

New Permanent Residence Subcategory for Foreign Students with More Than Six (6) Years of Studies in Panama

Executive Decree No. 3 of February 6, 2026, issued by the Executive Branch through the Ministry of Public Security, introduces an amendment to Panama's immigration framework by creating, within the permanent residence category, a new subcategory for permanent residence as a student.

This new provision allows foreign nationals who have completed more than six (6) consecutive years of studies in the Republic of Panama to apply for permanent residence, recognizing their academic and social integration in the country.

Legal framework

- Decree Law No. 3 of February 22, 2008, which created the National Migration Service and established provisions governing immigration matters.
- Executive Decree No. 320 of August 8, 2008, which regulates Decree Law No. 3 of 2008.
- Executive Decree No. 3 of February 6, 2026, which establishes the permanent residence subcategory for students.

The regulation allows foreign students with a continuous academic trajectory in Panama of more than six (6) years to apply for permanent residence, provided they meet the applicable immigration and documentary requirements before the National Migration Service.

This measure aims to recognize the prolonged stay and academic ties of foreign students, facilitate immigration stability for those who have completed their education in the country, and promote the retention of talent trained in Panamanian educational institutions.

Foreign nationals may be eligible for this subcategory if they can demonstrate more than six (6) consecutive years of studies in Panama, are currently enrolled or have completed their studies, and meet the immigration and documentary requirements established by the competent authorities.

The creation of this subcategory represents a relevant update to Panama's immigration framework, aligned with policies aimed at strengthening the country's position as a



regional educational hub and facilitating the eventual integration of locally trained international students into the workforce. Educational institutions, employers, and international students should assess the scope of this provision and its potential impact on immigration and professional planning.

Executive Decree No. 3 introduces an additional pathway for immigration regularization that may support the continued residence of foreign students with strong academic ties to Panama and contribute to the attraction and retention of qualified human capital.

For more information on this topic, please contact our Immigration team.

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