

STAYING IN EUROPE

AS A **NON-EU** MASTER'S GRADUATE

Powered by Talent & Careers

ASPIRING TO WORK OVERSEAS..?

What to bear in mind when considering working in a country you are not from

- **Language Requirements:** The local language is usually required, at least at a conversational level.
 - **Company Policies:** Companies determine their own policies regarding international hiring, quotas, and whether they are open to sponsoring visas.
 - **Work Eligibility:** You are eligible to work full-time in the countries where you hold a passport or a valid work permit.
 - **Varied Permissions:** Being a citizen or holding a work permit does not grant the same rights in every country. Make sure to check the specifics for your situation.
 - **International Agreements:** Understand the relationships between your home country and the country you wish to work in, as there may be specific agreements (such as citizenship opportunities after long stays).
 - **Embassy Consultation:** If you are in Spain and looking to stay here, you will be able to modify your permit from within the country. However, if you are pursuing post-graduation opportunities outside your country of origin *and* outside of Spain, your next step should be to consult your embassy in the target country to explore all available options.
- 

STAYING IN SPAIN, BASICS FOR JOB SEARCH

If, after analyzing your **FIG strategy and priorities** (Function, Industry, or Geography), staying in Spain after graduation is your top priority, you will need to be adaptable and flexible in your approach.

Opening your scope is a must. You should be open to exploring opportunities in different sectors and functions which maybe were not your first option beforehand.

Analyze what your added value is. For instance, consider whether your language skills or uncommon technical abilities make you a stronger candidate.

Accept that your path may be more challenging compared to candidates who meet the required work permit criteria.

It is possible that you'll have a higher chance of receiving offers by applying for internships first, rather than a full-time position.

KEY MESSAGES YOU CAN GIVE TO RECRUITERS

- In your CV heading, state:
“Eligible to sign an internship agreement via IE Business School post-graduation” (refer to the IE Student Visa Status section for more details).
- Highlight your unique value in the professional summary of your CV. Emphasize what makes your profile stand out from others.
- Network with people working at the firm, and if possible, talk to the recruiting team before submitting your application.
- Be aware of other visa options you may be eligible for. Make it easy for the company to understand your options and what you need from them (see more information on visa options [here](#)).

Many companies will be pleased to know that you can intern through IE for six months while they decide whether to sponsor you. Ensure you perform exceptionally during this period so they are motivated to keep you on.

IE STUDENT VISA STATUS



You are probably in Spain right now, under a student stay permit that allows you to work up to 30 hours per week.

Upon graduation, you can extend your student status through our Job Market Immersion Program. This program allows you to intern for up to 900 working hours (approximately 5.5 months), ensuring that you remain legally in Spain during this period.

You can also sign an internship agreement outside of Spain through the same Job Market Immersion Program after graduation. However, you will need to manage the necessary permits to legally stay in that country on your own.

OTHER VISA OPTIONS

Download and review the [document](#) prepared by Student Services, which outlines the main options available to IE graduates.

If you have any doubts or need recommendations for specialized lawyers, reach out to student.services@ie.edu

STORIES FROM OUR ALUMNI



José Alejandro Barrios Anzola

Nationality: Colombian

Program Studied: Master in Finance

Year of Graduation: 2025

Current Company, Position, and Location

SSE Renewables, Investment and Financial Modeling Analyst, Madrid

What visa are you currently in Spain with/working with:

Profesional Altamente Cualificado (Highly Qualified Professional visa)

Why did you decide to stay in Spain?

I decided to stay in Spain because I saw a very strong fit with my professional goals. Spain is an attractive market for investments in energy, especially in renewables, infrastructure and the energy transition, which is the sector where I wanted to develop my career.

In addition, as a Colombian national, staying in Spain also made sense from an immigration perspective, as it gives me the possibility to apply for Spanish nationality after two years of legal and continuous residence.

Briefly, please share with us your journey to securing employment in Spain post-graduation as a non-European student:

My process started during the master. I joined Private Equity Fund through an internship, which I formalized while I was still studying. At that point, my priority was to enter the Spanish job market and gain local experience in the sector where I wanted to build my career.

During the internship, I gradually gained the trust of the partners and became more involved in investment strategy, fundraising, financial analysis and investment opportunities. The partners extended the internship for extra 6 months and before the second internship term ended, I had a very clear conversation with the company. I told them that, in order to continue with them, I would need a full-time indefinite contract and their support with the Highly Qualified Professional visa.

This visa was very important in my case. The main advantage is that the process is much faster than other alternatives, as the resolution can take up to around 20 business days. The downside is that the permit is linked to the company that sponsors it, so if you change companies, the new employer needs to support the process again.

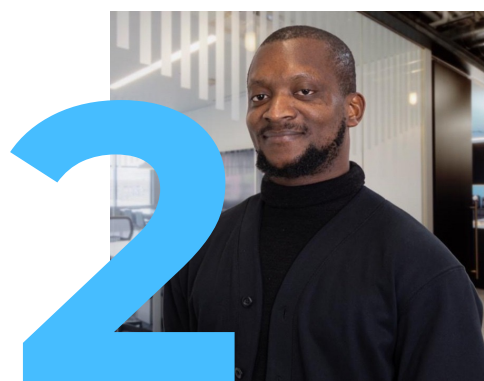
After that, I moved to SSE Renewables, where the company also supported me with the same visa process. My experience has been positive in both cases. I realized that companies can be more open to supporting this process than I initially expected, especially when they see a strong fit between your profile and the role.

Any tips you'd like to share with those students facing this situation now? Anything you would have liked to know at the time?

My main advice would be to define your objective very clearly. You need to understand why you want to stay in Spain, which sector you want to enter, and what type of opportunity can bring you closer to that goal. Once that is clear, it becomes much clearer to make strategic decisions, even if the first step is not necessarily the perfect job.

I would also recommend being flexible and thinking beyond the most obvious path. Sometimes the best opportunity does not come through the standard route. Entering the Spanish job market, even first through an internship or a smaller company, can open many doors later. Once you are already in the market and have local experience, moving becomes much easier.

Something I would have liked to know earlier is that the Highly Qualified Professional visa exists and that it can be a very practical route. I initially thought the immigration process would be much more complex, or that companies would not be willing to support it, but my experience was different. If there is a good professional fit, it is worth discussing it clearly with the company.



Israel Zowolu Kollie

Nationality: Liberian

Program Studied: Master in Computer Science & Business Technology

Year of Graduation: 2025

Current Company, Position, and Location

T-Systems Iberia - Software Engineer, Spain

What visa are you currently in Spain with/working with:

Tarjeta Azul UE Trabajo Y Residencia Inicial Profesionales Alta Cualificados

Why did you decide to stay in Spain?

I stayed because of the offer and I think it was a great choice, because I am growing professionally with a global company.

Briefly, please share with us your journey to securing employment in Spain post-graduation as a non-European student:

My journey was challenging and required persistence. I submitted numerous applications and faced several rejections before securing an internship with Ryanair through the program management track. This experience significantly strengthened my resume and prepared me for future opportunities. While on the internship, I interviewed with T-Systems and received a full-time offer before graduation. I began my job search as early as my first semester, consistently using the career portal and working with career advisors to refine my CV and approach.

Any tips you'd like to share with those students facing this situation now? Anything you would have liked to know at the time?

I would say they should remain persistent in their job search.



Mateo Padilla

Nationality: Ecuador / Costa Rica

Program Studied: Master in Strategic Marketing and Communication

Year of Graduation: 2025

Current Company, Position, and Location

TikTok, Account Manager - Beauty Category - TikTok Shop, Madrid

What visa are you currently in Spain with/working with:

I'm currently working under a Highly Qualified Professional contract (work visa), but until I was able to get it, I worked under the model of a 3-month internship (30 hours a week).

Why did you decide to stay in Spain?

I decided to stay in Spain because I wanted to pursue my professional development in the European market, in the Tech or the Entertainment industry (and I ended up in both at the same time!). And well, Spain is beautiful and Madrid is thriving right now so that was a great plus.

Briefly, please share with us your journey to securing employment in Spain post-graduation as a non-European student:

So, there are many ways to proceed when you want to elongate your stay in Spain. I decided to extend my student status by enrolling in another Master's program outside of IE, and with classes at night so I could start working at any time. That bought me some time to apply to jobs during the Fall job postings wave. I made a lot of applications. 245 to be exact. By January, I was already working at TikTok under an internship agreement with my other university and, after 3 months, they (TikTok) decided to sponsor my work visa.

Any tips you'd like to share with those students facing this situation now? Anything you would have liked to know at the time?

Know the law. Get legal advice and be super clear on what you can and cannot do. You are legal and Spain grants you the right to look for a job and to work. Even when the law protects you, you will receive questionings from HR departments and even from Spanish public employees. At the first sign of you doubting your legal right to work they can back out. Don't let them, be certain of your rights and walk them through if needed.



CONTACT US

Talent & Careers

careers@ie.edu

Student Services

student.services@ie.edu

International Info Sessions

Check out more info and register for our Regional Insight and Market Update Sessions [here](#).