

FAQs SIGMA 2025/26 – Residence Permits, Single Permit Holders, Family Reunification & Visa Requirements in Malta

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Section 1: Residence Permits in Malta

Who needs a residence permit in Malta?

- EU/EEA/Swiss nationals: May stay in Malta for up to 90 days without registration. Beyond 90 days, they are required to register their residence by obtaining an eResidence Document. Grounds for registration include: employment, studies, self-employment, family reunification, or financial self-sufficiency.
- Non-EU nationals (Third-Country Nationals – TCNs): Must always obtain a valid residence permit to live and work in Malta. The most common route is through the Single Permit procedure, which grants both residence and work authorisation.

What types of residence permits exist in Malta?

What types of residence permits exist in Malta?

- Employment-related permits (Single Permit, KEI, SEI, Blue Card, ICT)
- Study permits (for international students)
- Family reunification permits (linked to main sponsor)
- Special programmes (e.g., Nomad Residence Permit, Long-Term Residence, Permanent Residence)

Section 2: Single Permit

What is a Single Permit?

The Single Permit is a combined work and residence authorisation for TCNs employed in Malta. It is regulated by Subsidiary Legislation 217.17 and managed by Identità (Expatriates Unit).

How long does processing take?

- The law allows up to 4 months for processing.
- Average time is about 2 months, provided all documents are correct and complete.

What is the procedure to submit an application?

- The employer must submit the application online on behalf of the prospective employee.
- TCNs cannot submit applications directly.

Is there a fast-track procedure?

Yes. Fast-track options are available under:

- Key Employee Initiative (KEI) – 5 working days
- Specialist Employee Initiative (SEI) – 15 working days

Can an employee start work while waiting for the permit?

- Submitting the application alone does not grant the right to work.
- However, once the applicant has:
 1. completed biometrics,
 2. submitted all required documents, and
 3. received an interim receipt including a Temporary Authorisation to Work,they may begin employment (provided also registered with Jobsplus).

What if the employee changes role within the same company?

- A new Single Permit application is required.
- The permit is specific to the declared employer and designation.
- Changes must be filed through the Expatriates Online Portal (Change in Designation Form).
- Failure to notify Identità may lead to revocation of the residence permit.

Are applications digital?

- Yes. The entire process is fully online.
- Digital signatures (Advanced or Qualified Electronic Signatures) are accepted from both employer and employee.

How to extend an Interim Receipt?

If the interim receipt is close to expiry and the collection letter has not yet arrived, an extension may be requested by emailing spextensions.identita@gov.mt.

Where do I book biometrics?

After receiving the Approval in Principle (AIP) or Invitation Letter, applicants must book a biometrics appointment via: <https://expatsbooking.identita.gov.mt>

Section 3: Family Reunification

Who is eligible for family reunification?

Under Subsidiary Legislation 217.06, eligible family members include:

- The sponsor's spouse (must be at least 21 years old).
- Unmarried minor children of the sponsor and/or spouse, including legally adopted children.
- Dependent children where custody is held by the sponsor or spouse.

Sponsor requirements (legal basis – S.L. 217.06):

- Must hold a residence permit valid for at least 1 year.
- Must have legally resided in Malta for at least 2 years.
- Must demonstrate reasonable prospects of permanent residence.

Financial requirements:

Stable and regular income of at least the Maltese average wage, plus 20% per family member included in the application.

Accommodation requirements:

Proof of suitable accommodation that meets normal family standards. Lease agreements must be registered and supported by an architect's attestation and Housing Authority approval.

Health insurance requirements:

Each dependent must be covered by private health insurance with a minimum of €100,000 coverage, valid in Malta and Europe.

Schooling requirements (if applicable):

Children of compulsory school age must be enrolled in school. For KEI/SEI applicants, proof of private school application is required.

Exemptions under KEI and SEI:

- Normally, sponsors must reside in Malta for 12 months before applying.
- Under KEI/SEI, this rule is waived. Family members may join immediately if:

- Sponsor earns at least €50,000 per year (for sponsor + one dependent) + €6,000 per additional dependent.
- Valid health insurance is provided.
- Private school enrolment is secured for children.

What documents are required?

- Marriage and/or birth certificates (apostilled or legalised).
- Sponsor's residence permit copy.
- Proof of income (salary slips, tax returns).
- Lease contract and Housing Authority registration.
- Health screening certificates (as required by the Health Promotion Directorate).

Renewal applications:

- Proof of ongoing stable income.
- Proof of accommodation (if not previously submitted).
- Health insurance or national insurance contributions proof.
- Updated passport copies.
- Confirmation of school enrolment for children (ages 5–16).

Do family permits allow employment?

- No. Residence permits for family members do not automatically grant the right to work.
- To work, dependents must apply for their own Single Permit.
- Exception: dependents enrolled at ITS, MCAST, or University of Malta may work under apprenticeship/placement rules.

Section 4: Family Members Policy

What is the Family Members Policy?

The Family Members Policy is an ex-gratia framework that allows certain family members of third-country nationals (TCNs), who may not qualify under the Family Reunification Regulations (S.L. 217.06), to join their sponsor in Malta. Applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis and are subject to strict eligibility and documentation requirements.

Who is eligible under this Policy?

- Spouse (minimum age 21, monogamous marriage).
- Unmarried minor children (under 18), including legally adopted children.
- Dependent children of the sponsor or spouse where one parent has custody.
- Unmarried adult family members, provided dependency (financial or physical) is proven.

What are the sponsor's requirements?

- Must legally reside in Malta with a residence permit valid for at least one year.
- May only apply after 12 months of residence in Malta, unless exempted under the KEI or SEI fast-track provisions.

Are there exemptions for KEI/SEI permit holders?

Yes. Sponsors under the Key Employee Initiative (KEI) or Specialist Employee Initiative (SEI) may apply before 12 months if they can demonstrate:

- A minimum gross annual income of €50,000 (sponsor + one dependent), plus €6,000 for each additional dependent.
- Valid private health insurance for each dependent, with coverage of at least €100,000.
- Proof of application to a private school in Malta for children of compulsory schooling age.

What is the application procedure?

Applications must be submitted online via the Expatriates Unit Portal: expatriates.identita.gov.mt.

- Family members must not be physically present in Malta at the time of application (except children born in Malta).
- All documents must be in English or Maltese; foreign documents must be legalised/apostilled.
- Original documents must be presented at the appointment; copies are retained by Identità.

What is the stable resources requirement?

The sponsor's disposable income must exceed the Maltese median wage (€18,940 as per NSO, June 2024) plus 20% per dependent.

Acceptable income sources include: employment income, declared rental income, pensions, allowances, unemployment benefits, sickness/disability benefits, interest/dividends, or other declared income.

Income tax and social security contributions are deducted when assessing resources.

How are applications decided?

- Applications are vetted by the Police Immigration Office for all dependents over 12 years old.
- Applications may be rejected if the applicant is deemed a threat to public policy or security.

- Decisions are normally communicated within 60 days of submission (or a written notice if further verification is needed).
- Rejections include reasons, and sponsors may appeal.

Do family members have the right to work under this Policy?

No. Permits issued under this Policy do not automatically grant the right to employment.

Family members must apply separately for a Single Permit to take up employment.

Exception: dependents studying at ITS, MCAST, or the University of Malta may take part in apprenticeships, placements, or internships under Maltese law.

Can the permit be renewed?

Yes, if all conditions (income, accommodation, health insurance) continue to be satisfied.

Renewal applications must be submitted online via the Expatriates Unit portal.

Additional documents may be requested at renewal.

Section 5: Visa Requirements

What is a visa?

A visa is an authorisation that authorizes the bearer to stay in or travel through the Schengen area during a limited and specified period of time. The possession of a visa does not give the third-country national the automatic right of entry, as bearers must prove that they meet the entry requirements at the border.

Do I need a visa to enter Malta?

-Nationals of visa-exempt countries may enter without a visa in the Schengen area for short stays only (maximum stay of 90 days).

Please access the following link to confirm the list of nationalities that require a visa prior travelling and those who are visa exempt nationals - <https://identita.gov.mt/central-visa-unit-visa-application-requirements-for-a-visa/>

-Nationals of countries requiring a visa must apply for either:

1. Schengen Visa (C-Visa) – short stay up to 90 days with a Maltese Mission abroad or a Maltese representation in the residing country.

Please access the following link to check the list foreign representations that can issue a Schengen type C-visa on behalf of Malta -

<https://identita.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/VISA-Representation-Agreements.pdf>

Please access the following link to check the list of Maltese Embassies abroad that may issue a Schengen type C visa - <https://missions.foreign.gov.mt/>

2. National Long-Stay Visa (D-Visa) – must be applied for by all nationals (except EU nationals) whose intention is to visit Malta for more than 90 days with maximum stay of 365 days.

How do I apply for a D-Visa?

- Applicant can only apply for a D-national Maltese Visa using Identita's Extended service.
- Applicant must book an online appointment under the applicable visa category with VFS Global in any country the service is available in. One does **not** need to be a legal resident of such country in order to apply for a D-visa. The online appointment can be booked by accessing the following link: <https://identita.gov.mt/central-visa-unit-services-extended-service/>
- Upon booking of the online appointment, the applicant will be required to pay the visa fee online. Below are the Visa Fees:

-Extended Service - €250

-Standard Service - €150

The difference between Extended and the Standard Service is that applicant will find an earlier VFS appointment when choosing the Extended service however the visa processing time will remain the same for both services.

The visa fee varies for Student, Scientific Researcher, Minors and Family member of EU visas. For further confirmation, kindly access the applicable checklist.

- Applicant must attend the appointment at the chosen VFS office on the stipulated date and time with all required documents. The documentation checklists can be found by accessing the following link - <https://identita.gov.mt/central-visa-unit-applicable-fees-applications-applications/>
- Applicant will be requested to pay a further VFS administration fee upon submission of visa application.

- The entire visa process may take up to approx. 8 weeks from date of VFS appointment.

What if my visa or residence application is refused?

Applicants are entitled to appeal to the Immigration Appeals Board in Valletta. Appeal must be filed within 15 days of receipt of visa refusal letter. Supporting documents may be submitted. Further instructions on how to open an appeal will be stated on the visa refusal letter itself.

Section 6: Contacts & Useful Links

Expatriates Unit Malta – Non-EU Employment

Valley Road, Msida, MSD 9020, Malta

Tel. No: (+356) 2590 4800

Email Address: singlepermit.identita@gov.mt

Expatriates Unit Malta – Non-EU Non-Employment

Valley Road, Msida, MSD 9020, Malta

Tel. No: (+356) 2590 4800

Email Address: noneu.identita@gov.mt

Expatriates Unit Malta –EU

Valley Road, Msida, MSD 9020, Malta

Tel. No: (+356) 2590 4800

Email Address: eu.identita@gov.mt

Central Visa Unit Malta

Valley Road, Msida, MSD 9020, Malta

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Tel. No: (+356) 2590 4550

Email Address: visa.identita@gov.mt

E-Residence Unit Gozo

The Tower, 1st Floor, Fortunato Mizzi Street, Victoria Gozo

Tel. No: (+356) 2215 6122

Email Address: eresidence-eu.mgp@gov.mt

- **Website:** <https://identita.gov.mt/>
- **Interim receipt extensions:** spextensions.identita@gov.mt
- **Expatriates Portal:** <https://expatriates.identita.gov.mt/>



- **For biometric appointments:** <https://expatsbooking.identita.gov.mt/v2/>



