

A Practical Guide for International Researchers

WELCOME GUIDE



A close-up, high-angle photograph of several petri dishes containing bacterial cultures. The dishes are arranged in a cluster, with some in the foreground and others in the background. The cultures show various patterns of growth, including dark, circular colonies and more diffuse, brownish growth. The lighting is bright, highlighting the textures of the agar and the edges of the dishes. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue.

Welcome to a Community of Excellence

On behalf of NOVA School of Science and Technology|NOVA FCT, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to our Campus.

At NOVA FCT, we believe that groundbreaking research and academic excellence are driven by people. By joining us, you are becoming part of a vibrant, multicultural ecosystem where innovation knows no borders. Our mission is to provide you with the best conditions to thrive, ensuring that your integration into our community, and into Portugal, is as seamless and rewarding as possible.

We are proud of our history, but we are even more excited about the future we will build together with your contribution. Welcome to NOVA FCT.

NOVA FCT Dean

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01 DISCOVER

Thinking of coming to NOVA FCT?

NOVA FCT is one of Portugal's leading institutions in higher education, scientific research, and technological innovation.

As part of NOVA University Lisbon, the school is internationally recognised for excellence across a wide range of scientific and engineering disciplines.

WELCOME TO NOVA FCT

Our Academic and Research Profile

We are structured around 13 academic departments and 18 R&D Units financed by NOVA FCT. Our research spans a comprehensive range of fields, including Environmental Sciences, Materials Science and Nanotechnology, Engineering, Information Technologies and Artificial Intelligence, Life Sciences and Biotechnology, Chemistry, Physics, and Mathematics.

A Global Impact

We are deeply integrated into the global scientific community. NOVA FCT actively participates in major international networks, including Horizon Europe, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, COST Actions, EIC Pathfinder, LIFE, and ERASMUS. We also collaborate with prestigious programmes funded by the la Caixa Foundation and Boehringer Ingelheim, among others.

1,000+

Researchers and academic

22

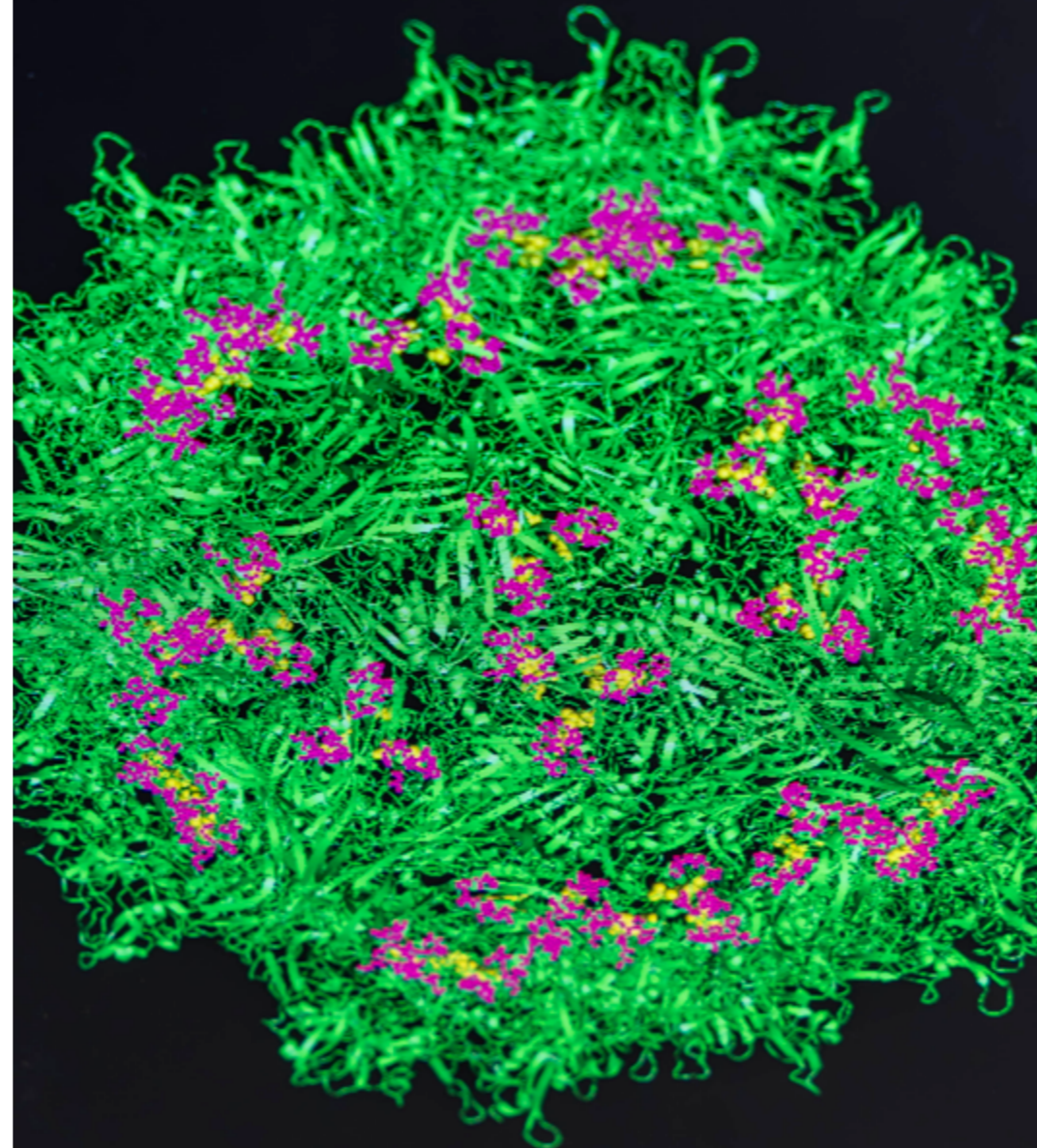
European Research Council (ERC) grants awarded

8,000+

Students, including a vibrant international community

18

R&D Units



THE RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

The **R&D Units** are the backbone of our school, fostering an interdisciplinary environment where innovation meets society's most pressing challenges.

Key Facts

Funding: All units are financed by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT).

Excellence: Our units are regularly evaluated by international panels, with many achieving the highest ratings of "Excellent" and "Very Good".

Integration: While units have scientific autonomy, your employment contract is legally held by NOVA FCT.

18 R&D UNITS

NATURAL SCIENCES

MARE-NOVA

Marine and Environmental Sciences Centre

LAQV REQUIMTE

Associated Laboratory for Green Chemistry

UCIBIO

Applied Molecular Biosciences Unit

LIBPhys

Laboratory for Instrumentation, Biomedical Engineering and Radiation Physics

CEFITEC

Centre for Physics and Technological Research

GeoBioTec

Geobiosciences, Geotechnologies and Geoengineering

NOVA MATH

Center for Mathematics and Applications

NOVA LINGS

Laboratory for Computer Science and Informatics

ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY SCIENCES

i3N-NOVA

Institute for Nanostructures, Nanomodelling and Nanofabrication

CENSE

Center for Environmental and Sustainability Research

CERIS

Civil Engineering Research and Innovation for Sustainability

CTS (UNINOVA)

Center of Technology and Systems

MEtRICs

Mechanical Engineering and Resource Sustainability Center

UNIDEMI

Research Unit in Mechanical and Industrial Engineering

NOVA-IT

Instituto de Telecomunicações (NOVA Pole)

HUMANITIES, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

CIUHCT

Interuniversity Centre for the History of Science and Technology

VICARTE

Glass and Ceramics for the Arts

EDUNOVA

Interdisciplinary Research Centre in Education



FINDING YOUR NEW HOME

Finding accommodation **is the researcher's responsibility**, and we recommend starting your search as early as possible.

While Lisbon is an option, Caparica and Almada city center are generally more affordable and closer to campus.



IMOVIRTUAL

Main national property portal



UNIPLACES

Best for student and researcher-oriented housing



IDEALISTA

Main national property portal

LIVING IN ALMADA & THE LISBON REGION

The Campus is located in Caparica (Almada), on the southern bank of the Tagus River, right across from Lisbon. Almada offers a perfect mix of historic charm, modern infrastructure, and a cosmopolitan student atmosphere.

CITY LIFE

Lisbon is just a bridge or a ferry ride away, offering endless urban exploration.

CULTURE & VIEWS

Don't miss the International Theatre Festival or the iconic views from the Cristo Rei statue.

NATURE AT YOUR DOORSTEP

Enjoy the Atlantic beaches of Costa da Caparica or the cliffs of Arrábida Natural Park.





GETTING AROUND

The Lisbon metropolitan area is connected by an extensive network of trains, ferries, buses, and trams.



Navegante Card

Don't waste money on individual tickets. As soon as you arrive, request a **Navegante Card**. For approximately **€40/month**, you get **unlimited travel**. This is significantly cheaper than paying for individual trips, especially if you commute daily.

01

Fixed Monthly Cost

For approximately €40/month, you get unlimited travel.

02

Total Coverage

Valid on all public transport across the entire Lisbon Metropolitan Area, including buses, trams (MST), trains (Fertagus/CP), metro, and ferries.

03

Where to get it

Apply at any major Metro or Train station (e.g., Cais do Sodré, Pragal, or Entrecampos)

Transportation Map

Get to know Portugal's extensive net of transportation.



HEALTH & WELLNESS

As a contract researcher, you have access to **Portugal's Public National Health Service (SNS)**. You can register at a local health center to access public healthcare.

Mental Health Support

NOVA FCT offers **free, confidential psychological support** to all members of the research community.

Sessions can be booked through:

gab.psicologia@fct.unl.pt.

Yoga & Meditation

Weekly yoga and meditation sessions take place on campus, open to everyone, no experience needed.

It's a great way to disconnect, meet people from other departments, and take care of your mind as much as your work.

Campus Wellness Culture

Beyond mandatory healthcare coverage, we believe wellbeing is part of a healthy research environment.

Throughout the year, you'll find additional initiatives, from sports activities to wellness talks, promoted across campus and on our social channels.



Social Security and ADSE

Employment contracts provide coverage for illness, parental leave, and retirement.

Private Insurance

You may opt for supplementary private insurance or check your eligibility for ADSE (public servants' scheme) via HR.

IMPORTANT

If you are here on a research grant, **Social Security is not automatic.**



LIFE ON CAMPUS

NOVA FCT is located in Caparica, Almada, just a few minutes away from Lisbon. This unique location offers the best of both worlds: the historic charm and cosmopolitan energy of the capital, and the relaxed lifestyle of the Atlantic coast with its 15km of golden beaches. The Caparica Campus is a modern, self-contained space designed for your convenience.



Green Leisure Spaces

Need a break from the lab or the screen? The Caparica Campus features expansive lawns and shaded areas. It's the ideal setting to relax, read, and enjoy the famous Portuguese sun.



Sports & Active Life

Stay active without ever leaving Campus! Book a match on our on-site Padel courts, grab a partner, and balance your research with a healthy dose of exercise.



Food & Coffee Breaks

Grab a hot meal at the central canteen or a quick espresso at one of our many cafés. These social hubs are the perfect spots to recharge and network with other researchers.



24/7 Study Areas

Find your focus in our comprehensive library or make use of the 24-hour study rooms. High-speed eduroam Wi-Fi keeps you connected seamlessly across the entire Campus.

02 UNDERSTAND

Your contract, rights and benefits.

This section gives you a clear overview of how employment works in Portugal and what you can expect when joining NOVA FCT.

Here you'll find essential information about your contract, your legal rights as an employee or grant holder, and the benefits and protections available to you while working in Portugal.

EMPLOYMENT IN PORTUGAL

Employment in Portugal is regulated and contract-based.

All research-related positions require a written contract that defines your role, duration, salary, working hours, and probation period.

If your position requires a PhD, official degree recognition in Portugal must be completed before signing the contract.

Contract Types at NOVA FCT

NOVA FCT uses several types of contracts depending on the project and funding:

Fixed-term contract

Linked to project duration; the most common format.

Researcher contracts

under the national Research Career framework.

Open-ended contract

Used for long-term or permanent positions.

Research fellowships

Not employment contracts - include fewer labour rights.

Probation Period

The probation period is the initial phase of an employment contract during which both parties assess whether they wish to maintain the employment relationship. It may be waived by written agreement between the parties.

In academia, probation periods vary according to the contract type. For instance, for a junior researcher with a 12-month fixed-term contract, the probation period may be up to 30 days, whereas for an Assistant Researcher on a permanent contract, it may extend to five years.



Salary & Benefits

Employment contracts in Portugal typically include 14 payments per year. While research grants are exempt from tax, employment contracts are subject to Social Security (~11%) and IRS income tax.

Category	Approx. Gross/Month	Payments/Year
Research Grant (Bolsheiro)	€1,309.64	12
Junior Researcher	€2,408.11	14
Assistant Researcher/Professor	€3,576.56	14

Working Hours & Leave

Standard Hours: 35 hours per week (7 hours per day).

Weekly Rest: Two rest days per week.

Annual Leave: 22 working days of paid vacation per year.

Short Contracts: If your contract is under one year, leave is proportional (2 days per month).

IMPORTANT

Your employer is always **NOVA FCT or NOVA.ID**, not the **research unit** where you work.





Contract Termination

Understanding how and why a contract ends is just as important as signing it. Under Portuguese labour law, an employment agreement may conclude due to:

Expiration: The agreed duration of your contract comes to an end.

Resignation: You choose to leave the position voluntarily..

Mutual Agreement: Both you and the university agree to part ways amicably.

Justified Dismissal: In specific legal cases, such as job extinction or unsuitability.

IMPORTANT

If you are on a fixed-term contract and it expires due to the university's decision not to renew it, you are legally entitled to financial compensation.



IFICI

Tax Incentive for Non-Resident Researchers

Portugal has created the Incentive Scheme for Scientific Research and Innovation (IFICI), a special tax regime designed for non-resident researchers and PhD holders who move to Portugal to carry out research activities. This regime offers favourable tax conditions, making Portugal more attractive for international talent in science and innovation.

For detailed information on eligibility criteria, procedures, and benefits, the Portuguese Chartered Accountants Association (OCC) provides a practical and updated guide. The HR Division will also assist you in assessing your eligibility, contact them as early as possible.



[Read Full Report](#)



03 SETTLE IN

You've been selected, what's next?

This section guides you through the essential steps to get established in Portugal after accepting your position at NOVA FCT.

BEFORE YOUR ARRIVAL

Once you receive your formal offer, your priority is handling legal documentation.

These processes can take weeks or even months, so **start as soon as possible**.

1. PhD DEGREE RECOGNITION

If your PhD was awarded by a foreign institution, **it must** be officially recognized in Portugal before you can sign your contract.

Where to Apply

Use the Direção-Geral do Ensino Superior (DGES) Portal.

Automatic Recognition

For degrees from institutions with pre-approved agreements (e.g., EU). Cost: ~€27

Level Recognition

Confirms your degree matches a Portuguese PhD level. Cost: ~€55–€138

Specific Recognition

A detailed academic evaluation for non-standard cases. Cost: ~€426.

IMPORTANT

DO NOT DELAY THE PhD RECOGNITION PROCESS.

Without it, the university cannot legally finalize your employment contract.

2. NIF (TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER)

The NIF is essential for signing your contract, opening a bank account, and renting a home. You can often obtain a provisional NIF before arrival if you have a fiscal representative in Portugal.

What It Is

The Portuguese tax identification number required for all major administrative and contractual procedures.

Why You Need It Early

Your employment contract, housing arrangements, and banking setup all depend on having a valid NIF.

Option 1: Obtain It From Abroad

You can request a NIF before arriving in Portugal through a fiscal representative who submits the application on your behalf.

Option 2: Obtain It In Person

If you prefer, you can request your NIF after arrival at a Finanças office or Citizen's Shop (Loja do Cidadão).

Fiscal Representative Requirement

Mandatory only for non-residents. Once you have Portuguese residency, the representative is no longer needed.

Documents Required

Passport and a simple proof of address (your home-country address is accepted for remote applications).

Cost

Typically free when issued directly by the Portuguese Tax Authority.

Processing Time

Usually immediate for in-person requests and very fast when submitted by a representative.

3. RESIDENCE PERMIT (NON-EU CITIZENS)

NOVA FCT collaborates with AIMA (Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum) to **fast-track applications for highly qualified researchers**.

Contact HR as soon as you accept your offer to start this institutional submission.

Who Needs It

All non-EU researchers must obtain a Portuguese residence permit to legally live and work in Portugal.

Fast-Track Through NOVA FCT

The university collaborates directly with AIMA to accelerate residence permit applications for highly qualified.

Start the Process Early

Contact the HR Division as soon as you accept your offer so they can initiate the institutional submission on your behalf.

What AIMA Handles

AIMA processes visa appointments, residence permits, and legal stay authorizations for non-EU nationals.

Documents You Will Need

Passport, employment contract or hosting agreement, proof of accommodation, and valid health insurance (exact list provided by HR).

Documents Required

Passport and a simple proof of address (your home-country address is accepted for remote applications).

After Arrival in Portugal

You must attend your scheduled AIMA appointment to provide biometrics and finalize your residence permit.

Processing Time

Timelines vary, but institutional submissions are significantly faster than individual applications.

AFTER YOUR ARRIVAL

Once you arrive in Portugal, there are a few essential steps to complete before fully settling into your research activities at NOVA FCT.

These procedures ensure that your institutional access, legal documentation, and practical arrangements are all in place, allowing you to start your work smoothly and confidently.



1. REGISTRATION AT NOVA FCT

Your first stop at NOVA FCT is the HR Division, where your onboarding officially begins. This registration unlocks your campus access, institutional email, and the essential tools you'll need for your daily work.

Why It Matters

This step activates your institutional access and completes your onboarding.

What You Receive

Your institutional ID card, campus access permissions, and official email account.

Where to Go

Human Resources Division (HR) on campus.

Institutional ID Card

Issued during your registration, this card gives you access to campus buildings, library services, and other essential facilities.

Institutional Email Activation

Your official NOVA FCT email is created at this stage. It's your primary channel for academic, administrative, and research communication.

Campus Access Setup

HR activates your permissions so you can use buildings, labs, and shared spaces across the campus.

2. OPENING A PORTUGUESE BANK ACCOUNT

Setting up a local bank account ensures you can receive your salary or research grant smoothly. It also makes everyday life easier, from paying rent to managing monthly expenses.

Why You Need It

A Portuguese bank account is required for salary or grant payments and for most long-term financial arrangements.

Documents Required

Banks typically ask for your passport, NIF, proof of address, and proof of employment or your HR onboarding confirmation.

How to Open It

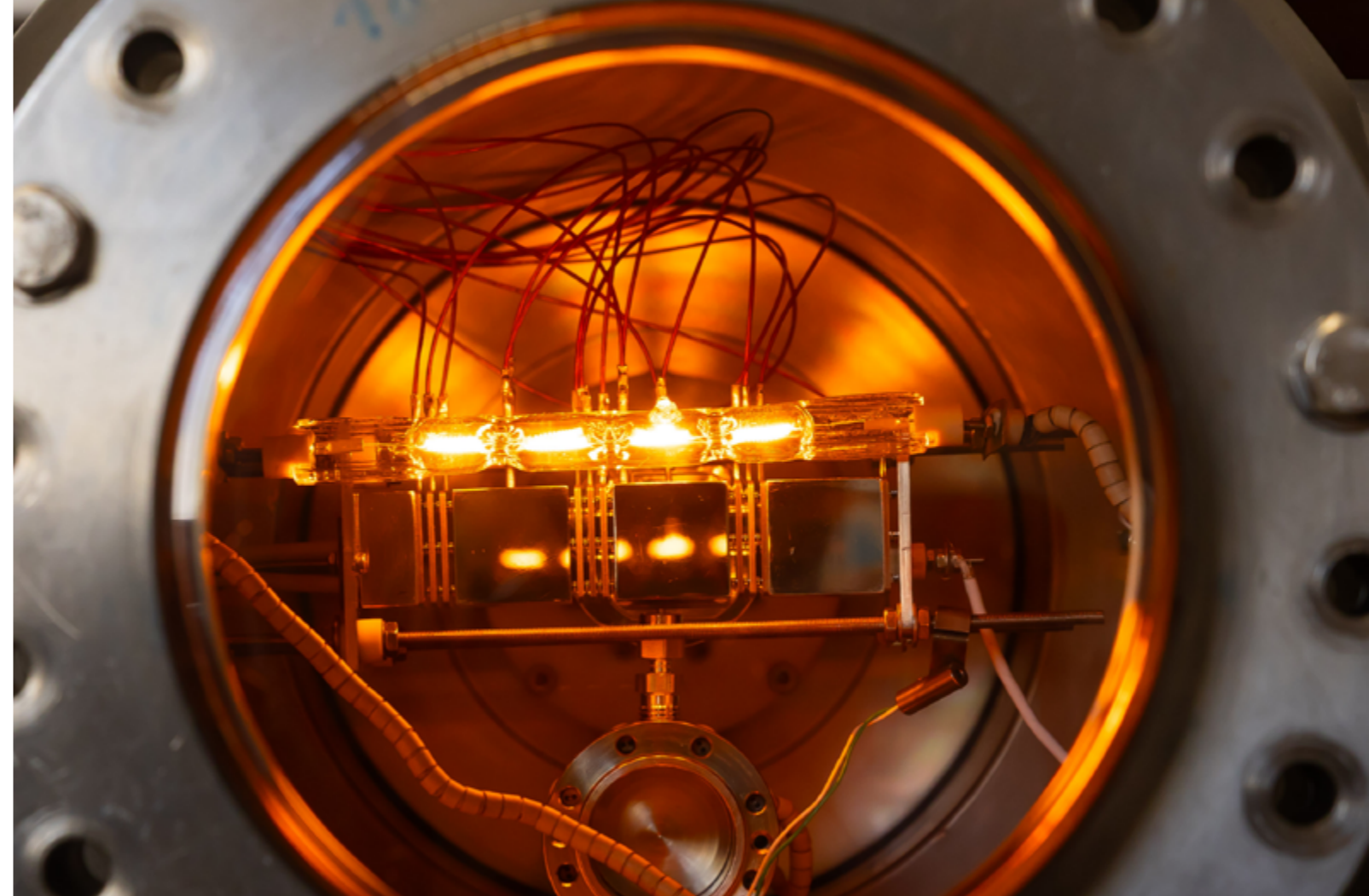
You can visit a bank branch in person, and some banks allow you to book an appointment in advance to reduce waiting times.

What to Expect

Account activation is usually quick, but some banks may take a few days to finalize verification.

Tip for a Smooth Start

If your account takes time to open, digital banks like Revolut or N26 can help you manage daily expenses in the meantime.



3. SOCIAL SECURITY REGISTRATION

Your social security status ensures you're covered while working or researching in Portugal.

Depending on your contract type, this step may be handled for you or require your action.

For Employment Contracts

HR registers you automatically with the Portuguese Social Security system.

For Grant Holders

You must enroll in the Voluntary Social Security Scheme yourself, as this is not handled by the institution.

Why It Matters

Social security registration provides access to social protection, including healthcare coverage and other benefits.



4. AIMA APPOINTMENT (NON-EU CITIZENS)

Your AIMA appointment is an important milestone in finalizing your legal stay in Portugal. It's where your biometrics are collected and your residence permit moves into its final stage.

● Purpose of the Appointment

AIMA verifies your documents and collects biometric data required for issuing your residence permit.

● What You Need to Bring

Passport, proof of accommodation, employment contract or hosting agreement, and any documents indicated by HR.

● Why It's Important

Attending the appointment on the scheduled date avoids delays in receiving your residence permit.

5. SECURING LONG-TERM ACCOMMODATION

Once your initial documents are in place, you'll be ready to settle into a long-term home. This step helps you establish stability and fully transition into your life in Portugal.

● Why This Step Comes Now

With your NIF and bank account ready, you can legally sign rental contracts and complete housing formalities.

● What Landlords May Request

Proof of employment, deposit payments, and sometimes a guarantor or additional documentation.

● Tip for a Smooth Process

Start your search early, as the rental market can be competitive in the Lisbon region.



RESOURCES

Useful contacts and information.

A curated collection of essential portals and documents to help you navigate contracts, recognition, social security, and research regulations in Portugal.



USEFUL CONTACTS

Whether you're preparing your arrival, settling in, or already immersed in your research, these contacts will help you navigate administrative processes, research support, and daily life at NOVA FCT.

Keep this page bookmarked, it's your quick-access reference for the people and services ready to support you.



Human Resources

Your main point of contact for onboarding, contracts, visas, and institutional procedures.

Email: humanresources@fct.unl.pt

International Relations

Assistance with mobility, international partnerships, and Portuguese language courses (when available).

Email: div.mie.coord@fct.unl.pt

Innovation & Research

Support for research funding, grant applications, project management, intellectual property, and innovation strategy.

Email: research@fct.unl.pt

Workplace Health and Safety

Support with laboratory safety, risk prevention, workplace conditions, and compliance with health and safety regulations.

Email: gab.shst.coord@fct.unl.pt



UNINOVA

Multidisciplinary research institute supporting applied R&D, innovation, technology transfer, and industry collaboration.

Email: rdm@novaidfct.pt

Phone: +351 21 87 24 500



NOVA.ID.FCT

The Research Management & Support institution responsible for managing research contracts, projects, and administrative support across NOVA FCT.

Email: secretariado@novaidfct.pt

Phone: +351 93 743 42 55



MADAN PARQUE

Science and technology park and business incubator supporting entrepreneurship, start-ups, and innovation-driven projects.

Email: info@madanparque.pt

Phone: +351 210 438 600



AIMA

The Residence Permits for Researchers supports with residence permit applications, biometric appointments, legal stay procedures, and documentation for non-EU researchers and professors.

Email: geral@aima.gov.pt

Phone: +351 217 115 000

Emergency Numbers

National Emergency: 112

Health Line (SNS24): 808 24 24 24

USEFUL PORTALS

These official portals provide essential information and services for international researchers working in Portugal.

They cover labour law, degree recognition, social security, research regulations, and practical administrative procedures. Use them as reliable reference points throughout your stay.



Social Security Portal

The national platform for accessing your social security information, including contributions, benefits, parental leave, unemployment protection, and retirement status. Essential for understanding your rights as an employee or for exploring voluntary coverage options.

Website: seg-social.pt



Portuguese Labour Code (DRE)

The official legislation portal where you can consult the Portuguese Labour Code. It provides clear access to employment rules, contract types, working hours, holidays, and worker protections relevant to your role in Portugal.

Website: diariodarepublica.pt



Euraxess Portugal

A dedicated portal offering guidance for researchers relocating to Portugal. It covers visas, relocation steps, working conditions, funding opportunities, and integration support for international academics.

Website: euraxess.pt



DGES (Degree and Diploma Recognition)

The official platform for submitting and tracking recognition requests for foreign academic degrees. This is particularly important for researchers who must validate their PhD before signing a contract.

Website: dges.gov.pt

USEFUL ARTICLES & KEY DOCUMENTS

These reference documents and legal frameworks help you understand how research careers, contracts, grants, and social protection operate in Portugal.

They are especially useful if you plan to stay long-term, apply for grants, or navigate academic career pathways.

- **[FCT Grant Values 2025](#)**
Official reference table for annual fellowship amounts funded by FCT.
- **[Practical Guide – IFICI \(OCC, 2025\)](#)**
Clear overview of tax obligations, social contributions, and financial procedures in Portugal.
- **[Voluntary Social Security Scheme](#)**
Explains how voluntary social security contributions work, especially relevant for fellowship holders.
- **[Decree-Law No. 57/2016](#)**
[Fixed Term Researcher Contract](#)
Explains how voluntary social security contributions work, especially relevant for fellowship holders.
- **[Scientific Research Career Statute \(ECIC\)](#)**
Defines the structure, rights, and progression of the scientific research career in Portugal.
- **[University Teaching Career Statute \(ECDU\)](#)**
Outlines the legal framework for university teaching careers and academic responsibilities.
- **[NOVA University Research Grant Regulations](#)**
Internal rules governing research grants at NOVA, including rights, duties, and financial conditions.

CAMPUS MAP



- MAIN ENTRANCE**
 - BUILDING I**
BOARD | ADMINISTRATION
SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL | PEDAGOGICAL COUNCIL
ADMISSIONS OFFICE | SECURITY OFFICE
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS
"CASA DO PESSOAL" BAR / STAFF BAR
 - BUILDING II**
DEPARTMENT OF MATERIALS SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE
 - BUILDING III**
IT INFRASTRUCTURES
PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT
AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE OFFICE
 - BUILDING IV**
ASSEMBLY HALL
CLASSROOMS
FABLAB
 - BUILDING V**
GRAND AUDITORIUM
 - BUILDING VI**
 - BUILDING VII**
DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS
DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCES
PEDAGOGICAL COMPLEX
INTERNSHIP AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES OFFICE
"MY SPOT" BAR
 - BUILDING VIII**
DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL
AND INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING
 - BUILDING IX**
DEPARTMENT OF EARTH SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL ENGINEERING
 - BUILDING X**
DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING
 - DEPARTMENTAL BUILDING (DEP)**
DEPARTMENT OF LIFE SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY
"NOVA ALQUIMIA" BAR
 - BUILDING XI**
PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATION OFFICE
 - EXECUTIVE EDUCATION SCHOOL (EE)**
 - HANGAR I**
STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
"TANTO FAZ" BAR
 - HANGAR II**
 - HANGAR III**
VICARTE – GLASS AND CERAMICS ARTS CENTRE
 - LIBRARY**
"C@MPUS" BAR
 - CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**
COMMUNICATIONS AND IMAGE OFFICE
EVENTS AND PROTOCOL OFFICE
NOVA.ID.FCT
 - CANTEN**
"C@MPUS. COME" RESTAURANT
 - PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRE**
 - UNINOVA 1**
 - UNINOVA 2**
 - CENIMAT**
-
- A** | MULTI-PURPOSE BUILDING
 - B** | Y-DREAMS BUILDING
 - C** | NEW STUDENT RESIDENCES
 - D** | STUDENT RESIDENCES
 - E** | RAQUETS PRO
 - F** | LIDL

*We look forward to welcoming you
at NOVA FCT.*

*Should you have any questions at
any stage of your journey, the HR
team is here to support you.*



NOVA SCHOOL OF
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY