Portugal

Are you a non-EU citizen wishing to work as a highly-skilled employee in Portugal? You can find information below on the conditions to fulfil and procedures to follow, as well as the rights you can enjoy during your stay.

Tabbed content

Conditions

To enter Portugal as a highly-qualified worker for a period of less than six months, you must have a valid temporary stay visa. You may apply for an extension of the stay, for up to one year. This may be extended, once, for the same period of time.

For longer periods, you must obtain a residence visa. The residence visa does not automatically grant you a right of residence. Once in Portugal, you must apply for a residence permit.

Procedures

Temporary stay visa

A temporary stay visa allows you to work as a highly-qualified worker for a period of less than 12 months.

Where to apply

The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for approving the granting of visas to highly-qualified workers whenever questions arise in relation to the classification of the activity requiring highly-qualified work.

You must possess an adequate consignment, a work contract, a written proposal or a contract for services supply.

Documents required

You must prove sufficient means of subsistence, travel insurance and a return ticket.

You must not have been the subject of an order to leave Portugal or an entry ban, nor of an alert under the Schengen Information System or on the SEF’s Integrated Information System for the purpose of refusing entry.
The visa is generally valid for three months and for multiple entries to Portugal.

In certain exceptional and duly justified cases, your visa can be valid for the duration of a contract that is more than three months. You may apply for an extension of the stay, for up to one year. This may be extended, once, for the same period of time.

**Residence visa for exercising an employment activity as a highly-qualified worker**

For long-term employment, you must obtain a residence visa. A residence visa does not automatically grant you a right of residence but allows you to enter Portugal for the purpose of applying for a residence permit, if the requirements are met.

The General Secretariat of the Ministry of Education and Science (SGMEC) is responsible for approving the granting of visas to highly-qualified workers whenever questions arise in relation to the classification of the activity requiring highly-qualified work.

You must prove that you have an adequate consignment, a work contract, a written proposal or a contract for services supply.

The residence visa will be refused if you have been the subject of an order to leave Portugal and you are applying while the period of prohibition to enter is still running or if you are listed in the Schengen Information System or in the SEF’s Integrated Information System has been issued.

The residence visa allows you to stay in Portugal for four months so that you can submit an application for a residence permit at the SEF. [5]

**Temporary residence permit**

A temporary residence permit is an official document issued by the SEF [5] which allows you to live in Portugal for a specific period of time. You must submit the application to the SEF of your area of residence [8].

You must have a work contract or a contract for services that includes either teaching at a higher education institution or developing a highly-qualified activity.

You must:
• have sufficient means of subsistence;
• have accommodation;
• be registered with the social security office;
• have no previous conviction for a criminal offence which in Portugal is punishable by a prison sentence of more than one year.

There must be no fact in existence that would have prevented the grant of the visa, if it had been known by the authorities before the visa was issued.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration of validity of permit</th>
<th>As a general rule, a temporary residence permit is valid for one year, renewable for successive periods of two years. The residence permit will be refused if you have been the subject of an order to leave and you are applying while the prohibition period is still running or if you are listed in the Schengen Information System or in the SEF's Integrated Information System. It may also be refused for reasons related to public order, public safety or public health.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refusal</td>
<td>The residence visa is cancelled if the application for a residence permit is refused. If your application for a residence permit is refused, you may challenge the decision before the administrative court. You will be notified of the refusal decision as well as the reasons for the decision, the right to appeal and the deadline for making an appeal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appeals</td>
<td>More on working in Portugal [9]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rights</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Change of status</td>
<td>If you hold a temporary residence permit for exercising a professional activity, you may be authorised to perform a self-employed activity provided you obtain the necessary permission from the relevant Portuguese authorities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>If you lose your job, you will need to prove sufficient means of subsistence in order to renew your residence permit.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Two types of permanent status can be obtained in Portugal - a national permanent residence permit or an EC long-term residence permit:

**Permanent residence permit**

The national permanent residence status can be obtained at the SEF [8] of your area of residence after at least five years of legal temporary residence, if during this period you have not been convicted of a prison sentence exceeding one year.

You must prove that you have basic knowledge of Portuguese, sufficient means of subsistence and accommodation.

The national permanent residence permit must be renewed every five years. The status is valid for an unlimited period of time.

**Long-term residence permit**

The EC long-term residence status can be granted by the SEF [8] of your area of residence after five years of continuous and legal residence. In order to obtain this status you must prove that you have:

- sufficient and stable financial resources to support yourself and your family members, without recourse to the social assistance system;
- adequate accommodation;
- health insurance coverage; and
- fluent knowledge of Portuguese.

The long-term resident status gives the same rights as Portuguese nationals in terms of:

- access to professional work;
- access to the employment and work conditions established by law;
- access to education and vocational training;
- recognition of diplomas, certificates and qualifications;
- access to social security, social welfare and social protection services;
- tax exemptions or reductions;
- access to health care;
- free access to all Portuguese territory.

The EC long-term residence permit is valid for five years and is automatically renewed upon application.

An application may be refused on grounds of public order, public security and the risk that may result from that person remaining on the Portuguese territory.

All decisions may be appealed before the administrative courts.

More on long-term residence [9]
Portuguese embassies and consulates abroad

Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security (MSESS)

Ministry of Justice (MJ)

Ministry of Education and Science (MEC)

Minister for Economy (ME)

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Links