IMMIGRATION

Highly qualified professional (PAC) residence

Residence and work authorization for highly qualified professionals

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This page is for general guidance only. Only the regulations in force when the application is filed will apply.

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Topics Work Research Internationalization

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01 Description

This authorization allows highly qualified foreign workers (with a higher education degree or equivalent experience) to live and work in Spain in management or skilled technical positions.

02 Advantages

- Fast, streamlined access to skilled employment in Spain.
- Family members can be included from the start, with the right to work.
- Valid nationwide (throughout Spain), with easier changes of employer.
- Standardized salary requirements and a possible reduction coefficient.
- Possibility of obtaining long-term residence after 5 years.

03 Who can apply? (including family members)

- ✓ A foreign professional who has received a job offer in Spain for a position requiring a university-level qualification or, failing that, proven professional experience at a comparable level may apply.
- ✓ The main applicant must be the person who will fill the skilled position and, in most cases, the hiring company files the application on their behalf.
- ✓ From the outset, the applicant may be joined in the same application by a spouse or registered partner, minor children or dependent adult children, and dependent parents or other ascendants.

04 Requirements

- ✓ Have a job offer in Spain for a position that requires high qualifications.
- ✓ Hold an appropriate higher education degree or, alternatively, sufficient professional experience.
- ✓ Meet the salary thresholds set for this type of authorization.
- ✓ Not be in an irregular situation in Spain at the time of application, except in expressly provided cases.
- ✓ Have no criminal record in the countries where the applicant has lived in recent years.
- ✓ Not be listed as inadmissible in the Schengen Area or subject to an entry ban for Spain.
- ✓ For applications filed from abroad, not be in Spain at the time of the visa application.

05 Required documents

- [ ] Employment contract or binding job offer justifying the need for the skilled position.
- [ ] Proof of the higher education degree or, where applicable, equivalent professional experience.
- [ ] Valid passport of the applicant and of each family member included.
- [ ] Criminal record certificate from the previous country or countries of residence.
- [ ] Proof of the family relationship if family members are included (marriage, birth or dependency certificates, etc.).
- [ ] Evidence of the hiring company's strategic profile, where applicable.

06 Application process

1 Gathering the documents

The employer or the applicant (as appropriate) must gather all required documents.

2 Filing the application

The application must be filed electronically with the Unidad de Grandes Empresas y Colectivos Estratégicos (UGE, the Large Companies and Strategic Groups Unit).

3 Decision and visa issuance

The authorities have up to 20 business days to decide. If they do not, the application is deemed approved by positive administrative silence (silencio administrativo positivo).

4 Entry into Spain and final steps

Once the authorization is granted, if the applicant is outside Spain, they must apply for the visa and, once it is issued, enter the country and apply for the TIE (foreigner identity card).

07 Duration and renewal

The initial authorization is valid for up to three years, provided the contract covers that period. If the contract is shorter, the authorization is granted for the length of the contract plus three months, up to a maximum of three years.

It can be renewed for two-year periods as long as the conditions under which it was granted continue to be met.

08 FAQ

Can I include my family from the start?

Yes. This authorization allows your spouse or registered partner, your children and your dependent parents or other ascendants to be included at the same time.

How long does it take to get a decision?

A decision must be issued within a maximum of 20 business days. If there is no response, the application is deemed approved by positive administrative silence.

How long is the authorization initially valid?

The authorization can be valid for up to three years, depending on the length of the employment contract.

What salary is required?

The salary offered must meet the thresholds set for this type of authorization, which differ for executives and technical professionals.

09 Applicable law

- Ley 14/2013, de apoyo a los emprendedores y su internacionalización
- Ley Orgánica 4/2000, sobre derechos y libertades de los extranjeros en España
- Real Decreto 557/2011, por el que se aprueba el Reglamento de la Ley Orgánica 4/2000
- Ley 11/2023, de transposición de directivas europeas
- Directiva (UE) 2021/1883, relativa a las condiciones de entrada y residencia de nacionales de terceros países

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