

CESPU Welcome Guide for Foreign Students

Arriving in a new country to live and study is always a challenge, so here is some information that you may find useful.

Certificate of Residence

- **Citizen of the European Union:** You do not need a student visa to study in Portugal, however, since your stay will exceed 90 days (3 months), you must apply for an "EU Citizen Registration Certificate - CRCUE", from the competent government body in the area of the Institution (*Câmara Municipal* or *Junta de Freguesia*). For this application, you must bring your valid ID card or passport, as well as a valid European Health Card. They will deliver your Registration Certificate within 4 months.
- **Non-European citizen:** 3 months before your trip to Portugal, you must apply for a student visa in your home country. For your visa to be approved you will need to submit a Letter of Admission from CESPU. The visa lasts for the duration of the study cycle, the course in which you are placed, or for 1 year.

Tax Identification Number (NIF)

- **Citizen of the European Union:** In order to be assigned a NIF (Tax Identification Number; which, in addition to being a number used by the taxpayer to declare his/her income each year, is also required to open a bank account, buy or rent a house, subscribe to a television, telephone or internet service and sign an employment contract), you must go to the service counters of the *Autoridade Tributária* or *Loja do Cidadão*. The process of being issued a NIF is simple, fast and free of charge. You will only need two things: your passport or ID card and proof of address from your home country (this could be a utility bill, water bill or internet bill, for example). Since you are going to reside in Portugal longer than three months, you will have to request the European Union Citizen Registration Certificate, as explained above, and after having this Certificate you must present it at a service counter of the *Autoridade Tributária* or *Loja do Cidadão*.
- **Non-European citizen:** In order to be assigned a NIF (Tax Identification Number; which, in addition to being a number used by the taxpayer to declare his/her income each year, is also required to open a bank account, buy or rent a house, subscribe to a television, telephone or internet service and sign an employment contract), you must go to the service counters of the *Autoridade Tributária* or *Loja do Cidadão*. The process of being issued a NIF is simple, fast and free of charge. In order to be assigned a NIF, you will need an entry stamp in Portugal, a valid passport with a visa, proof of address from your country of origin, a fiscal representative and a document proving that the fiscal representative has agreed to perform the function. The **fiscal representative** is the link between the Tax Authority and the non-EU citizen. Therefore, it has to be someone with permanent residence in Portugal, even

if they are not Portuguese. The fiscal representative must present: his/her Citizen Card or Permanent Residence Card; his/her NIF and confirm their address in Portugal. Your NIF is assigned at the time of application, and the address will be linked to that of your tax representative.

How to open a bank account

This process is the same for European Union citizens and non-citizens; before opening an account at the bank of your choice, you will have to submit documentation to give the banking institution more information about you, namely: Personal Identification Document (if you are a citizen of the European Union, you can present your passport or Citizen Card, as long as the document is valid); Tax Identification Number (NIF) of your country of residence and that of Portugal (if you only have the provisional NIF, that is fine) and respective proof; proof of your address (lease contract with proof that it is registered with *Finanças*, an electricity, water or gas bill).

Driving a vehicle with foreign registration

Counting the total period of stay of a car with foreign registration in Portugal, which can be a consecutive or non-consecutive period, it cannot be in Portugal more than 180 days (6 months) of each year (12 months).

You should also contact your insurance company to find out if the insurance you have is also valid in Portugal so that you can take advantage of all the coverage you have contracted.

You will also need a permit (*guia de circulação*) for the vehicle to drive on the road issued by the Tax and Customs Authority (*Autoridade Tributária e Aduaneira*). To get this permit, you have to:

- Fill out the template on Vehicle Tax Claims – ISV (Mod_1460_1; [this form](#)) from the Tax and Customs Authority, (request 2 and 2.1, Article 34);
- Attach the school registration declaration;
- Deliver the documents to a branch of the Tax and Customs Authority (*Alfândega de Braga* for students in Vila Nova de Famalicão; *Alfândega do Freixo* for students in Gandra and Penafiel).

Portuguese Courses

The first contact with the Portuguese language can be a bit daunting, since Portuguese is a difficult language to master and is also considered one of the most difficult languages to learn in the world.

But don't be discouraged, there are several courses (with teaching modalities adapted to your needs) available and the average time foreign language speakers take to learn Portuguese is approximately 24 weeks, for a total of about 600 to 750 hours of lessons.

- **Schools with face-to-face teaching in Porto:** Alliance Française; Cambridge School; InLíngua; University of Porto.
- **Schools with distance learning:** Lusa Language School; Portuguese Connection School; My Language Exchange.

Health

In order to access the National Health Service - SNS (public service provided by the Portuguese State, ensuring access to health services for most of the Portuguese population, offering primary and specialized health care), you need to have a user number (*número de utente*).

- **Citizens of the European Union; European Economic Area and Switzerland:** before you travel to Portugal, you must apply for the S1 document in your country of residence. This document allows you to benefit from healthcare in Portugal, even if you are covered by your country's healthcare system. You must submit this document to the District Social Security Center (CDSS) in your area of residence in Portugal. Once the copy of the document has been returned to you, you will have to go to the health center that they indicate to you to ask for the user number so that you can access the SNS. In order to be assigned a user number, you must present your valid EU Citizen Registration Certificate or Residence Card; Valid identification document; Proof of address (if it is not in the EU CRC document); NIF; Social Security Number (NISS) (optional). You can also apply for a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) from the social security office in your home country. This card only ensures your access to public healthcare (health centers, hospitals) and does not cover private healthcare.
- **Brazilians:** if you are a legal resident in Portugal and over 18, you can apply for the Equal Rights and Duties Statute to access the SNS.
- **Non-European citizen:** if you have a residence permit in Portugal issued by the Foreigners and Borders Service (AIMA), you must present this document at the health center in your area of residence in order to register with the SNS (please note that your registration, and consequent obtaining of the SNS user number, does not require the presentation of proof that you are registered with the Portuguese Social Security).