

Guidelines for non-EU nationals awarded self-employment contracts or postgraduate research grants at the Politecnico di Bari.

The information summarised in this explanatory document, intended for the University's internal use, is provided to offer operational support to non-EU researchers and to the University's administrative staff. It concerns stays in Italy for research activities exceeding 90 days, which are primarily governed by Article 27-ter of Italian Legislative Decree No. 286/1998. The ordinary channel is not subject to quotas and requires a hosting agreement with a research institution registered on the MUR (Ministry of University and Research) list. The Politecnico di Bari is duly registered on this list.

1) General rule

The standard procedure applies to non-EU nationals who hold the academic qualifications and meet the requirements set out in the selection notices for the award of self-employment positions/postgraduate research grants issued by the Politecnico di Bari, and who are subsequently selected as successful candidates. The University may initiate the procedure as an entity authorised to enter into the hosting agreement, as it is an institution registered on the MUR (Ministry of University and Research) list of authorised institutions. The agreement must specify, among other things, the subject and duration of the research, the legal relationship, the working conditions, sufficient financial resources, and health insurance coverage or registration with the Italian National Health Service (SSN). Financial resources are deemed sufficient if the net monthly remuneration or the net monthly instalment of the postgraduate research grant is not less than twice the amount of the social welfare allowance.

2) Standard case: researcher from abroad entering Italy for the first time

For the first entry, the relevant university office draws up the hosting agreement and, via the Single Immigration Desk (SUI) portal, submits the application for a research permit (FR form).

In order to enable the relevant University office to correctly and fully upload the data and documents to the SUI portal, the non-EU national must provide the duly countersigned hosting agreement, a copy of their passport and academic qualification, the address of the accommodation identified for their stay, a housing suitability certificate (which must be obtained from the relevant local authority), and any additional documentation requested by the office.

The institutions involved in the procedure for issuing the authorisation (the Police Headquarters, the Prefecture and the territorially competent Labour Inspectorate) may request additional information or notify the rejection of the application. Once issued, the authorisation is transmitted electronically to the Consulate, where the researcher must apply for a national research visa within 6 months. The research visa takes priority over other types of visa.

Within 8 working days of entering Italy, the researcher must apply for a residence permit; the permit is labelled 'researcher', is valid for the duration of the research programme, and enables the researcher to carry out the activity specified in the agreement, whether as an employee, a self-employed person or on a research training grant.

3) Common scenario: a researcher already residing in Italy on another basis

This situation is common at our University and at other Italian universities as well. The procedure under Article 27-ter also applies to researchers who are already legally residing in Italy on another basis: in this case, the University still applies for authorisation through the Sportello Unico, but the researcher obtains a research permit without the need for a visa and without having to prove actual residence abroad. In practical terms, this is the standard route when the individual is already in Italy, for example, for study or on the basis of another compatible permit.

4) Specific case: researcher already holding a research permit issued by another EU Member State

If the researcher already holds a research permit issued by another EU Member State, they may conduct research in Italy on short-term mobility for up to 180 days out of 360, based on a notification from the host institution, without the need for a new Italian permit to be issued. For periods exceeding 180 days, entry is permitted without a visa, but a clearance certificate is required and a permit labelled 'mobility-researcher' is issued in Italy.

This scenario is particularly useful for visiting researchers or for the continuation of European projects.

5) Common cases of 'conversion' or change of permit

a) From a study/training permit to a research permit

When a researcher is already in Italy on a study or training permit and the university intends to include them in a research programme, the most straightforward route is often to switch to Article 27-ter: this does not involve a 'Flussi Decree' conversion, but rather the activation of a research authorisation and the issuance of a 'researcher' permit without a visa, as the individual is already in the country.

b) From study/training to employment or self-employment

If, on the other hand, the university does not intend to use the 'research under Article 27-ter' route, but wishes to offer a standard employment contract, the study/training permit may be converted into a work permit before it expires, outside the quota, subject to verification that the relevant requirements are met. This is a very common scenario for former doctoral students, or students who have obtained a Master's degree (Laurea Magistrale, LM) in Italy, who move on to an employment relationship other than the pathway under Article 27-ter.

c) From a research permit to a work permit

At the end of their research activity, researchers may apply for a residence permit for a period of 9 to 12 months in order to seek employment or start a business; if the relevant requirements are met, they may then apply for conversion to a work permit. This is the most common type of conversion for researchers 'exiting' the research pathway.

d) Holders of work permits or permits for family reasons

In most cases, no conversion is required to carry out research work.

Indeed, the Consolidated Act stipulates that permits for employment, self-employment and family reasons may also be used for the other permitted activities; furthermore, a permit for family reasons expressly allows the holder to engage in employment or self-employment. In these cases, the administrative office's primary task is to verify the validity of the permit and the compatibility of the relationship that the University intends to establish.

6) Cases requiring enhanced verification

Article 27-ter does not apply to certain categories, including: beneficiaries of or applicants for international protection, family members of EU citizens enjoying the right of free movement, long-term EU residents staying for work purposes, Blue Card holders, and certain other categories expressly excluded by law. If the researcher falls into one of these categories, the automatic initiation of the 'researcher' procedure should be avoided, and the researcher's existing permit or alternative route of residence should be verified.

7) Essential obligations of the University

The University should follow this operational sequence: verify that the researcher holds the required entry permit; approve the project internally and draw up the hosting agreement; apply for the relevant authorisation electronically via the SUI portal; monitor the issuance of the authorisation and the subsequent consular procedure; keep on file the passport, academic qualification, hosting agreement, health insurance and financial documentation.

8) Essential obligations of the researcher

The researcher should receive a clear checklist from the University and provide a valid passport; a copy of their academic qualification; the hosting agreement; and the visa documents. In the event of entry, the researcher must arrive in Italy within the visa period, apply for a residence permit within 8 working days, ensuring that they send the kit provided by the post office, and complete the residence permit application process; they must also promptly notify the University of any change of address, expiry of their qualification, or extension of their research period.