

Country Profile - Spain

Job market

What are my chances of getting a job?

Finding graduate work in Spain is currently very difficult as unemployment is extremely high. In March 2012 the BBC reported that Spain has the highest unemployment rate in the European Union (EU), with almost one in four people without work. You will be competing in a large market of Spanish graduates. Foreign graduates may find it easier to secure work in Spain's consulting, industry and computer science sectors. These sectors are undergoing a huge process of globalisation, with Banco Santander being one example, and offer opportunities to graduates, especially those fluent in Spanish and English.

- **Typical problems encountered:** language requirements (see below); getting access to the 'hidden job market', the amount of experience required for graduate roles (usually two-three years), and legal restrictions for non-EU graduates.
- **How to improve your chances:** make as many contacts as possible, do not underestimate the importance of networking, enquiries to companies who work in your field are one way to make contacts. If you are looking for a professional level job, remember that it is a competitive market so your experience and skills must be impressive.
- **Language requirements:** if you do not have a working knowledge of Spanish (Castilian), job options are extremely limited except in areas such as tourism and teaching English. Multinational companies may sometimes offer jobs where Spanish is not essential and work for non-Spanish speakers is sometimes available within the ex-pat community. If you are seeking work in the Catalan, Basque, Galician or Valencian regions, you may be expected to speak the local language (all these languages are officially recognised by the Spanish government). Spanish courses are available from [BBC Languages - Spanish](#). Courses may also be offered by your university or local language institutes, and your local library may have Spanish learning resources. The [Instituto Cervantes Leeds](#), [Instituto Cervantes Manchester](#) and [Instituto Cervantes Londres](#), created by the Spanish government to promote the language and culture, offer courses in Spanish and cultural events. For courses in Spain, see [Diplomas of Spanish as a Foreign Language \(DELE\)](#). Or you could learn Spanish while doing work experience in Spain.

Where can I work?

- **Major industries:** retail/wholesale, manufacturing (especially chemicals, metals, textiles and apparel, food, motor vehicles), construction, real estate, transport, tourism.
- **Recent growth areas:** service sector, hotels and restaurants, IT and hi-tech industries.
- **Industries in decline:** construction, real estate, agriculture.
- **Shortage occupations:** skilled trades, mechanics, restaurant/hotel staff, sales representatives.
- **Major companies:** Santander, Telefónica, Repsol YPF, BBVA, Endesa, ACS, CEPSA, Iberdrola, Ferrovial, FCC, Mapfre.

- **Search for more companies:** [Kompass](#), [Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain](#), [Paginas Amarillas \(Spanish Yellow Pages\)](#) and [Global 500](#).
- **Major cities:** Madrid (capital, largest), Barcelona, Valencia, Seville, Bilbao.

What's it like working in Spain?

- **Average working hours:** average full-time hours are just over 40 hours per week. The working day varies between organisations, but is commonly 9am until 6 or 7pm with a long lunch break. Shift work is common.
- **Holidays:** usually one month per year plus various national holidays.
- **Tax rates:** If you intend to work in Spain, you should register with the national tax office [Agencia Tributaria](#) on your arrival. Non-residents are taxed on any income earned in Spain, but if you reside in Spain for more than 183 days in a calendar year, you will be classed as a resident for tax purposes and will be asked to declare all your income for that year.

Applying for jobs

You can secure a job before travelling to Spain by using vacancy websites, recruitment agencies and existing contacts. However, to gain access to the hidden job market (jobs that are not openly advertised), you may have to travel to Spain and make speculative enquiries. In any case, an employer will probably want to meet you in person before offering a job.

The usual method of applying for jobs in Spain is by CV, (also known as el curriculum) and covering letter (carta de presentacion), although application forms are also used. Applications should always be written in Spanish unless otherwise requested and should be concise and professional in style.

The style of the CV is similar to the formats in the UK. The CV should always start with your personal details, but the order of other sections can be changed to give appropriate emphasis. A concise personal objective section can also be included at the start of the CV and a scanned photograph can be included in the top right hand corner. Referees' details are only required if the employer specifically asks for them.

At the [UK National Europass Centre \(UK NEC\)](#) website, you can prepare an online CV suitable for use in European countries.

Interviews are generally quite formal in Spain and follow a similar structure to the UK. It is polite to shake hands with your interviewer(s) both on entering and on leaving the interview. Be prepared for questions about your personal life. Make sure you have researched the company and that you have examples ready to demonstrate your skills and ability to do the job.

For further guidance and examples of Spanish-style CVs as well as interview tips and examples of frequent interview questions visit:

- [Gabinete de Iniciativas Para el Empleo \(GIPE\)](#) (in Spanish)
- [Quiero un buen trabajo](#) (in Spanish)
- [AZ Carreras](#) (in Spanish)
- [Eurograduate – The European Graduate Career Guide](#) (in English)

Will my qualifications be recognised?

To compare UK qualifications with their Spanish equivalents, go to [ENIC-NARIC](#).

Do I still need to pay UK tax and National Insurance?

If you are planning to live and work in Spain check your UK tax and National Insurance position with [HM Revenue & Customs \(HMRC\)](#) to ensure that you are not losing any UK pension rights.

Vacancy sources

Job websites

The following websites are in English:

- [EURES - European Job Mobility Portal](#) - European jobs portal with online CVs and access to regional EURES advisers (in English).
- [Eurograduate - The European Graduate Career Guide](#) - search multinational companies offering employment in Spain.
- [Exposure Jobs](#) - professional jobs in Spain for English speakers.
- [Think Spain](#) - seasonal and permanent jobs available.

The following websites are in Spanish:

General

- [CompuTrabajo](#) - vacancy portal with company search and online CV.
- [Expansión y Empleo](#) - includes online CV and employment news.
- [Infoempleo.com](#) - vacancy search and online CV.
- [Infojobs](#) - searchable vacancies and online CV.
- [Laboris](#) - large vacancy website with careers information, course search and online CV.
- [Monster \(Spain\)](#) - includes company search, careers information and online CV.
- [Primerempleo](#) - includes vacancies where previous experience is not required.
- [Sistema Nacional de Empleo](#) - local employment offices and job listings.
- [studentjob.es](#) - jobs and internships for students and graduates.
- [trabajar.com](#) - national vacancies.
- [Trabajo](#) - national vacancies.
- [Trabajos](#) - national vacancies and online CV.
- [Turiempleo](#) - jobs in tourism.
- [Unique](#) - job search site with online CV, exercises, tests and courses.
- [Universitarios](#) - graduate jobs.

Academic and teaching jobs

- [Educajob](#) - academic and educational jobs including teaching English.
- [Profesores.com](#) - teaching vacancies.

Jobs in IT

- [Tecnoempleo](#)
- [TecnoJobs](#)

Recruitment agencies

Recruitment agencies in Spain mainly deal with temporary work opportunities and are called Empresas de Trabajo Temporal (ETT). A searchable database of recruitment agencies is available at [Empresas de Trabajo Temporal \(ETTs\)](#), or use the [Paginas Amarillas \(Spanish Yellow Pages\)](#). The professional associations for recruitment agencies in Spain are the [Asociación Estatal de Trabajo Temporal \(AETT\)](#) and the [Asociación de Grandes Empresas de Trabajo Temporal \(AGETT\)](#).

You can post your professional CV at [CV Explorer](#) to be looked at by Spanish headhunters and recruitment agencies.

Newspapers

- [Costa News](#) - English language weekly, small employment classified section for local and temporary work, covering Costa Blanca, Costa del Sol, Costa Almeria and Costa Levante.
- [EL Gazette](#) - English language teaching jobs.
- [El Pais classifieds](#) - national newspaper, jobs section searchable by region and you can upload your CV.
- [La Razon classifieds](#) - national newspaper vacancy site with details of courses and employment advice.
- [La Vanguardia classifieds](#) - vacancy website for the Barcelona-based newspaper, you can upload your CV too..
- [Sur in English](#) - English language weekly for southern Spain, good for jobs in the expatriate community and short-term opportunities.
- Search for more newspapers in Spain at [Kidon Media-Link](#).

Other sources

- The [British Chamber of Commerce in Spain](#) publishes a list of British companies in Spain and the [Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain](#) publishes some Anglo-Spanish trade directories.
- The [Enterprise Europe Network](#) and [Quiero un buen trabajo](#) list resources and contacts for setting up small companies.
- [EURES - European Job Mobility Portal](#) hold an international jobs fair in Spain, the [Feria Internacional de Empleo Universitario](#).
- [AISEC UK](#) organise occasional careers fairs.

Hidden vacancies

Many vacancies are found by using contacts and networking. Contact any friends and family you have in Spain and tell them you are looking for work. Personal recommendations are extremely important.

Speculative applications to companies can be effective - use the resources listed under the Job market section. You should always contact the manager of the company or

department you would like to work for. Direct phone enquiries are not uncommon but make sure that your Spanish is up to it! Alternatively you can send a speculative letter or, if it is a smaller company, take your CV in person. For examples of speculative letters, visit [Quiero un buen trabajo](#). Always follow up a letter with a phone call or email.

Work experience

Work placements and internships

Two main types of work experience are available in Spain:

- work experience available to undergraduate students during their studies (*prácticas*);
- work experience or trainee contracts for recent graduates.

Details of work experience opportunities in Spain are available from:

- [Europlacement](#) - searchable database of internships in Spain in a variety of job sectors;
- [IAESTE \(The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience\)](#) - provides degree level students of science, engineering, technology and the applied arts with paid course-related technical training abroad;
- [iAgora](#) - database of international entry level jobs and internships;
- [Intern Abroad](#) - search for international internships;
- [Leonardo da Vinci Programme](#) - European grants to enable you to have work experience in any EU country, for a period of three months to one year.
- [Quiero un buen trabajo](#) - informative Spanish website with a searchable database to find work experience, volunteering opportunities and recruitment agencies.
- [studentjob.es](#) - lists jobs and internships for students and graduates.

You can try applying for a work placement with a British company in Spain. For contact details, see the Vacancy sources section.

A number of placement schemes include language courses:

- [Tandem Madrid](#) - Spanish courses with internships for students who speak languages;
- [European Training Services \(ETS\)](#) - work placement programmes in Gran Canarias and Seville combined with language studies;
- [AIP Language Institute](#) - internships in Valencian companies with Spanish language lessons.

Exchange programmes

If you are on an undergraduate or postgraduate course in the UK you may be able to study abroad, or do a work placement, as part of the [Erasmus](#) scheme. Consult your university Erasmus coordinator for further details.

Teaching schemes

If you are thinking of teaching English in Spain, try to get a TEFL qualification. Being a native English speaker may not be enough to secure a job. Training organisations with links in Spain such as [Oxford TEFL](#) are an option, or you could find a TEFL programme in Spain such as [TtMadrid](#). [Teach Abroad](#) is a useful resource for finding TEFL courses and teaching opportunities. Also, you can search the [Paginas Amarillas \(Spanish Yellow Pages\)](#) for 'Academias de Idiomas'.

Volunteering

For volunteering opportunities in Spain, try:

- [Concordia International Volunteers](#)
- [Hacesfalta](#) (in Spanish)
- [International Voluntary Service \(IVS\) in Britain](#)

Casual work

The use of temping agencies (ETTs) is widespread in Spain. They employ people to fill positions in different companies. These opportunities give you a chance to get valuable work experience, show companies what you can do and establish good contacts, provide you with references or even lead to an offer of full-time employment. For a list of ETTs, go to the Vacancy sources section.

Gap year opportunities

For gap year opportunities, visit:

- [Gap Year Directory](#) - portal to gap year websites.
- [Global Choices](#) - internships, teaching and seasonal opportunities.
- [Jobs Abroad Bulletin](#) - a variety of short-term opportunities.
- [Puromundo](#) - combining work and travel.

Postgraduate study

How does the higher education system work?

The Spanish higher education system was reformed in 2007 to fall in line with the Bologna Process and the rest of the [European Union \(EU\)](#) via the resulting [European Higher Education Area \(EHEA\)](#).

Undergraduate degrees (*grados*) may take three years (*diploma*) or five years (*licenciatura*). They are based both on theory and practice and a dissertation is required as part of the assessment.

The majority of Spanish universities are public, though some are private or religiously funded.

Courses are mostly taught in Spanish, though some may use other official regional languages (e.g. Catalan, Basque). A small number of Masters programmes are taught in English.

Full details of the higher education system are available from Universidad.es, the public foundation for the international promotion of Spanish universities.

What courses are available?

Options are largely similar to the UK with a choice of Masters courses or Doctorates.

- Masters (Máster): You need an approved first degree. The programme of study usually takes one to two years (60-120 credits) and may be research based or professional training. Assessment includes a dissertation and oral presentation.
- Doctorate (Doctorado): You need an approved first degree or equivalent (a minimum of 240 European credits or equivalent). A doctorate takes at least two years of research and you must complete a thesis and defend it in a viva. The approved thesis is published online in the database of theses on the Ministerio de Educacion, Cultura y Deporte.

Where can I study?

A full list of universities is available from Universidad.es and you can find university rankings at Webometrics.

You can find Masters courses at Buscador Colon, where you can search by the language of instruction, including English. For information on MBA programmes, visit Todo MBA.

There is an annual postgraduate study fair for Spanish universities. See Feria Internacional de Estudios de Postgrado.

Applying for postgraduate study

Students from European Union educational systems applying for postgraduate studies in Spain will face entry requirements equivalent to those in their own educational system. Contact the [UK National Europass Centre \(UK NEC\)](http://UK National Europass Centre (UK NEC)) to find out how qualifications will be recognised in Spain.

You should check with individual institutions about application deadlines. Courses usually start in September or October, but some begin in December. Applications are made direct to individual universities, either in person, by registered post, or sometimes online.

Application forms and procedures vary. For some postgraduate courses, you only need to provide your personal details, a CV and a certificate of your previous studies.

Fees and scholarships

According to Universidad.es, the cost per credit for Masters and doctoral degrees in 2011-2012 is set between €16.50 and €34.00 per credit. Therefore, a Masters course of 60 credits may cost anywhere between €995 and €1,920.

You may secure EU funding from the European Commission. Official scholarships are available from the [Agencia Espanola de Cooperacion Internacional para el Desarrollo \(AECID\)](http://Agencia Espanola de Cooperacion Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID)) (in Spanish).

Are there any exchange programmes?

Visit the [European Commission's education and training pages](#) for details of the range of European study programmes available to EU nationals. These include the [Erasmus](#) and [Erasmus Mundus](#) (advanced integrated courses by at least three universities from different European countries) exchange programmes.

Will my qualification be recognised in the UK?

Following the Bologna Process and the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), a Spanish postgraduate course is directly comparable to the UK equivalent. Full details on comparing international qualifications are available from the [UK NARIC \(National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom\)](#).

Visa and travel information

Visa requirements and applications

If you are an EU national, you will not require a visa or work permit, but if you intend to stay in Spain for more than three months, you must apply for a residence certificate (see below).

If you are from a non-EU country, you may need a visa and/or work permit, so check with your nearest Spanish embassy about regulations for entry to and working in Spain, see [Spanish Embassy UK](#) or [Embassies Worldwide](#).

Permanent residency

You must apply for a residence certificate if you intend to stay in Spain for more than three months. You must register in person by bringing your passport to the Foreigners Office or designated police station in the province you intend to live. You will then be given a certificate of registration including an NIE number (foreigner ID number). More detailed information is available from the [Ministerio del Interior](#).

Help in an emergency

The [British Embassy Spain](#) can provide various kinds of help for UK citizens in an emergency. The website lists the kinds of help available and tells you what to do if, for example, you are a victim of crime, need a doctor, or lose your passport.

The Emergency Services telephone number is 112.

Travel advice

Travel advice and a general checklist for travellers are available from the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\)](#).

Country overview

Geography

- **Full country name:** Kingdom of Spain.
- **Population:** 46.4 million (UN, 2011).
- **Border countries:** Portugal to the west and, France to the north-east. Spanish territory also includes the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean, and the Canary Islands in the Atlantic.
- **Climate:** the northern Atlantic coast has mild summers, relatively cold winters and large amounts of rainfall. Inland areas have a continental climate, and the Mediterranean coastal areas to the east and south are hotter in both summer and winter.
- **Terrain:** mainland Spain is generally made up of plateaux but has large mountainous regions such as Sierra Nevada and the Pyrenees.
- **Natural hazards:** droughts are common, occasional flooding and volcanic eruptions in the Canary Islands.

Living in Spain

- **Cost of living:** the cost of living is slightly lower than in the UK, though the gap is narrowing, and the average wage is considerably lower. Housing costs and utility bills are particularly high. The cost of eating and drinking out is relatively low, except in tourist areas.
- **Internet domain:** .es (or .cat in Catalonia).
- **Health:** Spain has a national health service with relatively high standard of health care, though the system is decentralised and standards vary. For details of how to access health care in Spain, go to [NHS: Healthcare abroad](#) and follow the country by country guide. You should obtain a [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#) before you go. No vaccinations are required.
- **Laws and customs:** under-18s are considered minors in Spain. Smoking is banned in indoor public places and outside hospitals, schools and play parks. There are also strict controls on drinking and sexual activity in public, including beaches. Drug possession is a serious criminal offence. If asked to identify yourself by the police, you are required to show your passport or identity card. Gay rights have improved drastically in recent years; gay marriage is recognised in law and same sex couples are allowed to adopt children.

Economy and finance

- **Currency:** Euro €.
- **Type of economy:** western capitalist.
- **Health of economy:** in 2008, Spain entered the recession and has suffered the highest unemployment in the euro zone. At the start of 2012, the newly-elected conservative government (Peoples' Party or Partido Popular) inherited high unemployment, large budget deficits and a shrinking economy, but have agreed to maintain the previous socialist government's target to cut its budget deficit to the EU limit of 3 percent by 2013. Extreme measures will be necessary, including imposing drastic austerity measures.
- **Unemployment rate:** 23% (BBC, March 2012).
- **Main exports:** machinery, motor vehicles, food, mineral fuels and oils, consumer goods.

Culture

- **People:** approximately 90% of the population are Spanish. Ethnic minority groups include: Moroccans, Romanians, Ecuadorians and Colombians. There are substantial ex-pat communities, notably British.
- **Major religion:** Christianity (Roman Catholicism).
- **History:** see [BBC Timeline: Spain](#).

Politics

- **Type of government:** parliamentary democracy.
- **Major political parties:** PP (Partido Popular), PSOE (Partido Socialista).

More information

- [British Embassy Spain](#)
- [BBC Country Profiles - Spain](#)
- [The World Factbook](#)
- [XE Universal Currency Converter](#)

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