you hope) and **persistent** (don't give up!).

“In Spain, persistence is key. The catch-22 of needing an NIE to set up a bank account and vice-versa was made clear to me, but I found when I explained my situation and pointed out the difficulty of it, I was allowed to receive my NIE without a bank account.” (ELA Spain 2015 - 2016).

7.3. CREATING SOCIAL NETWORKS

Even if you have been to Spain before it is possible that you will find some things strange at first and will need a little time to settle in. On arrival, the thought of making friends and mixing with the locals can seem like a daunting task, but as long as you are prepared to put yourself out there; it is a part of the experience which previous assistants have found the most enriching. Give yourself some time to adjust – you don't need to feel like a local within a week and in the beginning you will have a lot of administrative matters to deal with.

“Get involved with youth groups, churches, local activities, sports, the gym etc. so that you're able to meet locals as well as other ELAs doing similar things to you. But try to target locals rather than fellow English-speakers, otherwise you could easily get comfortable and stuck speaking English most of the time” (ELA Spain 2015 - 2016).

Here are some other ways to meet people within the area:

- Live with students/native speakers;
- Enrol for an evening class, join a sports club, music group, choir etc.;

- Enquire about joining the local university and attending lectures;
- Get involved in the local culture and join clubs that you couldn't join in the UK; and
- Volunteer for a charity, society, festival, etc.

Former assistants have recommended that you don't spend all your free time with other assistants, as you will not be able to integrate into your community and life in Spain. On the other hand, don't feel that you must cut yourself off from them – assistants can provide a very good support network for each other, as you understand each other's experiences. Don't forget that there may be language assistants from other countries in your area. You may wish to ask your employer if they have contact details.

As a golden rule, **try to say yes to every social opportunity presented to you that does not compromise your personal safety.** Accept invitations to places and activities even if they do not sound interesting as you might meet other people there who do share your interests however at all times, please follow the advice given in our [Personal Safety leaflet](#).

Start at school

The best way to start is with colleagues at school. Make sure that you always seem positive, enthusiastic and willing to learn. Socialise as much as you can with colleagues and accept all invitations to events, dinners etc. Tell people what your interests are and ask them to let you know what's going on in the local area. Do keep in mind that teachers can be very busy, especially during exam periods.

Apart from your work in the classroom you may be able to attend other classes in subjects which interest you. You will find that you become much more integrated into school life and gain considerably more from your stay if you become involved in activities organised by the school, such as sports days, theatre or music productions or modern language societies. Go to school 'open days' or parent evenings as these are also a good way of meeting people. If you hear about something happening which interests you, ask if you can become involved. Don't wait to be invited as people may assume that you're not interested.

“My fellow teachers at IES Canarias have really gone above and beyond in making me feel welcome and showing me around the island. They are truly making the experience as easy and enjoyable as possible for me.” (ELA Spain 2016-2017)

Previous Assistants

It is also a good idea to get in touch with other people in the area before you leave. One useful way to do this is to get in contact with a previous assistant in your region and ask them to give you any e-mail addresses or numbers of contacts they made.

Languages

Another excellent way to meet new people is to set up language exchanges with local people who want to practice their English. You could also enroll at a local language school (There are inexpensive government Official Language Schools that offer Spanish lessons and other languages in many areas). You could join Erasmus societies (at a local university), offer English lessons to colleagues/locals, join a club and join assistant groups on social networks such as Facebook. www.educa-system.com offers opportunities for teaching extra English classes. Often language exchanges are called tandems or intercambios, so it's worth keeping an eye out for adverts.

“Language exchanges are a perfect way of meeting local people and improving your language skills. There are groups that meet in bars in the evening in most big towns and cities (check facebook and watch out for flyers when you're out in your area). Arranging exchanges with the teachers in your area is also a good way to integrate, they tend to have a wealth of knowledge about the area and can be a lot of help when first settling in.” (ELA Spain 2015-16)

ESN

Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is a non-profit international student organisation. Their mission is to represent international students, thus

provide opportunities for cultural understanding and self-development under the principle of **Students Helping Students**. ESN can sometimes assist with finding accommodation in university towns and cities. Assistants completing their third year abroad can often affiliate to local ESN groups and register for an ESN student discount card. Often ESN groups run events and trips throughout the year which provide a great way to meet new people and explore Spain on a budget.

Social media

There are often Facebook groups for people who are new to the city/town, which organise different events to help people make new friends - just search for 'new in "city name"' Previous assistants have also suggested joining a local Couchsurfing group as they often organise social activities.

Madrid

Assistants in Madrid may be interested in MadridMas (see www.disfrutamadridmas.es), a student organisation which offers opportunities to meet people, travel, go to bars and clubs, fiestas, dance classes, etc. at discounted prices.



Rural Posts

It should be noted that lots of the posts in Spain are in rural areas. Past assistants to rural areas have had very positive experiences as they have been able to see “real Spain”. Sometimes assistants posted to rural locations will comment that it can be more challenging to adapt to, however it can be a very enriching experience

and a real immersion in Spanish culture and language. Often assistants in rural postings comment that they receive much more support from their school which can help with settling into life in Spain.

“If you are working in rural schools like I did, it is important to give yourself time to adapt to your surroundings, it will come eventually and these small communities are very welcoming and grateful for your presence.” (ELA Spain 2015-16)

It is important that the British Council and Spanish Ministry for Education send assistants to rural as well as more urban settings both in the UK and Spain as pupils in both settings must be given the opportunity to benefit from exposure to other cultures and language learning.

7.4. STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

If you wish to attend lectures on a part-time basis, you should obtain information before departure from the Education Department of the Spanish Embassy in London, telephone 020 7243 8535. You should also take proof of your student status in the UK. If some of your students or friends ask your advice about studying in the UK, you should refer them to the British Council in Spain's website at www.britishcouncil.es.

7.5. SETTLING INTO SCHOOL LIFE

Starting any new job can be a daunting experience, no matter how confident a person you are. It's completely normal to be unsure of where to go, what to do or who to talk to at the beginning.

You will have to make an effort to get to know your colleagues. Showing that you are enthusiastic and keen to get to know staff will go a long way. Start with a simple hello or ask how their weekend went. Learning some simple conversation starters in the target language is always useful. Remember however that you will be working in a school environment therefore staff may not have a lot of free time. Don't be put off if a teacher doesn't have time to talk to you in

the first instance, they may be in-between or preparing for a class. It doesn't necessarily mean that they don't want to talk to you.

Whilst it's important to get to know the colleagues you will be directly working with, it's always useful to get to know other staff too. Try introducing yourself to staff you may not directly work with, for example teachers in other departments, lunch time staff, receptionists, caretakers etc. If there are social occasions or team meetings try to make an effort to attend. It's a great way to get to know colleagues in a different environment.

“Introduce yourself to everyone, even if you will not be working with them. Try and attend meetings when you can and never turn down invitations for a drink or meals out! Always speak to your colleagues and programme coordinator if there are any concerns - don't wait until the last minute to flag issues. (ELA Spain 2015 - 2016)”

Language Assistants that are proactive and take the initiative often settle into school life much faster. Being a self-starter is a great way to make a strong first impression. Teachers are often very busy and will certainly appreciate your efforts to help and try to make an impact.

“Treat them in a way you would like to be treated. If you want to take a day off/swap some days around, be willing to do the same for them if they need it. Being responsible, reliable and trying your best will get you further than missing days without real reason, looking like you don't really want to be there and letting teachers down if they give you a little bit of responsibility or ask you to do a favour for them. It's only for 9 months so you might as well give it your all and get the most you can from this experience.” (ELA Spain 2015 - 2016).

8. MONEY MATTERS

8.1. MONTHLY ALLOWANCE

You will receive a monthly allowance (*ayuda mensual*) of around €700 (with the exception of Madrid, where you will receive €1000 for 16h per week). **The first payment of your allowance may not arrive until late November**, so you should ensure that you take around £1000-£1500 or a credit card to cover initial costs (**more might be required in larger cities**). This is likely to be an expensive month as you will have to put down a deposit on accommodation and invest in things like mobile phones and possibly extra furniture. We recommend that you budget for at least 2 months without pay so that you do not run out of money before you get paid.

For Ministry allocated ELAs, the Ministry will register all assistants on a payment system once in Spain. You will need to open a bank account in order for the Ministry to set up the payment system. Once you have set up an account you need to complete a bank details form issued by the Ministry for Education. You will have to provide the entity number (*la Entidad*), branch number (*surcursal*), control digit (*D.C.*) and the account number. You should then send the form to the email address as instructed on the form. It is essential that all Ministry allocated ELAs follow the instructions provided in the *Guía del Auxiliar de Conversación*. These instructions will also be provided during the induction courses to be held in Madrid and other cities. Comunidad allocated ELAs should follow instructions from your Comunidad.

It is also useful to have access to your UK bank account throughout the year in case there are delays to the allowance payment. **Make sure you inform your bank before leaving the UK that you may use it in Spain so that they do not block your card.** Be aware that you are often charged for using your British debit card to withdraw money abroad. You may wish to check what your bank charges are. Please check this information is correct with your local branch should you wish to pursue this option. Your monthly payments should cover the cost of your rent and general living costs. If you wish to go travelling at weekends and holidays you may

need to take extra money with you or have access to some savings. Your school may be able to give you an advance in an emergency.

8.2. ADDITIONAL INCOME

If you wish to supplement your income by giving private tuition in English, you are strongly advised **not** to advertise in local papers or public places. (Please read the relevant sections of our [Personal Safety leaflet](#)) In general pupils are easily found through school or private connections, i.e. by word-of-mouth. However, it is essential to check that the other English teachers in your school(s) do not mind, so that you are not perceived to be 'stealing' their private pupils. The going rate for private one-to-one tuition seems to be **€10-25** per hour depending on how much preparation for the lesson you plan to do and how much your pupils can afford. Please ensure that any additional work does not conflict with your school timetable.



8.3. ERASMUS+ GRANTS

Language Assistants who are completing the assistantship as a **third year abroad** **may** be entitled to an Erasmus+ Traineeship grant. Individuals can benefit of an exchange abroad with Erasmus+ multiple times, either as a student or as a trainee, but the total time abroad (study abroad periods included) may not exceed 12 months within one cycle of study. An undergraduate degree is considered as one cycle. In some cases, students can go for an Erasmus+ traineeship abroad as a **recent graduate**. In this case, the traineeship must

occur within one year of graduation and individuals must apply while still being enrolled in their higher education institution. It is advised to discuss options with your university Erasmus+ / International coordinator as soon as possible to see if you would be eligible for additional Erasmus+ grant funding as a Language Assistant 2017/18.

Please also note that the British Council is not the employer or traineeship provider of English Language Assistants. This means that we are unable to complete any Erasmus+ related documents and you should not put the British Council as the traineeship provider. You should put the name of your host institution (school) once you receive these details. Our understanding is that there is a one month grace period following the start of your placement in which to submit any Erasmus+ documents, however individual universities and Erasmus+ coordinators will have their own internal deadlines. Please liaise with the Erasmus+ coordinator at your university should you have any questions.

8.4. CURRENCY AND BANKS

“It’s really easy to set up a bank account in Spain, but be aware that it charges you to take out of any bank that is not a branch of your account. Find a bank that has branches everywhere.” (ELA Spain 2012-2013)

Details of how to open a Spanish bank account will be given at the induction course and/or sent to you by the Ministerio/Comunidad. If you are not attending the induction course, you should ask your school to help you.

You are advised to wait until you arrive in your town of appointment in Spain before opening a bank account. This will allow you to research all the local options, seek recommendations and choose what will be most convenient for the rest

of the year. It is essential that you open a bank account as soon as possible after your arrival. You may want to check with your local British bank whether it has a sister bank in Spain. You are likely to need to show your passport and any documents that you have received from the British Council and Ministry of Education/Comunidad/school that confirm you are a Language Assistant in Spain.

8.5. LOST OR STOLEN CREDIT CARDS

If a credit card is lost or stolen, immediately call your bank to cancel it. If stolen, the theft should be reported to the police.

8.6. INCOME TAX

A Double Taxation Agreement exists between the UK and Spain. Under this agreement UK assistants are normally exempt from Spanish income tax for a period of up to 2 years. However, it is normally the case that 100% of the remuneration received abroad will be liable for UK tax. It is important to know that the agreement only covers teaching jobs. You might be taxed for any non-teaching jobs and should check how much you are allowed to earn per year without having to pay taxes.

You are reminded that the UK tax year extends from 6 April to 5 April and that income earned in the UK between April and the start of your assistantship may be taken into account when your own or your parents' tax liability is being assessed.

Enquiries regarding UK income tax should be addressed to a local Inspector of Taxes, **not** to the British Council. We cannot assist you in this area because we are not trained in tax, cannot give advice on how your personal circumstances will affect your tax, and for data protection reasons. Please check www.hmrc.gov.uk for information about who to contact.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

9.1. ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Please remember that you are a member of staff and must therefore adhere to the holiday dates set by the school. If you cannot work because of illness you should inform your school(s) and local education authority (if applicable) immediately by telephone. You may be asked to provide a letter from a doctor. This should cover the entire duration of the absence and must be sent to the school and, if applicable, local authority as soon as it is issued.

Any prolonged absence on account of illness should be reported as soon as possible to the Ministry of Education/Comunidad and to the British Council. Requests for leave of absence for any other reason should be made in advance to the head of the school(s) who is within his/her right to refuse it. You should ensure any permission of absence is provided in writing as evidence.

If it becomes necessary to resign from your post, you must give sufficient prior notice in writing of your intended departure to the school, the Ministry of Education/Comunidad and the British Council, setting out your reasons in full. If you are an undergraduate you must also inform your university/college in the UK.

Pay deductions

Please read this section carefully. Every year the British Council receives calls from assistants who are unaware of their school policies regarding absence and face pay deductions.

If you are absent from school without prior written authorization (or without providing a doctor's evidence for your illness) a financial penalty could be deducted from your monthly allowance. Deductions are usually calculated via a daily rate from the first day of your absence until your return to school.

This daily calculation includes weekends. For example, if you are absent on a Thursday and do not return to work until the Monday, your monthly allowance could be deducted for 4 days' (Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday).

This rule spans holidays too. For example if you miss school on your last working day before the Christmas holidays and do not provide evidence for your illness, your pay could be deducted by a daily rate until you return to school in the New Year. This could result in two weeks of missed pay.

“Lots of people put off registering at the doctor until they actually needed one, or didn't at all. I would strongly suggest registering as soon as you can and it will make things a lot easier for you when you are ill! Also, any day off work needs a note from the doctor so even if you just have a cold you will need a trip there!” (ELA Spain 2015-2016)

If you are sick, you should book a doctor's appointment immediately - even if you consider your illness to be minor. At the appointment you should explain that you work in a school and require evidence 'justificante' for your absence.

A doctor's letter for in some regions is not considered as justification unless the letter explicitly states that the individual **was 'unfit to work'** and accounts for all the days of the absence. If you are required to take sick leave, please ask the doctor to clearly declare 'not fit for work' on the letter if appropriate.

In most circumstances the British Council is unable to intervene in matters of pay deductions due to unauthorised absence. Assistants must make themselves aware of, and comply with their own school policy. Please be aware that your school may have a different policy to that of other assistants working in the same region.

9.2. SOLVING PROBLEMS & LINES OF REFERRAL

“Definitely speak up if there's a problem. Consult your mentor teacher, principal, or even a staff member you get on well with if any issues arise, and don't feel pressured to suffer in silence if there's something you aren't happy with.” (ELA Spain 2015-16)

Conditions in schools in Spain differ from those in this country. Any difficulties should be discussed with your mentor teacher and/or the teacher of the class concerned in the first instance. If the problem cannot be solved then talk to the head teacher or get in touch with your contact at the local education authority (if applicable).

Satisfactory solutions can usually be found through such consultations but if the problem remains unresolved, you may contact the Ministry of Education/Comunidad. The British Council in the UK will be happy to offer advice, but should only be contacted when all other attempts to solve the issue have been made. Problems are dealt with most quickly and effectively locally and British Council will instruct

you to take the steps mentioned above. Please see the provided ‘Who to Contact’ document for your line of referral.

To avoid problems at school, it is a good idea to form a good working relationship with other members of staff. You should introduce yourself to all members of the English department. It is important to be patient and polite and to be aware of the work pressure of others. Please remember that it is not good practice to correct the teacher in front of students. You should always be punctual, responsible and prepare adequately for your lessons. Furthermore, meeting regularly with your mentor gives the opportunity for them to feedback about your performance and for you to raise any concerns or issues.

Do tell people if you have problems or if you need information as otherwise they will assume everything is ok. **The authorities will not appreciate it if you suffer in silence and complain six months later.** A lot of past assistants may tell you that their assistantship in Spain was the best year of their life. This can raise expectations and often leads to people feeling low especially during the first few weeks until they settle in.



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10. IN COUNTRY ADVICE

10.1. PERSONAL SAFETY

It is very important to stick to the same health and safety rules as you would at home and always heed advice given by local people. Please see refer to the Personal Safety Leaflet which provides an emergency telephone number as well as essential guidelines on how to avoid potentially dangerous situations.

We strongly advise that you spend some time looking at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website and check it regularly as there is a lot of useful and up-to-date information provided. We also recommend that assistants read the 'Advice for Travellers' documentation which can be found here: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice. Ensure that you check regularly the Spain travel advice page: www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/europe/spain. Please also refer to the FCO website for information regarding sexual attacks:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/rape-and-sexual-assault-abroad

10.2. TRAVELLING AROUND SPAIN

“Throw yourself in, travel and visit as many places as you can, there's not likely to be many other times in your life when you have so much free time in a foreign country.” (ELA Spain 2012-2013)

Working as a language assistant gives you a great opportunity to travel around Spain and you should make the most of your free time. Try to avoid coming home every holiday and experience as much of the surrounding area as possible. Turespaña: Spain's official tourism portal. This is the government tourist information website and provides a lot of information about local traditions, celebrations, accommodation, etc. www.spain.info/en/. Other useful travel websites are:

- www.aboutspain.net

- www.red2000.com/spain/
- www.lonelyplanet.com
- www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree
- www.budgettravel.com
- www.roughguides.com
- www.worldtravelguide.net
- www.tourspain.es www.okspain.org

“Stay in hostels when travelling. They are much cheaper than hotels and usually just as nice or nicer and often nearer the centre of town. Never be afraid to ask for help or information from locals. They are usually delighted to help.” (ELA Spain 2012-2013)

Bla Bla Car

Many assistants have previously highlighted in end of year feedback that Bla Bla Car is a popular way to travel around Spain. At all times, please ensure that you exercise caution.

10.3. ISIC CARDS

International Student Identity Cards cost £9 and are available online and from student travel agents such as STA and BUNAC. They can be used to obtain cheap entry into certain museums, theatres, cinemas and art galleries throughout Europe. They may also entitle you to certain travel concessions. Please see www.isiccard.com for further information. Please note that in order to obtain an ISIC card you need to be a full time student.

For non-students who are under 26 there is the International Youth Travel Card (£9), which can be bought in the same way – see www.statravel.co.uk/youth-identity-card.htm for further information.

All assistants under the age of 30 (or 26 depending on the country or region), can also buy the European Youth Card. Holders of the card are eligible for discounts at a range of places and on a range of services. For more information on the discounts and where you can buy the card, go to www.euro26.org.

10.4. INTERNET

Former assistants have recommended that you do not take out a monthly or year contract and instead use a Pay as You Go dongle or simply stick to internet cafes. There have been issues in the past with assistants being unable to cancel their contracts and then being faced with legal action. If you do wish to take out a contract, please make sure that you read the small print carefully and keep a copy of all documents that you sign. Do not sign any contract without fully understanding the terms and conditions.

Student language assistants can sometimes benefit from using Eduroam. Thanks to global agreement, the eduroam Wi-Fi roaming service is free-of-charge to users. More than 6,000 eduroam hotspots are available at universities, research centres, academies, many schools, and other research and education institutions in more than 70 territories around the world. As eduroam grows, more and more hotspots are appearing in additional places such as libraries, museums and public spaces such as railway stations and coffee shops.

10.5. PHONING HOME & MOBILES

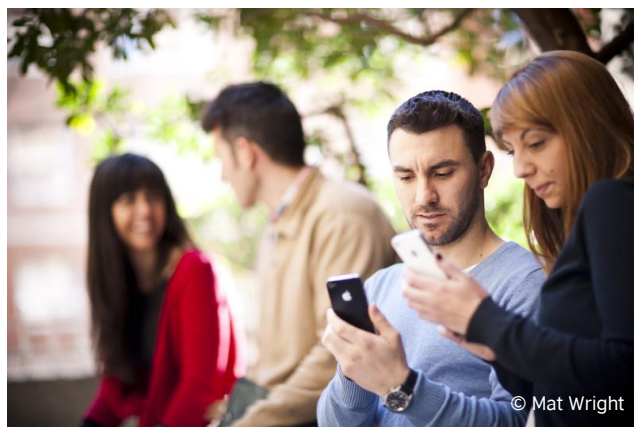
The country code for Spain is +34. Most assistants find that investing in a mobile phone is a huge asset to their social life. Pre-pay is often more convenient and cheaper than a contract, and assistants in the past have recommended Orange, Movistar, Vodafone, Happy Movil (through The Phone House) and Yoigo (see www.yoigo.com).

For assistants wishing to invest in a landline and internet, previous assistants have recommended ONO (see www.ono.es). Very cheap calls to the UK via a skype account (see www.skype.com) can then be made using the internet. Using local “Locutorios” (phone booth shops) are also a cheap way of contacting UK land lines. Equally, many cafes will allow you to use their internet for free when buying a coffee or something to eat. Be aware that calls to the UK from a mobile can be expensive. Previous assistants have

recommended using Skype and www.voipbuster.com as an alternative.

“Just like in the UK, cancelling internet, phone etc. contracts can be quite difficult and the companies you phone will offer you other contracts and, in my case, lie to try and get more money out of you..... Make sure you know exactly what you're signing up for when you first enter into a contract and make sure that you have your contract in front of you as you phone them to cancel a contract.”
(ELA Spain 2014-2015)

HOWEVER do not sign any contracts for phones or internet if you are not going to be in Spain for the entire length of the contract (most phone contracts are for a minimum of 12-18 months). Please also remember to cancel any contract before leaving the country. Do not sign any contract without fully understanding the terms and conditions.



10.6. LOST OR STOLEN MOBILE/CELLULAR PHONES

If a mobile phone is lost or stolen, call the service provider and give them the IMEI number (this is a cellular/mobile phone's unique identification number) so that the service can be suspended. Report the theft or loss to the police, providing the IMEI and telephone numbers.

11. TEACHING TIPS AND RESOURCES

“Try to be positive as much as possible, never say no! It's a great experience so if you work hard, the school will appreciate it and you'll definitely be rewarded” (ELA Spain 2015-16)

11.1. OBSERVATION PERIOD

When you first arrive at your school(s) you should ask for a period of observation of 1-2 weeks. It may not be offered to you automatically. Observation will allow you to familiarise yourself with the school environment, to experience classroom management techniques as well as to get to know the names, faces and personalities of your pupils and gauge their level of English.

Try to note the following:

- How the teacher starts and ends the lesson;
- How the teacher speaks to pupils;
- How the teacher involves all pupils, including shy ones, in the class activity;
- What the teacher's attitude is to pupil errors and error correction; and
- How the teacher controls disruptive behavior, lateness and lack of effort.

11.2. TEACHING MATERIALS

One way of making language learning real for your pupils is bringing authentic materials from the UK into the classroom. Take the opportunity to collect a variety of resources while you are still at home.

Past assistants have found that the following materials worked well: Photos of family and friends and your home town, lots of postcards, examples of UK coins and notes, train tickets and timetables, stamps, posters and tea towels to decorate walls, Christmas cards and crackers, posters and games, UK TV programmes and listings, magazines and local newspapers, CDs, photos of school uniforms, a school timetable and school report, flashcards, word searches, maps, tourist brochures, UK food (marmite, jelly, chocolate, custard, mince pies, gravy granules, etc), adverts, menus, cartoons, comic books, DVDs (e.g. Ready Steady Cook for catering

students), simple recipes e.g. scones, recordings of the weather forecast, London tube map, tapes of friends' accents and conversations, bingo, Taboo etc.

The more materials you can find the better. Think about what worked well for you as a language student and about which items you find interesting when you are in a foreign country. You can also ask your host school(s) whether there is something specific they would like you to bring and to find out about topics you are likely to be asked to cover during your assistantship.

11.3. BRITISH COUNCIL TEACHING RESOURCES

The British Council produces and co-produces a range of resources specifically for Language Assistants. Making use of these will help you greatly to deliver interesting and useful classroom activities and will support you in solving problems in the classroom. The British Council is also closely involved with the teaching of English abroad. Local branches develop useful resources and organise a range of cultural activities, which may be of interest to you and your school. For information on forthcoming events, go to www.britishcouncil.es.

11.4. LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS MANUAL

'Language Assistant' by Clare Lavery is a resource book designed for language assistants and provides information on all aspects of the role. Please read this carefully as it is extremely useful in preparing you for your assistantship. <https://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/attachments/books-ela-manual.pdf>

11.5. SCHOOL LINKING

Please note that many foreign schools are anxious to establish links with UK counterparts in order to share information and arrange pupil exchanges. Assistants are encouraged to help in whatever way possible in establishing such links and there is information and guidance on the British Council website:

www.schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/content/uk-home-page

You may also wish to find out if your school has any eTwinning projects or set up a project yourself. eTwinning can be accessed via www.etwinning.net. eTwinning is a free online community for schools in Europe which allows schools to find partner schools and collaborate on online projects within a secure network and platform. Through participating in eTwinning, your school will be able to:

- enrich learning and motivation of pupils (aged between 3 and 19) and staff;
- access high quality professional development and ready-made resources;
- raise standards across the whole school community;
- gain recognition through eTwinning awards
- Search for an Erasmus+ partner to carry out projects with and apply for mobility funding.

11.6. BILINGUAL PROGRAMS

Many schools in Spain are implementing bilingual programmes. You may find yourself supporting teachers who teach science or PE in English. In some instances students need to go through external exams in the school (PET from Cambridge University, GESE from Trinity College London, etc). It is one of the roles of the language assistants to improve students' oral fluency and conversation skills.

www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams/preliminary-for-schools/

11.7. TEACHINGENGLISH WEBSITE

TeachingEnglish.org is an online resource centre produced jointly by the British Council and the BBC: www.teachingenglish.org.uk. On the site you will have access to:

- Teaching tips
- Essential UK: Seasonal lesson plans based around UK topics
- Primary tips: Help getting started with primary-level students
- Classroom games

"I think the TeachingEnglish webpage is an invaluable resource, I often use it when preparing lessons, either for a whole lesson plan or just inspiration. I find the content to be really well designed and thought out. The glossary of teaching terms also available on the site is very useful too." (ELA Spain 2016-2017)

11.8. USEFUL TEACHING WEBSITES

www.cartoonstock.com
www.tes.co.uk
www.puzzlemaker.com
www.bbc.co.uk
www.slideshare.net/
www.macmillanenglish.com/
www.eslcafe.com
www.eslpartyland.com
www.eslgold.com
www.esl-lab.com
www.eslflow.com
www.eslflashcards.com
www.onestopenglish.com
www.prezi.com
www.bogglesworldesl.com
www.royal.gov.uk
www.projectbritain.com
www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc
www.developingteachers.com
www.lyrics.com www.busyteacher.org
www.letssingit.com
www.visitbritain.com www.eslprintables.com/
www.cambridgeesol.org/teach
www.enchantedlearning.com

11.9. BOOK LIST

You are not obliged to purchase any materials, however some assistants have commented that some of the books below are useful for English Language Assistants; particularly those who may wish to engage in private tutoring or pursue a career in language teaching in the future. Also look out for the series of handbooks and source books for language teachers published by CUP, Longman, Macmillan and OUP.

Dictionaries

- BBC English Dictionary (BBC English/Harper Collins)
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (Longman)
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Oxford University Press)
- Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture (Longman)

Grammar Reference Books

- A Practical English Grammar (A.J. Thomson & A.V. Martinet, Oxford University Press)
- Current English Grammar (S. Chalker, Phoenix)
- Basic English Usage (M. Swan, Oxford University Press)
- Practical English Usage (M. Swan, Oxford University Press)
- Discover English (R. Bolitho & B. Tomlinson, Macmillan Heinemann)
- English Grammar in Use (R. Murphy, Cambridge University Press)
- Advanced Grammar in Use (R. Murphy, Cambridge University Press)
- How English Works (Michael Swan and Catherine Walter, Oxford University Press)
- Learner English (Michael Swan & Bernard Smith (eds.) Cambridge University Press)

Basic Methodology Books

- The Practice of English Language Teaching J. Harmer Longman
- How to Teach English J. Harmer Longman
- How to Teach Grammar S. Thornbury Longman
- How to Use the Internet in ELT D. Teeler & P. Gray Longman
- One to One Peter Wilberg Language Teaching Publications



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12. SPOTLIGHT ON SPAIN

The Spanish population is now more than 46 million, with an average density of just 9.5 inhabitants per square kilometre - one of the lowest in the European Union. The Euro is the official currency

Spain's urban population has risen to over 77% of the total number of inhabitants. The large metropolitan areas include Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Seville, Zaragoza, Bilbao, etc. Of the Autonomous Regions, Madrid has the greatest population density, followed by the Basque Country, Canary Islands, Catalonia and the Region of Valencia.

Spain is a non-confessional state and the freedom of worship is recognised in its Constitution. However, the majority of Spaniards are Catholic, and this religion is deeply rooted in Spanish society.

Castilian or Spanish is the official language of the nation. There are also officially-recognised languages in the following Autonomous Regions: Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque Country. In Valencia and the Balearic Islands a particular variety of Catalan can also be spoken

12.1. REGIONS

Spain covers an area of 505,955 square kilometers, which places it amongst the fifty largest countries in the world. Spain's geography is amongst the most diverse in Europe, boasting beaches, cities, mountains and national parks, all within a relatively short distance of each other. Spain is the perfect place to visit other areas of Europe and Africa, such as Portugal or Morocco.

The country is divided into 17 autonomous regions or 'Comunidades Autónomas' in Spanish. These Comunidades are further divided into 50 provinces 'provincias'. Each comunidad will have its own history, traditions, culture and in some cases language.

12.2. NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

Spain has many official public holidays every year, some observed nationwide, some local. When a holiday falls close to a weekend, there is often a *punte* (bridge), meaning that the day in between is also a holiday. In all cases you should check public holidays with your school, however the following holidays are usually observed in most regions:

- 01 January, New Year's Day
- 06 January, Epiphany
- 14 April, Good Friday
- 01 May, Labour Day
- 25 July, Santiago Apóstol
- 15 August, Asunción de la Virgen
- 12 October, Fiesta Nacional de España
- 01 November, All Saints Day
- 06, December, Constitution Day
- 08 December Immaculate Immaculada Concepción
- 25 December, Christmas Day

Smaller towns will have local fiestas in addition to these. Semana Santa (Easter) is one of the main holidays/fiestas in Spain and is a real highlight in the Spanish calendar (especially in Sevilla and Andalucía in general). If you travel during this week, make sure you book early. Previous participants have recommended seeing as many Spanish fiestas as possible during the year, as they are a real insight into Spanish culture and brimming with traditional dishes, customs, lively displays and fireworks, all of which vary widely across regions.

12.3. EMERGENCY SERVICES IN SPAIN

In any emergency, call 112.

To report a crime, including stolen property and lost or stolen passports, visit the nearest Policía Nacional, regional police (Ertzaintza in the Basque Country, Mossos d'Esquadra in Catalonia, and Policía Foral in Navarre) or Guardia Civil Station to file a police report (denuncia). While in

Spain, you can also call a dedicated English-speaking police line on +34 90 210 2112.

Road accidents or information about weather and traffic congestion: +34 900 123 505

General enquiries to the British Embassy:

+34 91 700 82 00
+34 91 319 0200

British Consular Emergency Service for any emergency queries at any time of any day. Leave a message and someone will normally get back to you within one hour of your call:

+34 91 524 97 00

12.4. BRITISH EMBASSY AND CONSULATE

For up-to-date British Embassy and consulate contact details in Spain please refer to: www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/find-an-embassy. Please take note of the address of the British Embassy in Spain below in case of emergency or loss of your passport. Assistants who do not hold British citizenship should check with their own Consulates/Embassies in Spain.

British Embassy
Torre Espacio
Paseo de la Castellana 259D
28046 Madrid

Tel: +34 917 146 300
Fax: +34 917 146 301

Office hours are Monday - Friday 8.30am-5pm (Spanish time). If you call outside of these hours you will be given instructions on how to proceed with your call depending on your circumstances. Please see www.ukinspain.fco.gov.uk for more information

Other Consular services are provided in:

- [Alicante](#)
- [Barcelona](#)
- [Ibiza](#)
- [Las Palmas](#)
- [Malaga](#)

- [Palma de Mallorca](#)
- [Santa Cruz de Tenerife](#)

12.5. THE BRITISH COUNCIL IN SPAIN

Please note: The British Council in Spain is not responsible for the administration of the Language Assistant programme - this is the role of the Spanish Ministry of Education in Madrid.

Our organisation started in Spain in 1940 and has since undertaken a major programme of activities to promote educational and cultural relations. The British Council has a total of 17 centres in a variety of locations, including: Madrid, Barcelona, Segovia, Valencia, Bilbao and Palma de Mallorca.

We also have the [British Council School in Madrid](#), where we give a bicultural and multilingual educational programme to almost 2,000 students, from 3 to 18 years old. We work hard to further their education at top universities, nationally and internationally. The British Council School is recognised globally as a leader in its sector and an innovative centre for British and Spanish education.

Many people associate us with qualifications such as Cambridge First and Advanced. Although they are a fundamental part of our work, they are not the only qualifications we offer. The International English Language Testing System - [IELTS](#) is one of our most exciting ventures for young people and adults, conducted at our own centres and other external premises in Spain.

In addition to this, the British Council develops and participates in many different projects themed around society, science, education and the arts.

In arts, we work primarily as facilitators and intermediaries. The Arts team in Spain develops relationships with cultural institutions and public organisations. Our goal is to showcase the best of UK creativity through artistic, innovative and high quality events. Through the European Union National Institutes of Culture (EUNIC) we are able

to cooperate effectively with Europe's cultural institutions.

We also work with Teachers Associations in Spain, supporting their training and providing access to educational resources for its members. Our own annual conferences for teachers of English are held in late September and attracts over 700 teachers.

The British Council is closely involved with the teaching of English abroad and organises a range of cultural activities, which may well be of interest to assistants. British books, tapes and films may be borrowed from British Council offices for a small fee. Those requiring information or wishing to take advantage of its services may like to telephone or write to the British Council at one of its offices. To find out more about our activity in Spain, download our [Agenda magazine](#) (in Spanish).

EXAM ADMINISTRATION CENTRES

MADRID

Email: exams.madrid@britishcouncil.es
Address: Pº General Martínez Campos 31,
28010 Madrid
Telephone: 91 337 3577

Telephone lines open: Monday to Friday from
9:00 to 17:00h

BARCELONA

Email: exams.barcelona@britishcouncil.es
Address: c/ Amigó 83, 08021 Barcelona
Telephone: 93 241 9700

Opening hours: Mon – Fri 09.30-21.00; Sat
09.30-13.30

BILBAO

Email: exams.bilbao@britishcouncil.es
Address: Avda Lehendakari Aguirre 29, 2º,
48014 Bilbao
Telephone: 94 476 3650

Opening hours: Mon – Fri 10:00 to 14:00h and
16:00 to 20:00h; Saturday 9:00 to 14:00h

TEACHING CENTRES

BARCELONA AMIGÓ

C. Amigó, 74 i 83 08021 Barcelona
Telephone number: 93 241 97 00
Fax number: 93 202 31 68
Email
address: cursos.barcelona@britishcouncil.es

BARCELONA YOUNG LEARNERS – BONANOVA

C. Vendrell, 1 08022 Barcelona
Telephone number: 93 253 19 00
Fax number: 93 418 86 01
Email address: infoylc@britishcouncil.es

BILBAO

British Council Bilbao Avda. Lehendakari Aguirre
29, 2º 48014 Bilbao
Telephone number: 94 476 36 50
Email address: bilbao@britishcouncil.es

BRITISH COUNCIL SCHOOL

British Council School
c/ Solano 3-5-7
28223 Madrid
Telephone number: +34 91 337 5050
Email
address: admisionescolegio@britishcouncil.es

MADRID TEACHING CENTRE (Pº GRAL. MARTÍNEZ CAMPOS)

ADULTS - Pº General Martínez Campos, 31
28010 Madrid

Telephone number: 91 337 35 01
Fax number: 91 337 50 01
Email address: madrid.adults@britishcouncil.es

YOUNG LEARNERS - Pº General Martínez
Campos, 31 28010 Madrid

Telephone number: 91 337 35 93
Fax number: 91 337 36 00
Email
address: madrid.younglearners@britishcouncil.es

MADRID ALCALÁ DE HENARES

Universidad de Alcalá Facultad de Económicas
Plaza de la Victoria s/n Alcalá de Henares 28802
Madrid
Telephone number: 91 507 87 40
Email address: alcala@britishcouncil.es

MADRID ALCOBENDAS

Calle de la Constitución 59-61 Alcobendas
28100 Madrid
Telephone number: 91 659 28 79
Fax number: 91 659 30 55
Email address: alcobendas@britishcouncil.es

MADRID LAS ROZAS

Nuevo Centro de la Juventud de Las Rozas
Avda. Nuestra Señora de Retamar, 8 28232 Las
Rozas
Telephone number: 91 636 18 64
Fax number: 91 636 71 51
Email address: lasrozas@britishcouncil.es

MADRID SOMOSAGUAS

Calle Solano 5-7 Prado de Somosaguas 28223
Pozuelo de Alarcón (Madrid)
Telephone number: 91 337 36 36
Fax number: 91 337 36 37
Email address: somosaguas@britishcouncil.es

MADRID VILLAVICIOSA

Escuela Santa Ana Calle Santa Ana s/n 28670
Villaviciosa de Odón (Madrid)
Telephone number: 91 616 13 46
Fax number: 91 616 00 62
Email address: villaviciosa@britishcouncil.es

PALMA DE MALLORCA

British Council Palma de Mallorca Calle Arxiduc
Lluís Salvador, 1, 4º 07004 Palma de Mallorca
Islas Baleares
Telephone number: +34 971 76 22 77
Alternative telephone number: +34 646 727
631
Email address: palma@britishcouncil.es

SEGOVIA

British Council Segovia Avenida Padre Claret, 3
40003 Segovia
Telephone number: 921 53 55 55
Email address: segovia@britishcouncil.es

VALENCIA

Avda. Cataluña, 9 46020 Valencia
Telephone number: 96 339 29 80
Email address: valencia@britishcouncil.es



13. OTHER INFORMATION

13.1. DRUGS

Co-operating partners abroad have requested that the attention of British visitors be drawn to the severe penalties imposed for drug offences which may result in heavy fines and prison sentences. You are therefore strongly advised not to become involved in these activities.

13.2. POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS

Co-operating partners abroad have requested that the attention of British visitors be drawn to the severe penalties imposed for taking part in unlawful political demonstrations which may result in heavy fines and prison sentences. You are therefore strongly advised not to become involved in these activities.

13.3. SPOUCES / PARTNERS/DEPENDANTS

Assistants should note that the allowance is intended to provide for one person only. However, if an assistant's spouse remains in the UK and is unemployed, he/she may be barred from income support or be required to refund whatever was received as such since the start of the assistantship. Enquiries should be made well in advance in order to prevent financial difficulties from arising during a period of appointment.

13.4. REFERENCES

Please note the British Council is not the employer of UK assistants abroad and should not be given as a referee in future job applications.

In general the head of the school would be the most appropriate referee.

13.5. SOCIAL MEDIA

You should be very careful about how you use social networking sites while you are an ELA. Keep your profile private so that it can only be seen by people you intend to see it. If you invite other teachers to be 'friends', remember to remain professional in what you say on your wall and be careful what you say about your employer.

You should not exchange personal contact details with students, invite them to be 'friends' or accept similar invitations from them. This is likely to be regarded as inappropriate behavior. Check with teachers about the school's internet policy, particularly regarding any online communication involving students either in or outside school. It is exceptionally important that you understand issues around child protection, both to protect the students and also to protect you from any damaging and potentially serious accusations.

13.6. USEFUL WEBSITES/INFORMATION

Useful websites include:

- www.thirdyearabroad.com
- www.gov.uk/government/world/spain
- www.britishcouncil.es/
- www.google.es
- www.elmundo.es
- www.elpais.es
- www.inmadrid.com/

Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in these notes. However the British Council cannot accept responsibility for any errors which may exist or for any subsequent changes.

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