

Country Profile - Portugal

Job market

The job market in Portugal depends heavily on tourism and the service sector now employs over half the working population. There are high levels of graduate unemployment and competition from native graduates means there is a shortage of graduate jobs for foreigners. Most graduate jobs will tend to be located in the larger cities and unless you are looking to teach English, you will need to be able to speak some Portuguese.

What are my chances of getting a job?

- **Typical problems encountered:** although Portugal's official unemployment rate is 15%, the real rate is estimated to be around 22% as not everyone seeking work is officially registered as unemployed (BBC, 2012). Unemployment is highest among women and young people. Many new jobs are on short-term contracts.
- **How to improve your chances:** research the job market thoroughly so that you have realistic expectations. Consider entry-level jobs so that you can develop your Portuguese language skills and make contacts, before applying for graduate-level roles.
- **Language requirements:** as a UK graduate, you will probably find it difficult to get a job at any level in Portugal unless you speak Portuguese, particularly in occupations requiring contact with the public. Language courses are run in Portugal by many Portuguese institutions and organisations such as [CESA Languages](#) and the [Eurolingua Institute](#). Knowledge of other languages, such as English, Spanish, French or German, may be useful, particularly in tourism.

Where can I work?

- **Major industries:** tourism, property and business services, hotels and catering, public services, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, textiles, wood and cork, retail.
- **Recent growth areas:** call and contact centres and shared services centres. The aerospace, biotechnology and IT industries are also being developed in some areas.
- **Shortage occupations:** seasonal jobs in the tourism, hotel and catering sector, doctors in various specialisms, IT professionals, particularly computer engineers, call and contact centre managers.
- **Major companies:** EDP (electricity), Cimpor (building materials), Corticeira Amorim (cork), Galp (energy group), Jerónimo Martins (retail), Millennium BCP (banking), Portucel Soporcel (pulp and paper), Portugal Telecom, Sonae (conglomerate), Martifer (metal construction and renewable energy), RE/MAX Portugal (real estate).
- **Search for more companies:** [Kompass](#) is a worldwide business directory searchable by country and product/service, [British-Portuguese Chamber of Commerce](#), [Guianet](#), [Europages](#), [Portuguese Yellow Pages \(Páginas Amarelas\)](#) (in Portuguese and English), [Portuguese White Pages \(Páginas Brancas\)](#) (in Portuguese and English).

- **Major cities:** Lisbon (capital and largest), Porto, Vila Nova de Gaia, Amadora, Braga, Funchal, Coimbra.

What's it like working in Portugal?

- **Average working hours:** 40 hours a week, which is also the legal maximum.
 - **Holidays:** annual leave entitlement is a minimum of 22 days, plus public holidays. As part of its austerity measures, from 2013, Portugal will cut its national public holidays from 14 days to 10 days for five years. Public holidays falling on a weekend are not observed on the following Monday. Holidays are mainly taken during August, which leads to some factory shut-downs.
 - **Tax rates:** tax, national insurance and social security contributions are automatically deducted from your salary via the PAYE (pay as you earn) system. For non-residents, the general tax rate is 25%. Tax deductions for residents (usually defined as anyone living in Portugal for more than 183 days in a year) are on a progressive scale from 11.5% to 46.5%. Further details are available from [Anglo Info](#).
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Applying for jobs

The use of application forms is widespread in Portugal and they vary widely. Some ask for standard information, while others ask more open questions about previous experience. Online recruitment is common.

Letters of application may be either typed or handwritten, but handwritten letters are more common for speculative applications. A response to a job advert should be typed, short and simple.

Copies of diplomas and references are not required at the application stage, but you should take them with you if you are invited for an interview.

If you are considering a move to Portugal to live and work, be aware that there are certain bureaucratic processes to observe. For example, many professions require licence and certification. Prospective employers should be able to guide you through this but you should be proactive about checking requirements specific to the industry or sector in which you intend to work.

A Portuguese CV is usually presented in reverse chronological order and should be no more than two or three pages. Start with your personal details (name, date and place of birth, civil status, address, telephone number including the international access code, email address). If you have a driving licence, say so in this section. You should also include your national identity card number if you have one.

Continue with your education, professional training (a distinct category from university education), work experience, computer skills, and language skills (list languages in order of fluency).

Include a separate section for any specific training relevant to the job. This is important for Portuguese recruiters, who regard it as a sign that you were valued by your previous employers.

You can find an example of a Portuguese CV and advice on applying for jobs on [Eurograduate - Working in Portugal](#).

The selection procedure may consist of several interviews and some psychological and technical tests. Aptitude and psychometric tests are sometimes used for candidates up to middle-management level.

Will my UK qualifications be recognised?

To compare your professional, vocational or technical qualifications with Portuguese qualifications, consult [ENIC-NARIC](#).

Do I still need to pay UK tax and National Insurance?

If you are planning to live and work in Portugal, check your UK tax and National Insurance position with [HM Revenue & Customs \(HMRC\)](#) to ensure that you are not losing any UK pension rights.

Vacancy sources

Job websites

- The [Portuguese Public Employment Service](#) (Instituto do Emprego) - provides advice on training, opportunities and how to find work, as well as providing access to vacancies (in Portuguese).
- [Superemprego](#) - online vacancy portal with a section for careers advice. You can post your CV and receive email alerts (in Portuguese).
- [EURES - European Job Mobility Portal](#) - provides information about job vacancies, living and working conditions, and labour markets in Portugal, as well as a CV-posting service for jobseekers.
- [Academic Jobs EU](#) - part of the European Union (EU) network of websites and advertises academic jobs across the EU, including Portugal.

Recruitment agencies

- A large number of UK recruitment agencies have permanent bases in Portugal. Check with the [Recruitment and Employment Confederation \(REC\)](#) for lists of approved UK agencies and then contact the agency to see if they have an office or jobs in Portugal.

- Euro-CIETT is the European organisation of the [International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies \(CIETT\)](#). Visit the website for details of their European members, of which Portugal is one.
- Details of recruitment agencies, including private agencies, are listed in the [Portuguese Yellow Pages \(Páginas Amarelas\)](#) under 'pessoal temporário' and 'pessoal recrutamento e seleção'. You can search in English.
- Try the [British-Portuguese Chamber of Commerce](#) for links to recruitment agencies in Portugal.

Newspapers

- [Correio de Manhã](#) - general vacancies at graduate and non-graduate level across Portugal (in Portuguese).
- [Diário de Notícias](#), [Jornal de Notícias](#) and [Expresso](#) share one vacancy portal that can be accessed through any of their websites (in Portuguese).
- [The Portugal News](#) - Portugal's leading English-language newspaper.
- [Região Sul](#) (in Portuguese) and [Algarve Resident](#) (in English) list job opportunities in the Algarve.

Other Portuguese newspapers can be accessed via [Kidon Media-Link](#).

Vacancies sometimes appear in the UK press, e.g. in the [Times Educational Supplement \(TES\)](#) or [The Guardian](#). These will mainly be either TEFL or language positions or vacancies with UK companies based in Portugal.

Hidden vacancies

Speculative applications are fairly common in Portugal and can be an important route into employment for graduates. It is advisable to phone the company before submitting. This enables you to introduce yourself, show your interest in the company and ask to whom you should send your application.

Make use of informal methods of recruitment such as word of mouth and networking, especially when looking for employment with small and medium-sized companies.

Work experience

Work placements and internships

- [AIESEC \(Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences Economiques et Commerciales\)](#) runs an international exchange programme.

- [IAESTE \(The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience\)](#) arranges paid, course-related vacation training abroad on a reciprocal exchange basis. These placements are available to undergraduates.
- The [European Youth Portal](#) has a list of work experience and training opportunities across Europe and worldwide.

Exchange programmes

Your institution may be involved in the [Leonardo da Vinci Programme](#) through which vocational training exchanges and work placements are arranged with partner organisations in other countries. Contact your institution's international office or careers service for more information.

Teaching schemes

There are opportunities to teach English in Portugal with organisations such as [International House Portugal](#). You can find a directory of language schools at [ESL Base](#).

For more information about teaching in Portugal and the structure of the education system, visit the [Portuguese Ministry of Education and Science](#) website (in Portuguese).

Volunteering

- The [European Youth Portal](#) has a list of organisations providing voluntary opportunities for young people in Portugal.
- Organisations such as [Volunteer Abroad](#) have volunteer projects in Portugal.

Casual work

Casual work opportunities in Portugal are mainly seasonal and in the tourism industry.

Postgraduate study

How does the higher education system work?

Higher education includes universities and polytechnics administered by public, private and cooperative institutions.

Universities award first degrees, Masters degrees and Doctorates. Polytechnics award first degrees and Masters degrees.

Lisbon has the greatest concentration of public and private higher education establishments (about a third of the national total), and a large number of research and development institutions.

What courses are available?

Levels of study available are:

- first degrees: Bacharelato (three years of study) and Licenciatura (four to six years of study);
- postgraduate courses: Mestrado (four semesters, advanced degree in a scientific area through practical research);
- Doctoral studies: Doutoramento (several years of personal study for a thesis);
- postdoctoral programmes: Agregação (reserved for Doutoramento, the highest level of study).

Where can I study?

A complete list of all higher education establishments is available from [DGES - Direcção Geral do Ensino Superior](#) and [Guia do Estudante](#) (both in Portuguese) or via [Universities Worldwide](#).

University ranking lists are available from [Webometrics](#).

Applying for postgraduate study

Most universities operate an entrance examination and also stipulate entrance criteria (such as minimum qualifications). Foreign students must meet the same criteria as those set for Portuguese students.

Places at public universities are allocated by passing a national exam, whereas private institutions set their own.

Although it may not be specified, it will usually be necessary to have a good knowledge of Portuguese since few courses will be taught in English.

As in the UK, there is no official closing date for postgraduate courses, but it is advisable to apply as early as possible.

For postgraduate study, contact the university you are interested in attending. Each university has its own admissions system for postgraduate programmes, and you will have to apply separately for each university. All universities have their own official application form.

Check with each institution to find out about their application procedure. Some universities deal with applications centrally, while others deal with applications within individual faculties or departments. Some have application forms available on their website, and some accept forms submitted electronically.

Most universities in Portugal, as in the UK, have an international office where you will find information about the procedures to follow for applying to and attending your chosen university. This information is usually available in English both online and by requesting a prospectus.

Fees and scholarships

Both public and private institutions charge tuition fees. In public institutions, fees are payable annually and are related to the minimum wage. In private institutions, fees are payable monthly and are generally significantly higher.

Details of fees and the costs of living can be found on university websites. You can request more information from the international office of the university you are interested in attending.

- EU students are eligible to apply for grants and exemptions in the same way as Portuguese students. These are usually administered by facilities within the public institution universities and further information should be available.
- For private study, the state provides a 'fundo de Apoio ao Estudante' (student support fund). Grants are allocated through a competitive exam.
- To be eligible for a grant, students must be applying for a course/establishment recognised by the [Portuguese Ministry of Education and Science](#).
- The [Camões Institute](#) offers grants to students attending either summer, or longer annual, courses in Portuguese language and culture, or for research in these areas.
- Search for funding opportunities at [Ploteus](#).

Are there any exchange programmes?

UK students on undergraduate degree programmes or postgraduate Masters and some PhD programmes may be interested in spending time studying in Portugal through the [Erasmus](#) programme. This programme is open to all subject areas, but check with your institution's Erasmus coordinator first (usually based in the international office) to see which countries they have links with and in what subject areas.

Will my qualification be recognised in the UK?

The [ENIC-NARIC](#) network provides information on how to compare academic qualifications. Their office in Portugal is based within the Portuguese Ministry of Education and Science.

See [Study Abroad Links](#) for general information about studying outside the UK.

Visa and travel information

Visa requirements and applications

Most EU nationals do not need a visa or work permit but citizens of non-EU countries may be required to have these documents.

If entering Portugal to study, you may need to show proof that you are a student and have the means to support yourself.

If entering the country to work you may be asked to prove that you have adequate means to support yourself during your stay and that the cost of your return journey is secured.

An identity card (bilhete de identidade) must be carried at all times. Application forms are available from the Portuguese Consulate General. Contact the Consulate well in advance of departure to confirm requirements.

Employees must register at the Treasury to get a CIF number, without which their employer will not be able to pay them. More information (in Portuguese) is available from the Portuguese Ministry of Finance.

[EURES - European Job Mobility Portal](#) has a before and after moving to Portugal checklist that will help you to make sure you have completed all the essential tasks.

If you are an EU national or a permanent resident with a residence card (autorização de residência), you can work in Portugal as a self-employed person or a sole trader. To be self-employed, you must meet certain legal requirements and register with the appropriate organisation. For more details, consult:

- [EU Business](#)
- [Instituto de Apoio às Pequenas e Médias Empresas e à Inovação \(IAPMEI\)](#) - a business development agency, specialising in small to medium-sized enterprises (in Portuguese).

If you are from a non-EU country, check with the Portuguese embassy in the country where you are residing (find a list of embassies at [Embassies Worldwide](#)) to enquire about visa requirements. [The Schengen Office](#) also has useful visa information.

You may also wish to contact your ministry of foreign affairs (or your own embassy, if you are not in your home country) to find out whether there are any issues to be considered if you are planning to study or work in Portugal.

Permanent residency

EU nationals who intend to stay in Portugal for longer than three months must apply to the [Portuguese Immigration Service \(Serviço do Estrangeiros e Fronteiras\)](#) for a registration certificate in the 30 days following the three-month period.

This certificate is initially valid for five years, or for the period of intended residence if this is less than five years. After living in Portugal for five years, you can apply to the immigration authorities for a certificate of permanent residence.

Help in an emergency

EU nationals who intend to stay in Portugal for longer than three months must apply to the [Portuguese Immigration Service \(Serviço do Estrangeiros e Fronteiras\)](#) for a registration certificate in the 30 days following the three-month period.

This certificate is initially valid for five years, or for the period of intended residence if this is less than five years. After living in Portugal for five years, you can apply to the immigration authorities for a certificate of permanent residence.

Travel advice

Find the latest travel advice and a traveller's checklist on the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\)](#) website.

Country overview

Geography

- **Full country name:** Portuguese Republic
- **Population:** 10.7 million (The World Factbook, 2011)
- **Border countries:** Spain
- **Climate:** cool and rainy in the north, warmer and drier in the south.
- **Terrain:** mountains in the north, with plains in the Alentejo region divided from the Algarve in the south by a range of mountains. The Algarve is a popular resort area with wide sandy beaches and attractive bays. Madeira and the Azores also belong to Portugal.
- **Natural hazards:** forest fires occur frequently during the summer and the Azores are subject to severe earthquakes.

Living in Portugal

- **Cost of living:** prices have risen recently, although prices of commodities, accommodation and leisure are slightly lower than in the UK. As in many other European countries, commuters tend to live in apartments in city suburbs, but rented accommodation is scarce. Rents vary according to location, quality and the number of rooms, e.g. 1-2 rooms, €350-€1,100 per month, 4 rooms, €750-€2,000 per month. The minimum period for a rental contract is six months. Most

newspapers publish adverts for property to rent ('alugam-se'), including English papers, such as [The Portugal News](#). Always look for adverts that say 'mediador autorizado' (government-licensed). Some employers offer assistance in finding accommodation.

- **Internet domain:** .pt. Only residents can subscribe to an internet service in Portugal. When you complete a subscription form (Formulário de Adesão) and sign a contract, you will be given a username and password.
- **Health:** Portugal provides free essential medicines and general medical consultations through its health system. For non-essential medicines, contributions of 40%-100% are standard. It is likely that you will have to pay for dental treatment. Everyone legally employed in Portugal has health insurance deducted from their salary. The self-employed need to arrange their own payments. Private health insurance is often recommended for visitors to Portugal. There is a British hospital in Lisbon, but it is very small and cannot deal with serious emergencies. Portugal is part of a reciprocal agreement between EU member states, which enables EU citizens to receive free urgent medical treatment. For this, a [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#) is required. For more details about the health service in Portugal visit [Anglo Info](#).
- **Laws and customs:** if you are caught in possession of drugs for personal use, you may be subject to a fine or other sanction (including the seizure of personal belongings). The selling or trafficking of drugs is subject to severe penalties. Foreign nationals are required by law to be able to show some form of identification if requested by the police or judicial authorities. Same-sex marriage was legalised in Portugal in 2010 and there is an established gay scene in both Lisbon and Porto. Other smaller cities and regions have much more discreet gay communities.

Economy and finance

- **Currency:** Euro (€)
- **Type of economy:** free market economy
- **Health of economy:** Portugal is struggling with a large budget deficit and in 2011, became the third EU country to ask for a financial bail-out. The government has had to implement austerity measures and economic reforms, such as cutting public sector spending and raising taxes. Some of the reforms are aimed at reducing the unemployment rate by encouraging people back to work and reducing bureaucracy for companies which are looking to hire.
- **Unemployment rate:** 15% (Eurostat, 2012)
- **Main exports:** automobiles and transport components, agricultural products, machinery and tools, electrical equipment, textiles, clothing, footwear, wood products, paper pulp and cork, wine, plastic moulds, tomato paste.

Culture

- **People:** ethnic Portuguese make up the vast majority of the population. There are small numbers of people from Portugal's former colonial possessions such as Brazil and parts of Africa and Asia, as well as minority groups such as Ukrainians and Romani. There is a strong expatriate community, who are predominantly British.
- **Major religion:** Roman Catholic
- **History:** see [BBC Timeline: Portugal](#).

Politics

- **Type of government:** parliamentary democracy

- **Major political parties:** the coalition government between the leading Social Democratic Party and the Popular Party has been in power since the 2011 elections. The main opposition party is the Socialist Party (PS). For more information, go to [Portuguese Government](#).

More information

- [British Embassy in Portugal](#)
- [BBC Country Profile - Portugal](#)
- [The World Factbook](#)
- [XE Universal Currency Converter](#)

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