

# WORKING IN PORTUGAL – A QUICK GUIDE<sup>1</sup>

Dealing with paperwork in Portugal, like many other countries, can sometimes be a Kafkaesque experience. Thus, we have gathered in this document some general information and tips to get you oriented. Although we try to keep the information up to date and accurate, it does not rule out the need to check the official documentation.

## 1) COMING TO PORTUGAL

### A) EU citizens

#### A.1) Arriving

In order to enter Portuguese territory, European Union (EU) citizens are only required to be in possession of a valid identification card (such as identity card or passport).

#### A.2) Staying

If the stay does not exceed 3 months, EU citizens are only required to hold a valid identity card or passport.

EU citizens that intend to stay in Portugal for more than 3 months (i.e., work or study here), must apply for a registration certificate within 30 days following their first 3 months in national territory. The cost of this certificate is EUR 15 for adults, and it is valid for up to 5 years.

The registration certificate is issued by SEF<sup>2</sup>, and you might need:

1. If you are coming as a worker (e.g., a researcher):

<sup>1</sup> Last updated on 15 January 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Note that by the decree law No. 43/2021, SEF is going to be replaced by a new agency called SEA, sometime in 2022.

- a. A valid Identity Card / Passport;
  - b. A written Affidavit declaring that you have a Professional activity as a worker or as self-employed in Portugal; or an Affidavit, declaring that you have sufficient funds for you and for your family, and that you are covered by health insurance (when the same applies to Portuguese citizens in your country of origin).
2. If you are coming as a student:
- a. A valid Identity Card / Passport;
  - b. An Affidavit declaring that: i) you are enrolled at the university (by means of an Affidavit or by other means of proof of your choice), ii) that you hold sufficient funds to support yourself and your family, iii) that you are covered by health insurance (when the same applies to Portuguese citizens in your country of origin).

### A.3) Official information and legislation:

- [General information for prospective new residents](#)
- [Legislation on residency](#)

## **B) Non-EU citizens**

### B.1) Arriving

Coming to Portugal as a citizen of a country outside the EU (non-EU), might be a little trickier and, thus, we advise you to start preparing for at least 2 months in advance.

[Some non-EU countries](#) have agreements that allow their citizens to enter European territory without needing a VISA (the same applies for non-EU citizens that already have a residence permit issued from another EU country). As such, it is common for people in those situations to come to Portugal first, start working, and then apply for a residence permit while here. While that might be possible,

depending on the situation some complications might arise and, thus, we advise you to inquire for the necessity of a study/work VISA for your case.

## B.2) Staying

If you do get a study/work VISA before coming, you will get automatically booked for a SEF appointment in order to get your residence permit, which will have to be renewed every year (or every two years, for researchers). If you are not automatically booked for an appointment, you will have to do it yourself by calling one of the [telephone lines](#) or by [booking online](#), if the option is available to you (see section 2.5 for more on how to communicate with SEF).

The complete list of the documents required for the residence permit application can be found on the links below:

1. [for students](#);
2. [for researchers](#).

## B.3) Official information and legislation:

- [General information for prospective new residents](#);
- [Legal framework](#).

## 2) NAVIGATING THROUGH BUEROCRACY

Whether you are coming as EU citizen or a non-EU citizen, you might be asked to present a set of documents, either for your SEF application or to other institutions (like banks or even the University). Here we present a list of these “key” documents, and how to obtain them, as well as some tips on how to deal with certain institutions.

**2.1) Degree and Diploma Recognition**. This is usually required for a scholarship/grant application, and it must be issued by a Portuguese university. It costs a minimum of EUR 27,30, and after you submit all of the required documents the process can take up to 30 days for diplomas subject to an [automatic recognition](#) (most EU diplomas), and a maximum of 90 days for other diplomas. The cost for the automatic recognition is EUR 27,30, whilst for other diplomas it might depend on the institution that is granting the recognition. In this [link](#) you can check which conditions might apply to you. Note that the institution that grants the recognition does not have to be the University of Aveiro. A complete list of the necessary steps to obtain this document can be found [here](#).

The recognition bureaus are sometimes quite picky, and foreign Diplomas that do not explicitly state the degree being awarded in conventional terms can sometimes be misinterpreted (i.e., diplomas that do not include buzzwords such as “PhD” or “doctorate”). Thus, we advise you to be aware about this when requesting a translation of your documents.

In addition, it can be required that the diplomas that you supply include grades in a numerical scale, and that the minimum requirements for obtaining the degree (passing grades) are stated explicitly. This is known to be an issue for degrees obtained at some Brazilian universities, where the final grade is solely given in terms of a letter.

**2.2) NIF**. It stands for tax identification number, and it is required in order to create a bank account and many other essential paperwork. You can get one by going to an Autoridade Tributária e Aduaneira (AT) office, and it is free.

AT offices can usually be found at Loja do Cidadão, a place that gathers many essential public bureaus. You will only need to present your passport with VISA and a proof of where you are currently living. Non-EU citizens might need to be accompanied by a citizen that already possess a NIF number.

### **2.3) Proof of accommodation (atestado da Junta de Freguesia).**

If you do not have a formal contract from the place where you are being accommodated, you will be required to present a document from your [Junta de Freguesia](#) (JF), in order to have a proof of your current address.

First you need to know in what JF you are currently living in. You can get this information by, for instance, inserting your address into this [search engine](#). Then you will need to go to the office of your JF, and ask for a proof of accommodation (the contact information of all JF of Aveiro can be found [here](#)). Depending on the rules of your JF, you might be asked to be accompanied by two residents or, instead, to present a couple of signatures (usually two), from any local business of the same area.

**2.4) [SNS user number](#).** With this number you can get access to the Portuguese National Health System, and it will be required for your residence permit application. It is free, and you can get it by going to any health centre nearby. You might be asked to present your passport, NIF number and a proof that you have booked an appointment with SEF.

**2.5) [Interacting with SEF](#)**<sup>3</sup>. Most SEF bureaus only accept pre-booked appointments. This can be done by phone, or via the online system (if this option is available to you). The tricky part is that calling to SEF can be, sometimes a very frustrating endeavour. This

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<sup>3</sup> Dealing with SEF has been the main source of frustration for newcomers, something that was aggravated with the Pandemic. But we are aware that there are institutional changes on course, and it is likely that you are not going to have to deal with the same problems.

institution is currently facing some hurdles, due to high service demand and also because of ongoing internal reforms and reorganization.

Contact via e-mail is possible, but only for general inquiries, and not for booking purposes. If you are in need of urgent information, you can still try to go to one of the SEF bureaus and wait for the very brief moments in between the booked appointments, to try to have a word with one of the attendants.

### **3) SETTLING DOWN**

**3.1) Finding a room/apartment.** You can get accommodation through the [University of Aveiro resources](#), or by renting a room/apartment by your own. Through the university you can get a room in one of the [student residences](#). These residences have the advantage of being located near the campus, and they have a very multicultural environment.

The University also provides a [list](#) of private housing options (usually rooms in shared apartments), that do not exceed EUR 250 for rooms without private bathroom, and EUR 300 for rooms with a private bathroom.

The university's list is, unfortunately, very limited. The most common way of finding a room is by visiting classified websites such as [OLX](#) and [Bquarto](#). Another popular way of finding a room is through social media [groups](#).

**3.2) Opening a bank account.** The conditions will depend on the bank where you intend to open an account, but you will certainly need, besides your identification documents, a NIF number and a proof of your incomes (a scholarship/grant contract will do).

Note that the University of Aveiro has partner bank, which is [Caixa Geral de Depósitos \(CGD\)](#). As such, you will be offered the

opportunity to open an account there as you ask for you student card, but you are not obliged to accept.

**3.3) Access to public health.** Once you get a SNS number (see section 2.4), you will get access to access to the National Health System just like any national citizen. If you intend to stay for a long period of time, it might be useful to apply for a [family doctor](#), so that you get a more personalized treatment, but the waiting list for this can be huge.

The University of Aveiro has a [health center on campus](#), and many [protocols](#) with different private health services that might be useful.

#### 4) OTHER RESOURCES

- [University of Aveiro international students' guide](#);
- [Gr@v guide for prospective students](#);
- [Official immigrant information portal](#).

#### 5) FEEDBACK

If you have any suggestions on how to improve this document or if you have noticed any incorrect/outdated information, please send an email to:

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