

# GUIDELINES

## FOR FOREIGN RESEARCHERS

### MOVING TO SPAIN

This document has been created by the Commission on Diversity and Inclusion of the Iberian Society of Ecology (SIBECOL) with the collaboration of several people from different countries who have moved to Spain as predoctoral or postdoctoral researchers. This is the first version (31 March 2023).

These guidelines aim to provide useful information for foreign researchers moving to Spain (either European (EU) or non-European (non-EU)). While we wrote this document with the best intentions, note that each case is different and some sections might not apply equally to everyone. **Contact to your forthcoming host institution in Spain as soon as possible and ask them for all the procedures.**

If you have additional information that might be useful to other researchers, contact to [diversity@sibecol.org](mailto:diversity@sibecol.org).

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## Section 1: Previous Requirements

### 1.1 Preliminary Employment Contract

Before starting any official procedure, you need a **preliminary employment contract**. The *Department of Human Resources* of your forthcoming host institution in Spain should send it to you, but it is always better if you ask for it in advance.

If you have been awarded with a fellowship (e.g. FPU, JdC, MSCA), your forthcoming host institution will need two documents to write the preliminary contract: (i) the grant call and (ii) the final resolution of the call. We recommend you to send these documents as soon as possible.

**IMPORTANT: Keep this step in mind as this will ease all the following steps of your journey to Spain.**

### 1.2 Employment Contract

Once it is confirmed that you got the position, you must sign an **employment contract**. To sign the contract, it is often required:

- Homologated Academic Degree (*see Note 1*).
- Thesis title (in case of PhD contract).
- Residence Address in Spain (you can provide an address from a friend or supervisor).
- Social Security Number
- Bank Account
- Health Certificate from a Spanish Doctor (< 3 months, sometimes asked).

**DO NOT PANIC! Sections 2-5 aim to guide you to get these requirements.**

#### **NOTE 1. HOMOLOGATED ACADEMIC DEGREES**

**All academic degrees must be homologated.** If your contract is linked to a postdoctoral grant, you only need to homologate the PhD degree and any university can do it (it may take up to 3 months). If you have a regular employment contract, you also must homologate your Bachelor's and/or Master's degree. You must homologate your degree at the Ministry of Universities (it takes 12 months). If you sign the contract for CSIC, you may need to apply to "Bolsa-CSIC". For the application, you only need to upload the application form of the homologation (i.e., a document stating the homologation of your degree is in progress).

## Section 2: Residence and Work Permits

These documents need to be done before moving to Spain. The procedure takes up to 4 months, so be prepared for it.

Your host institution (either a university or research center) is responsible for applying for your residence and work permits. In the case of CSIC, your host institution will help with the application, but “CSIC Central” is the one in charge of applying for the documents. Usually, someone from the *Department of Human Resources* of your host institution will contact you and send you all the required documents.

Despite the documents required for a residence permit vary depending on the grant, job position and institution, the **most common documents are**:

- A copy of your passport (all pages, including both covers).
- The preliminary contract (supplied by your host institution).
- The official application form (supplied by your host institution; *see Figure 1*).
- The project summary (in case of PhD contract).
- The application fee. Sometimes, this fee is paid by the host institution, but not always. Don't be shy and ask your institution if they can pay for it.

**IMPORTANT:** The residence permit is temporary. You must renew it after 2 years even if you have a long-term contract.

**FIGURE 1. EXAMPLE OF APPLICATION FORM (CSIC)**

The image shows a sample of the official application form for a residence permit in Spain, specifically for the CSIC (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas). The form is titled "SOLICITUD DE AUTORIZACIÓN DE RESIDENCIA" and is issued by the "MINISTERIO DE EMPLEO Y SEGURIDAD SOCIAL". It includes sections for "DATOS DEL EXTRANJERO" (Foreigner's Data), "DATOS DE LA EMPRESA/ENTIDAD EN ESPAÑA" (Data of the Company/Entity in Spain), and "DATOS DEL REPRESENTANTE A LOS EFECTOS DE PRESENTACIÓN DE LA SOLICITUD" (Data of the Representative for the Submission of the Application). The form contains various fields for personal information, contact details, and institutional affiliation, along with checkboxes for different types of authorization and residency status.

## Section 3: VISA

You can apply for your VISA either before or after moving to Spain. [More information here](#) (in Spanish).

### 3.1 Applying for a VISA from abroad

You must go to the **Spanish embassy or consulate in your country of origin**. The process is analogous to applying for a VISA to visit any country. Yet, remember that your VISA is emitted under a **special law for research** (Ley 14/2013 *investigador ámbito nacional*).

To apply for your VISA, you should **fill and official form and send it to the consulate together with several other documents** as soon as possible (*see* NOTE 2 for a list of documents).

**It takes 1-4 months until getting an official response**. During that time, you cannot travel abroad. After that time, you will get a VISA in your passport with a NIE (your Spanish ID). As soon as you arrive to Spain, ask for an appointment to get a TIE (ID Card, *see section 4.2.*).

### 3.2 Applying for a VISA from Spain

This option is **only valid if you are in Spain legally**. This means you already have a residence permit, working permit or employment contract. So, even if you do not require a VISA to enter the EU, **you will not be able to apply for a VISA in Spain if you enter the territory as a tourist**. In this case, you need to go abroad and apply for your VISA from overseas.

If you are in Spain legally, go to the **Immigration Office** and apply for your VISA. You can arrange an appointment through [their website](#). Before your appointment, you must gather all the documents required (*see Note 2*). You must show all of them at the Immigration Office.

**The passport is retained at the immigration office for ~15-30 days**. During that time, you cannot travel abroad. After that period, the immigration office will contact you and let you know when you can go to pick up your passport and VISA.

#### NOTE 2. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR A WORKING VISA

- VISA Form (in Spanish: *Solicitud Visado Nacional*): [download it here](#)
- Two face pictures
- Proof of residence (in Spanish: *Comprobante de residencia*).
- Passport (> 6 months before the expiration date)
- Residence or Working Permit (in Spanish: *Autorización de residencia y trabajo*).
- Illegal Penalties Certificate (in Spanish: *Certificado de penales expedido por la policía federal*)
- Health Certificate (only in some cases)
- PhD Certificate (officially translated, in some cases).
- An address in Spain (you can provide the one from a friend).

**IMPORTANT:** All documents must be original, in Spanish (or officially translated) and apostilled. Note that they will ask you for an extra copy to be provided.

### 3.3. Student VISA

This procedure only applies to non-EU students that need to apply or renew their Student VISA (in Spanish: “*Estancia*”). This VISA is for people doing an official university program in Spain, but might be a good solution for researchers that have been accepted in a Spanish PhD program and are waiting for their employment contract. Also this VISA allows you to (i) apply for your NIE/TIE (see [Section 4](#)); and (ii) work 15 hours / week.

Once you moved to Spain with the Student VISA, **you must renew your authorization card every year**. You have a 150 days to submit them: from 60 days prior to the expiration date of your current card to 90 days after its expiration.

For renew your Student VISA, go to the **Immigration Office** and apply for your renewal. You can arrange an appointment through [their website](#). Before your appointment, you must gather all the documents required (see [Note 3](#)). You must show all of them at the Immigration Office.

#### NOTE 3. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR A STUDENT VISA

- VISA Form (in Spanish: *Solicitud de autorización de estancia y prórrogas*): [download it here](#)
- Photocopy of your Passport (> 6 months before the expiration date)
- Photocopy of your TIE (front & back).
- Acceptance letter as a student at the registered University or affiliated centers; or enrolment certificate for the current academic year that certifies that class attendance is mandatory and the length of the studies (minimum of 3 months). Both the acceptance letter and the enrolment certificate must state that the student was “admitted”.
- Registration receipt for the new academic year.
- Medical insurance. It must cover medical expenses associated with accidents or diseases for at least one year in advance (must be from a Spanish private company).
- Certificate of economic means. Stamped photocopy of your Spanish bank account book with a minimum sum of 6.358,44€ (the sum changes every year, but it is around this amount).
- In case of having changed your home address: a new certificate of census registration was issued by the city council of the city where you live.

## Section 4: NIE and TIE

Once you moved to Spain, you can apply for your NIE (i.e. Spanish ID) and TIE (i.e. ID card). NIE/TIE last the duration of the contract (or two years). Sometimes, contracts are renewed every year. In this case, you must renew your NIE/TIE annually.

### 4.1 Número de Identificación de Extranjero (NIE)

The NIE is an essential document for foreigners residing in Spain. It is used to identify a person in all administrative areas and it will be requested for getting a health card, a social security number, a bank account or even for register yourself for gas, electricity and water utilities at your new home.

#### Obtaining NIE with an Employment Contract

- **Get an appointment for the Immigration Office** of the province you are living in. The best option is to apply for the appointment through the [Immigration Office Website](#) (only in Spanish), selecting the procedure “*Certificados y Asignación NIE*”.
- Go to the Immigration Office. Bring with you **(i) a valid passport** (> 6 months before expiring), **(ii) your employment contract**.
- **Pay the NIE fees**. Probably, you should pay the fee at a specific bank (yet sometimes you can pay it in cash at the same Immigration Office).
- **Go back to the Immigration Office** and show the payment receipt. If everything goes well, they will give you either your “temporal” or “final” NIE. If you get the temporal NIE, you will receive the final one at your place or you will be contacted to get it on a specific date.

#### Obtaining NIE without an Employment Contract

- **Get an appointment for the Immigration Office** of the province you are living in. The best option is to apply for the appointment through the [Immigration Office Website](#) (only in Spanish), selecting the procedure “*Certificados y Asignación NIE*”.
- Go to the Immigration Office. Bring with you **(i) a valid passport** (> 6 months before expiring), **(ii) two recent face pictures**, **(iii) a proof you are living in Spain** (e.g., rental agreement; *see Note 4*).
- **Fill out the application form** they will give you.
- **Pay the NIE fees**. Probably, you should pay the fee at a specific bank (yet sometimes you can pay it in cash at the same Immigration Office).
- **Go back to the Immigration Office** and show the payment receipt. If everything goes well, they will give you either your “temporal” or “final” NIE. If you get the temporal NIE, you will receive the final one at your place or you will be contacted to get it on a specific date.

#### NOTE 4. VALID DOCUMENTS FOR OBTAINING A NIE

- Long-stay VISA.
- Temporary residence permit
- Humanitarian residence permit
- Lease contract, rental agreement and/or invoice of a utility with your name on it
- Participation in a voluntary work program in Spain
- Participation in a student exchange program in Spain
- Registration of an official university program (BSc, Master, PhD); *see Section 3.3.*

## 4.2 Tarjeta de Identificación de Extranjero (TIE)

The TIE is the ID card. This card is not needed to sign the contract, but it is necessary for daily life. Obtaining the TIE is a long procedure (3-6 months), as you must go **three times** at the Immigration Office.

- **First visit:** To submit the required documents (*see Note 5*).
- **Second visit:** To store your fingerprints. Before getting this second appointment, you must wait for a notification from the Immigration Office stating all documents are correct.
- **Third visit:** To get your TIE. Usually, the TIE is ready after 45 days from the second visit.

Remember to get your appointment at the [Immigration Office Website](#) as soon as possible; it might take 2-3 months only to get the first appointment at the Immigration Office.

#### NOTE 5. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR TIE

- A valid passport (> 6 months before expiring)
- Residence Permit
- Picture (passport style) with white background.
- Application Form (modelo 720, código 12): [download it here](#) (in Spanish only)
- Receipt of the paid fees. You must pay the fees physically at a bank office.

**IMPORTANT:** Some offices also require to be at the census registration (in Spanish: “empadronamiento”). [Read Section 5](#) for further information.

### 4.3 NIE/TIE Renewal

If you have to renew your NIE/TIE, you need the following documents:

- Fill out and present the specific Application form.
- A valid passport copy (check the passport expiration date!).
- NIE/TIE first application.
- Fees proof of payment.
- Signed renewed.

## Section 5: Other Critical Documents

For signing a contract in Spain, you must have (i) a Social Security Number and (ii) a Spanish Bank Account.

### 5.1 Social Security or Affiliation Number

The Social Security or Affiliation Number (in Spanish: *Número de la Seguridad Social*) is a personal ID for people working in Spain. It is personal and is the same for all your life.

To apply for your Social Security Number, you must fill [the form TA.1](#), which can be downloaded from the [Social Security website](#). Then, you must submit this form together with a copy of your NIE or Passport either in person at the Social Security Office of your province or via the online system. The notification of acceptance and your Social Security Number will be send to you in 30-45 days.

Some institutions apply for the Social Security Number for the researcher (actually, they *must* do it; but not all institutions *are willing to do it*). A detailed explanation of all the procedure can be found at the [Social Security Website](#) (see Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: PROCEDURE AND APPLICATION**

**¿Quién puede solicitarlo?**

Podrá solicitar Número de la Seguridad Social todo ciudadano o trabajador por cuenta ajena o por cuenta propia que no dispusiere del mismo.

El empresario, deberá solicitar el Número de Seguridad Social de la persona que va a contratar si éste no lo tuviera.

**¿Dónde se tramita?**

Vía Presencial: La solicitud y documentación deberá presentarse en la Tesorería General de la Seguridad Social o Administración del domicilio del ciudadano o empresa según el caso.

Vía Telemática: Realizada con certificado digital al servicio de la Sede Electrónica. "Asignación de número de la Seguridad Social".

El plazo máximo para dictar y notificar la solicitud será de 45 días. Transcurrido este la solicitud se entenderá como estimada.

**¿Qué trámites se tienen que realizar?**

Junto con el Modelo TA.1, en ambos casos firmado por el interesado, se le de acompañar:

Documento Nacional de Identidad, Tarjeta de Extranjero o Pasaporte.

El número de Seguridad Social será asignado por las Direcciones Provinciales de la Tesorería General de la Seguridad Social o Administraciones cuando incumplan su obligación trabajar y empesar.

NOTA: El número de Seguridad Social se convertirá en número de Afiliación en el momento que el ciudadano comienza una relación laboral.

**SOLICITUD DE: AFILIACIÓN A LA SEGURIDAD SOCIAL, ASIGNACIÓN DE NÚMERO DE SEGURIDAD SOCIAL Y VARIACIÓN DE DATOS**

1. DATOS DEL SOLICITANTE

1.1 PRIMER APELLIDO \_\_\_\_\_ SEGUNDO APELLIDO \_\_\_\_\_ NOMBRE \_\_\_\_\_ 1.2 SEXO \_\_\_\_\_

1.3 TIPO DE DOCUMENTO IDENTIFICATIVO (Marque con una "X")

D.N.I.: \_\_\_\_\_ TARJETA DE EXTRANJERO: \_\_\_\_\_ PASAPORTE: \_\_\_\_\_ 1.4 Nº DE DOCUMENTO IDENTIFICATIVO \_\_\_\_\_ 1.5 NÚMERO DE SEGURIDAD SOCIAL \_\_\_\_\_

FECHA DE NACIMIENTO \_\_\_\_\_ NOMBRE DEL PADRE \_\_\_\_\_ NOMBRE DE LA MADRE \_\_\_\_\_

Día: \_\_\_\_\_ Mes: \_\_\_\_\_ Año: \_\_\_\_\_

LUGAR O MUNICIPIO DE NACIMIENTO \_\_\_\_\_ PROVINCIA DE NACIMIENTO \_\_\_\_\_ PAIS DE NACIMIENTO \_\_\_\_\_

1.6 GRADO DE DISCAPACIDAD \_\_\_\_\_ NACIONALIDAD \_\_\_\_\_ 1.7 APELLIDO DE SOLTERA (Sólo nacionales Unión Europea excepto España) \_\_\_\_\_

1.8 DOMICILIO

TIPO DE VÍA \_\_\_\_\_ NOMBRE DE LA VÍA PÚBLICA \_\_\_\_\_ BLOQUE NÚM. BIS \_\_\_\_\_ ESCAL. PISO \_\_\_\_\_ PUERTA \_\_\_\_\_ C.POSTAL \_\_\_\_\_

MUNICIPIO / ENTIDAD DE ÁMBITO TERRITORIAL INFERIOR AL MUNICIPIO \_\_\_\_\_ PROVINCIA \_\_\_\_\_

CORREO ELECTRÓNICO \_\_\_\_\_

1.9 ACEPTO ENVÍO COMUNICACIONES INFORMATIVAS DE LA SEGURIDAD SOCIAL SI  NO  TELÉFONO MÓVIL \_\_\_\_\_

2. DATOS RELATIVOS A LA SOLICITUD (Marque con "X" la opción correcta)



## 5.2 Bank Account

Opening a bank account in Spain can be a pain in the ass. Some banks only required your passport, others required your TIE, Social Security Number or even your employment contract. Unfortunately, there is no universal law on that, and these politics might change from one office to the other.

**The best option** is to open a bank account once you have (i) your Social Security Number and (ii) a preliminary contract (*see Section 1*).

## 5.3 Census Registration

While a **Census Registration** (in Spanish: *Empadronamiento*) is not mandatory for signing a contract, but it is **very useful or mandatory to get other documents** (e.g. Health Card, TIE).

For obtaining your Census Registration, you must go to the **Municipality Office**. Usually, you need to make an appointment online or by phone (not always, but mandatory in big towns and cities). In the Municipality Office, you must submit at least one of these documents (better if you submit both):

- **The lease contract** of your new home. If you do not have a lease contract (e.g., you rent a room in a shared apartment), you need a letter from the person that has the lease and a copy of their ID.
- **An invoice of a utility with your name on it** (e.g. gas, water or electricity). That is used as proof that you live in that place. If you do not have an invoice on your name, you need a letter from the person who is paying the invoice and a copy of their ID.

## Section 6: Clarifications and advice

**Face-to-face barriers.** Most procedures must be done in person at the different administration offices (mainly at the Immigration Office). Be prepared for it.

**Language and Racism.** Most administration staff only speak Spanish, but not English, French, or any other language. If you do not speak Spanish, it is strongly recommended to find a Spanish speaker that helps you along the procedure. Also, some administration staff can be racist; and the procedures themselves are racist and xenophobic. That is an awful reality that hopefully will improve in the future, but we want you to be ready and to know about this reality.

**Holidays.** Summer (from August 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>), Christmas (usually from December 24<sup>th</sup> to January 6<sup>th</sup>) and Easter (a week in March-April, depending on the year and province) are holiday periods. It is strongly recommended to avoid these periods in order to accelerate the process.

**Prior appointment.** Most procedures require a prior appointment (in Spanish: *cita previa*). Prior appointments are often not available in the short term, so you will experience delays in procedures just because of waiting for these appointments. **Some advice:**

- Ask to the *Department of Human Resources* or point person to help you with appointments, sometimes universities and research centers have a preference to get appointments, so they can get an appointment for you in the short term.

- You can get prior appointments before being ready for them, planning in advance. For instance, if you have an appointment for the fingerprints of your TIE, you know that your TIE will be ready in 45 days, so you can already get a prior appointment.
- You can get an appointment using your passport or NIE. A funny thing is that if you go with the procedure using either one or the other document, you can get two different appointments for the same office and service to secure a closer date. Use this funny fact as an advantage and always apply for two appointments to ensure you have enough time to gather all the documents required.
- Usually the *Delegación del Gobierno* offices do not require an appointment. If you need to physically go to the Immigration Office to deposit papers, but you do not have an appointment, you can go to *Delegación del Gobierno* and they should attend you. They will scan your documentation and give you a reference number (that you should keep).
- Some of the procedures can be done online, but you will need the digital signature (in Spanish: “*Firma digital*”). We recommend you to get the digital signature as soon as possible; it will save you a lot of time.

**Title homologations.** In some cases, you will need the official homologation of your titles. For instance, this is needed for the “*Bolsa de Trabajo*” of CSIC and some universities. The homologation procedure is tedious and can take years. In other cases, such as being hired directly from a research project, most probably you will not need the official homologation, just the translation of the document. In some cases, you will not need anything, just the original title.

**NIE.** Your NIE can change if you change from one VISA to another (i.e. from a Student VISA to a Working VISA). We are unsure if this is legal, but it happens. Try to avoid this change because it can be problematic in the future if you apply for Spanish nationality (e.g. they will probably count only the years you have been living in Spain with the last NIE). In case they change your NIE, we recommend you to go to the National Police station during the first 10 days in Spain to put in a reclamation so they should recover your old original NIE.

## Section 7: Useful Links

- [Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration](#)
- [Application for the Digital Signature](#) (In Spanish: “*firma electrónica*”)
- [Easy steps to get the NIE/TIE](#)
- [Social Security website](#)
- [Easy steps to get your Social Security Number](#)