Work permits and residence for teachers coming to Poland

To teach at IAS you need two things: the right to stay in Poland and the right to work here. Which papers that means depends on your passport and your post. This guide sets out the usual routes and the order to do things in.

> **Please read this first**
> This is a general guide, written as a suggestion to help you plan. Immigration rules, fees and procedures change, sometimes at short notice, and every case is different. Nothing here is legal advice, and it does not commit the school to any step, timing or outcome. Always check the official sources at the end, or ask an immigration adviser, before you act.

Start with your passport

Citizens of the EU, EEA or Switzerland

You do not need a work permit. You can start work as soon as your contract begins.

If you stay longer than three months, register your stay with the voivode, the central government's office for the region. For Warsaw that is the Mazowiecki Voivode Office. Go in person, no later than the day after three months from your date of entry. Bring your passport or ID card, four photos and your employment contract or a statement from the school.

You will also want a PESEL number (see the residence permit section). A family member who is not an EU citizen applies for a residence card for a family member of an EU citizen.

Everyone else, including UK and US citizens

You need permission to work and a legal basis for your stay. A visit does not give you the right to work, whether you came with a visa or without one.

For most teachers the order is:

1. Ask the school which of the three routes below is likely to fit your post.
2. You get a national visa, type D, from a Polish consulate.
3. Once in Poland, you apply online for a temporary residence and work permit, and later collect a residence card, the *karta pobytu*.

The right to work: three routes

1. The teacher exemption

Since 1 December 2025 a regulation from the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (Dz.U. 2025 poz. 1620) lets a foreigner who is legally entitled to stay in Poland work without a work permit if they teach a foreign language, or teach a subject in a foreign language, at a school covered by Polish education law. Whether it applies depends on the post and on how the school is registered, so ask us before you rely on it. You still need the visa and the residence permit described below.

2. A type A work permit

If the exemption does not apply, the school applies for a work permit for you. The permit is issued by the voivode, for one named employer and one named job. Since 1 June 2025 employers file these applications online only, through praca.gov.pl, under the new act on employing foreigners. The old labour market test, which asked the labour office to confirm that no local candidate was available, was dropped by the same act. The employer files this application, not you. The consulate will ask to see the permit.

3. The EU Blue Card

A residence permit for jobs that need higher qualifications, usually a degree, and pay a high salary. The contract must pay at least 150% of the previous year's average gross wage in Poland. For applications filed in 2026 that works out at about PLN 13,355 gross a month, based on the 2025 average of PLN 8,903.56 published by Statistics Poland (GUS). The figure changes every

year. Ask us if your offer might qualify.

The visa: before you travel

Apply for a national visa (type D) at the Polish consulate that covers the place where you live, booking the appointment through e-Konsulat, and expect to hand in your passport, a photo and the printed application form along with the document for your route: the work permit, or a signed letter of employment from the school. Consulates in the United States say a decision is normally made within 15 working days, and that a type D visa is valid for up to one year. Apply early. Do not book flights on the assumption that it will be faster.

The residence permit: once you are in Poland

From 27 April 2026 applications for a temporary residence permit are filed online only, through the MOS portal (Moduł Obsługi Spraw). A paper application, or one sent by email, is left unexamined. File before your visa or other legal stay runs out. Logging in to MOS needs a Profil Zaufany (the Polish trusted profile), and that in turn needs a PESEL number. So the order matters.

1. **Get a PESEL number.** It is assigned automatically when you register your address for more than 30 days (see the renting guide). If you cannot register yet, apply at any city office (*urząd gminy*). Non-EU citizens apply in person. No fee.
2. **Set up a Profil Zaufany and an e-Doręczenia mailbox.** The Warsaw office sends summons and letters about your case there.
3. **Fill in the application in MOS.** Attach a digital photo (684 × 883 pixels, taken in the last six months), scans of every page of your passport, proof that you paid the stamp duty and proof that you paid PLN 100 for the residence card. The stamp duty depends on the type of permit; the Mazowiecki office lists amounts such as PLN 340, 440 and 640.
4. **Give your employer's email address.** MOS sends the employer a link to Annex 1, the employer's part, to complete and sign. You get an email when it is done.
5. **Sign with your Profil Zaufany and send.** Download the UPO, the official receipt, and keep it. No UPO means the application was not filed.

After you file

The Warsaw office emails you a case number and then a certificate stating that your stay is legal until the case ends with a final decision, a certificate that now replaces the old stamp in the passport. You will be called in person to show your passport, give fingerprints and sign. Further documents go through e-Doręczenia. A paper original has to be sent as a scan certified by a notary or a lawyer. You can follow the case in the inPOL portal. When the permit is granted, the office tells you when to collect your residence card.

Two cautions. If you entered Poland on certain visas, such as a tourist Schengen visa, the office will not open a case for this permit. And a pending application keeps your stay legal but does not, on its own, give you the right to start a new job. If you already work at IAS legally and apply in time to continue in the same post, you can usually keep working while you wait. Check your case with us before your current permission ends.

A permit for work is tied to the job written in it. If your post, salary, hours or type of contract change, tell us first: some changes need an application to amend the permit.

Documents to start gathering now

- **Passport.** Valid well past the end of your contract, with scans of every page.
- **Degree and teaching qualifications.** Schools in Poland have their own rules on teacher qualifications, so we will tell you exactly which documents we need for your post, and whether any need an apostille or legalisation.
- **Criminal record certificates.** Polish law requires anyone who works with children to provide a criminal record extract from their country of citizenship, and from every country they have lived in during the last 20 years, issued for work with children where that country offers one. If a country keeps no such register, you sign a statement for the employer instead. Some countries take weeks. Request them early.
- **Sworn translations.** Documents in another language that you submit in the residence case need a Polish translation by a sworn translator, a *tłumacz przysięgły*. The Ministry of Justice publishes the list of sworn translators.
- **Photos.** 35 × 45 mm on paper, and a digital file for MOS.

How long it takes

The visa is usually the quick part. The residence permit is not. Waits in Warsaw run to many months. In June 2026 a question in the Sejm described a Warsaw case still open after a year and a half, and the office itself pointed to staff shortages and a rising caseload. Plan for a long wait. Answer every letter in e-Doręczenia quickly, and tell the office if your address or job changes, so the case does not stall.

Bringing your family

A spouse or child who is not an EU citizen needs their own permission to stay. The usual route is a temporary residence permit to join a family member. Most residence applications now go through MOS, but this one is still filed on paper while the family member is outside Poland. Start the conversation with us early if your family is coming with you, because their timing depends on yours.

How IAS helps

The school can help with the paperwork for the work visa and with local formalities. Every case is different, so ask us what support is available for yours.

Where to check

Work permits, employer applications	praca.gov.pl
Residence permit applications (MOS)	mos.cudzoziemcy.gov.pl
Mazowiecki Voivode Office, Foreigners Department (Warsaw)	migrant.wsc.mazowieckie.pl
Office for Foreigners (UDSC)	gov.pl/web/udsc
Visa appointments at Polish consulates	secure.e-konsulat.gov.pl
PESEL for foreigners	gov.pl/web/gov/uzyskaj-numer-pesel--usluga-dla-cudzoziemcow-en
EU citizens: registering your stay	gov.pl/web/mswia/rejestracja-pobytu
Teacher exemption (Dz.U. 2025 poz. 1620)	dziennikustaw.gov.pl/DU/2025/1620
Criminal record checks for work with children	gov.pl/web/krajowy-rejestr-karny
Sworn translators (Ministry of Justice list)	bip.ms.gov.pl, tłumacze przysięgli

Questions about your case employment@ias.edu.pl +48 22 649 14 40 Office: Monday to Friday, 08:00 to 16:00

Last checked against the official sources above in October 2026. This guide is general information, offered as a suggestion, and is subject to change. It is not legal advice. International American School of Warsaw, ul. Dembego 18, 02-796 Warszawa.