Steps to Stay in Portugal After Completing an MSc

If you've completed a Master's degree (MSc) in Portugal and wish to remain in the country, here are the main steps:

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1. Check the validity of your residence permit

If you held a **residence permit for study purposes**, it is usually valid **until the end of your program**. Once your degree is complete, you must request a **change of purpose** to remain legally in Portugal.

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2. Apply for a change of residence purpose

After finishing your MSc, you can apply to change your residence status to:

- **Job search or entrepreneurship** (valid for 1 year, non-renewable);

- **Residence permit for employed work** (with a work contract);

- **Residence for independent work** (as a freelancer or service provider);

- **Residence for research or highly qualified activity**.

👉 These applications are submitted to the **AIMA – Agência para a Imigração e Mobilidade**.

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3. Gather required documents

To request the change, you'll typically need:

- Proof of completion of your MSc (degree certificate or academic transcript);

- Proof of financial means;

- Proof of accommodation;

- Criminal record from your country of origin;

- Portuguese tax number (NIF) and social security registration (if applicable).

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4. Schedule and attend your appointment

Schedule an appointment on the AIMA website (https://aima.gov.pt) and attend with all required documents. A fee may be charged.

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5. Alternative: Job-seeking visa

If you do **not yet have a job offer**, you can apply for the **Job Seeking Visa** through a Portuguese Consulate or, in some cases, from within Portugal.

Key features:

- Valid for **120 days**, renewable for an additional 60;

- Allows you to search for a job and convert the visa into a residence permit once employed.

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6. Option for entrepreneurship or freelance

If you have a business idea or work as a freelancer, you can consider:

- The **D2 Visa** (for entrepreneurs);

- Or apply for a residence permit as an **independent worker**.