

# FAQs for non-national students enrolled at the PhD in Informatics Engineering, University of Coimbra

Version 1 (2024)

## Introduction

This document gives answers to several frequently asked questions that arise to a non-national PhD student at the University of Coimbra. However, it is important to note that it does not serve as a substitute the official information provided by the University of Coimbra and governmental websites.

A variety of official information is available at the official website of the University of Coimbra: <https://www.uc.pt/international-applicants>.

A comprehensive welcome guide, with detailed steps and instructions, can be accessed in the following link:

[https://www.uc.pt/international-applicants/welcome-guide/WelcomeGuideUC\\_web.pdf](https://www.uc.pt/international-applicants/welcome-guide/WelcomeGuideUC_web.pdf).

Some information regarding the enrollment and registration can be found in the following link:

<https://www.uc.pt/en/academicos/inscricoes/PIAs>.

Information about how to apply for recognition of foreign degrees and diplomas of higher education can be accessed in the following link: <https://eportugal.gov.pt/en/servicos/pedir-o-reconhecimento-de-graus-academicos-e-diplomas-de-ensino-superior-estrangeiros>

General information about documents attestation, including educational documents, in Portugal, can be accessed in the following link: <https://pecattestation.com/portugal-attestation>

If you find any mistake and/or outdated information, please, inform us by writing an e-mail to the Coordination team of the PhD in Informatics Engineering ([coord-phd@dei.uc.pt](mailto:coord-phd@dei.uc.pt)).

### **FAQ1: Do I need degrees and transcript attestation? And how can attest my documents?**

Both master's and bachelor's degrees, as well as doctorate's for those seeking to apply for a post-doctoral position, require attestation. It is essential to provide **attested degrees and transcripts**, along with **the grading scale** if not explicitly stated on your transcript.

To attest your documents to be used in Portugal, you typically need to follow a process called **document legalization or authentication**. The exact steps may vary depending on the type of document and the country where your document was issued. The following list gives you a general guide on how to attest documents in Portugal:

1. **Translation:** If your documents are not written in Portuguese, you may need to have them translated by a certified translator. The translation should be attached to the original document, and both the original and translated versions may need to be legalized.
2. **Notarization:** Start by getting your documents notarized by a recognized public notary in the country where they were issued. The notary will verify the authenticity of the documents and your signature.
3. **Authentication by Competent Authority:** After notarization, you may need to have the documents authenticated by the competent authority in your country. This could be a government department or agency responsible for certifying the validity of your documents. In some cases, this may be the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** or **Higher Education Commission**. Two common options are:
  - o **Apostille:** If your country is a member of the Hague Apostille Convention (see <https://www.hcch.net/en/instruments/conventions/specialised-sections/apostille>), you can obtain an Apostille for your documents. The Apostille is a simplified form of authentication that is internationally recognized. It is usually issued by the designated authority in your country. Check if your country is a member of the Hague Apostille Convention, and if it is, obtain an Apostille for your documents.
  - o **Consular Legalization:** If your country is not a member of the Hague Apostille Convention, or if the document requires additional steps, you may need to have the documents legalized by the Portuguese consulate or embassy in your country. Contact the nearest Portuguese consulate or embassy to inquire about their specific requirements and procedures for document legalization.

### **FAQ2: Do I need degrees recognition and grade conversion? What is the process?**

There are two main funding opportunities for students enrolled in our Doctoral Program: Research Scholarships for PhD, at the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), Portugal (see previous edition in <https://www.fct.pt/en/concursos/concurso-bolsas-de-doutoramento-2023-linha-de-candidatura-geral> ) and grants within research projects at CISUC (See list of ongoing projects in <https://www.cisuc.uc.pt/en/projects> and list of available scholarships at UC in <https://apply.uc.pt/explore/scholarships>). For project grants, providing the recognition of your master's degree (or the PhD degree for post-doctoral applications) is sufficient.

However, if you are willing to apply for an FCT grant, it is necessary to provide the recognition of your bachelor's degree as well. The process involves the following steps:

1. Request a syllabus of your degree on the university's official letterhead (from the country of issuance), endorsed by the dean or a higher authority within the department, with each page having their signature. The document should include a summary of the courses on the first page, followed by each subsequent page dedicated to a detailed syllabus for each course you have completed.
2. Choose the degree that is closest to yours by visiting this link: <https://apps.uc.pt/courses/en/index?q=&ou=&type=PRIMEIRO>
3. Apply for specific recognition (automatic recognition of some Brazilian degrees can be obtained, check at the Academic Management Services at UC) **AND** grade conversion through DGES by filling out the form at <https://www.dges.gov.pt/recon/formulario> . For more information, visit <https://www.dges.gov.pt/en/pagina/degree-and-diploma-recognition?plid=1536>.

### **FAQ3: where can I find a supervisor?**

The Centre for Informatics and Systems of the University of Coimbra (CISUC) is a research center within the Department of Informatics Engineering and consists of 6 specialized research groups:

- 1- Cognitive and Media Systems (CMS)
- 2- Adaptive Computation (AC)
- 3- Software and System Engineering (SSE)
- 4- Communications and Telematics (LCT)
- 5- Information Systems (IS)
- 6- Evolutionary and Complex Systems (ECOS)

You can access the list of all members, including professors of the Department of Informatics Engineering (i.e., designated as *full members*) within each research group on the CISUC website: <https://www.cisuc.uc.pt/en/people>

### **FAQ4: How can I find accommodation in Coimbra?**

The best option, especially during the first year, is to book accommodation from the university's residences (dorms). For more information refer to <https://www.uc.pt/international-applicants/estudar-viver-coimbra/alojamento> and <https://www.uc.pt/en/sasuc/Accommodation>.

If university residences have no available rooms or if you prefer living somewhere else, you may be able to find a room or an apartment for renting through the following links:

- <https://www.uniplaces.com/>
- <https://www.studentville.pt/en>

- <https://www.idealista.pt/>
- <https://www.owme.pt/>
- <https://saferentcoimbra.com/>
- <https://www.remax.pt/>

#### **FAQ5: Do I need a visa? How can I get a visa?**

Explore the following links for comprehensive information:

<https://visaguide.world/europe/portugal-visa/>

<https://visaguide.world/europe/portugal-visa/student-visa/>

Note that Master and PhD students should ask for “Residence visa > 1 year” visa and Postdoctoral researchers should ask for “Researchers Visa”.

For requesting Visa, you need to prove that you have accommodation in Portugal. This can be a **rental contract, accommodation from your university (dorms) or a letter of invitation from a family member/friend with whom you will live** in Portugal.

It is advisable to apply for the visa at your earliest convenience, as the processing time can be long. Typically, the duration may range between 5 to 7 weeks.

#### **FAQ6: What additional items should I make sure to bring with me before traveling to Portugal?**

It is recommended to carry a **vaccine card** (childhood vaccine history card) with the **tetanus** vaccine information translated to English. While this is a university requirement rather than a visa necessity, it is considered to be rather important. However, If you have not received this vaccine yet, you can obtain it in Portugal.

#### **FAQ7: How can I bring my family (partner or/and kids) with me?**

If you have a partner and/or children, it is advisable to initiate the visa application process for yourself initially. Following the approval of your visa, you can then proceed to apply for accompanying visas for your partner and/or children, if applicable. Please note that the necessary documents may differ depending on the country. To ensure accuracy, kindly review the specific requirements on the VFS Global website:

<https://www.vfsglobal.com/en/individuals/index.html>.

If the previously mentioned option is not accessible or suitable for your situation, an alternative route is available through family reunification. In this scenario, your initial step involves applying for your residence visa. Once you have successfully relocated to Portugal and obtained your Temporary Residence Permits (TRP), you can then proceed to initiate the family reunification process through SEF (i.e., Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras).

For your family members, it is essential to provide documents authenticated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Portuguese embassy in your home country or through the Hague Convention, including a color copy of their passports. The complete list of required documents can be found at <https://imigrante.sef.pt/en/solicitar/residir/art98-1/>. After obtaining clearance from SEF, you can forward the clearance document to your family, enabling them to proceed with the application for their residence family reunification visa.

**Important Note:** The services currently handled by SEF are in the process of transitioning to Agência para a Integração, Migrações e Asilo (AIMA) (<https://aima.gov.pt/pt>). Consequently, the aforementioned tasks might now be carried out within the AIMA framework rather than SEF.

### **FAQ8: How to get to Coimbra and Polo II?**

You can take flights for either Porto or Lisbon airports, and from there, use a bus to Coimbra, for instance, using Flixbus (<https://www.flixbus.pt/>) or Rede Express (<https://rede-expressos.pt/pt>). Booking on-line is available for both options. You can also choose train (to **Coimbra B** destination) (<https://www.cp.pt/passageiros/en>). There is also an Airport shuttle service available to Coimbra (<https://coimbra.airportshuttle.pt>).

Upon arriving in Coimbra, you have the choice of either taking a taxi or catching a bus. If you opt for public transportation and arrive at either Coimbra B or a Rede Expressos station, ensure that you board Bus 28 initially, followed by a transfer to Bus 34/34T to reach to University Polo II (where the Department of Informatics Engineering is located). To reach to other destinations, please find the appropriate line in the following link: <https://www.smtuc.pt/rede-e-horarios/>.

Other information about the trip planning and prices can be found in <https://www.smtuc.pt/en/>.

A list of some important bus lines follows:

34: University - Polo II <-> Praça de Republica (close to University - Polo I)

34T: University - Polo II (DEI) <-> University - Polo I

38: University - Polo II <-> Parque Verde Do Mondego <-> Santa Clara

38T: University - Polo II <-> Portagem

38F: University - Polo II <-> Forum de Coimbra

### **FAQ9: What are the documents I need to ask for after arriving to Coimbra?**

To live and work in Portugal, you will need to register with the Finance Department and Social Security. In Coimbra, you can do it at **Loja do Cidadão** in the first few days after arriving. The requirement is a **valid visa with your passport and proof of address/accommodation**.

You can also ask for a NISS number (Social Security Number) at the same place (i.e., Loja do Cidadão). The documents requirements are the same as for NIF.

For more details, refer to the following link:

<https://eportugal.gov.pt/en-GB/migrantes-viver-e-trabalhar-em-portugal/migrantes-impostos-e-seguranca-social-em-portugal/como-pedir-o-nif-e-o-niss-para-cidadaos-estrangeiros-em-portugal>

You can also ask for National Health Service (SNS) number. For more information refer to the following link:

<https://eportugal.gov.pt/en-GB/servicos/pedir-o-numero-de-utente-do-sns>

#### **FAQ10: How to open a bank account?**

Portugal offers a variety of banking options to choose from. Please refer to the following link to have access to a list of banks in Portugal:

[https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lista\\_dos\\_maiores\\_bancos\\_de\\_Portugal](https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lista_dos_maiores_bancos_de_Portugal)

Before opening an account, it is crucial to carefully review the specific requirements of each bank. Some may request a Temporary Residence Permit (TRP), while others may cover account maintenance costs.

The following documents are usually required for opening a bank account in Portugal:

1. Passport and valid visa
2. Scholarship agreement (if there is any)
3. Multipurpose certificate (if you do not have this certificate, the PhD coordinator can provide a document that you are a student in the university)
4. Proof of address
5. Proof of NIF
6. University student card

**Important Note:** It is highly suggested (especially if you are on a scholarship/grant), to generate the multipurpose certificate in the first month of enrollment, since this is a mandatory document in many processes, and only in the first month you have access to generate it without paying the tuition fees.

**FAQ11: How to set an appointment with SEF for the residence card?**

Your appointment should be mentioned on your visa as a link. In case it isn't, or you have missed it, the University of Coimbra has a SEF office at Student Hub, Polo I. You can book an appointment through the link <https://www.uc.pt/studenthub/>. SEF has another office at Loja do Cidadão but you would need to book an appointment by calling SEF which may take more time.

The required documents are mentioned in <https://imigrante.sef.pt/en/solicitar/estudar/art91/>