



Dear Minister,

REQUEST FOR A REVIEW OF VALIDITY OF IRISH RESIDENT PERMIT FOR PHD STUDENT

I am Abraham Agboola, the President of the Postgraduate Students' Union (PSU) at the University of Limerick (UL). The Postgraduate Students' Union represents 4000 postgraduate students who come from over 80 countries across the globe.

I am writing to appeal for the extension of the 1-year validity of resident permit for PHD students. This is a big challenge for international student especially those from third world countries.

The PHD journey requires a lot of travelling for collaboration, conferences and research stay. The passport possessed by student from 3rd world countries requires that they apply for a visa to visit almost any country like the UK, the Schengen area, US, Australia etc. One of the requirement of getting the visa is the validity of the residence permit, most countries requires that the resident permit is valid for 3 months after return. In the case of a student that has just a residence permit that is valid for 3 months , he or she has to go through the process of renewing his/her residence permit before applying for a visa.

The process of renewing the residence permit is so laborious besides the financial implication which is 300 euros for the renewal. A typical PhD student who doesn't travel will spend 1200 euros for his/her 4 years in the PHD program but for a PHD that travels he/she may end up spending nothing less than 2000 euros on immigration issues. Aside the process of applying for a visa being laborious, it takes about a week to get all the document together before getting an appointment, travelling to the embassy and paying for the visa process.

That is, for a PHD student that wants to attend a conference in France, he or she has to set at least a week aside, for the processing of visa and if the residence permit is about to expire, he/she need to go through the mental stress for like a month. This has strong effect on the progress of the PHD work because of the time wasted, the emotional effect from getting all the documents together and the fear of missing a document. In addition, it leads to lack of interest in collaboration and participation in international conferences that further affect the overall output of the PHD student & the reputation of the universities & country from a research perspective

Recommendation

Some European countries like Germany, Austria, Belgium and Spain gives their PHD student at least two years valid resident permit at a go, while some countries give 3 years or till the end of their PhD registration or the expected date of completion especially for those on PHD funding. This makes it easy for them to apply for a long-term visa to other countries since the embassy looks at the validity of their resident permit. I would recommend PHD student in Ireland are given the same privilege even if it requires a slight increase in fees for registration at the immigration office.

It would be lovely if this were taking into consideration, as it would affect the research output of PhD student as well as their progress. Thank you for your utmost consideration.

Kind regards,

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