

Panama Creates New Permanent Residence Subcategory for Researchers, Scientists and Exceptional-Talent Professionals

By virtue of Executive Decree No. 6 of 2026, published in Official Gazette No. 30,488 C on March 23, 2026, the Government of the Republic of Panama created a new immigration subcategory of Permanent Residence for researchers, scientists and exceptional-talent professionals. The subcategory is intended for foreign nationals who will carry out activities in areas of national importance.

Purpose of the Subcategory

This measure aims to:

- Attract and retain highly qualified talent that contributes to Panama's scientific, technological and strategic development.
- Strengthen the research, innovation and technological development ecosystem by incorporating researchers and professionals with internationally recognized experience, and by supporting their contributions to teaching, knowledge transfer and academic training in Panama.

Who Is Eligible?

The subcategory is available to foreign nationals who enter Panama as:

1. Scientists
2. Researchers
3. Exceptional-talent professionals

Applicants must demonstrate a recognized and verifiable international scientific or technological track record and intend to carry out research, teaching or technology-transfer activities at scientific institutions, academic entities or research centers established in Panama.

Validity and Immigration Status

The Decree provides, among other things, that:

- The permit is initially granted on a provisional basis for a period of two (2) years.
- Upon completion of that period, the foreign national may apply for permanent residence.
- The principal applicant and eligible dependents may obtain the permanent resident identification card issued by the National Directorate of Identification (Cedulation) of the Electoral Tribunal of the Republic of Panama.

Key Benefits

Individuals granted this permit may:

- Carry out additional employment activities other than those performed at the relevant scientific, academic or research



institution.

- Qualify for an exemption from import duties on household goods upon their first relocation to Panama, in accordance with applicable tax and customs regulations.

Role of SENACYT

The Decree establishes the Scientific Integration One-Stop Office, coordinated by the National Secretariat of Science, Technology and Innovation (SENACYT), to facilitate the technical evaluation of applicants seeking to qualify under this immigration subcategory.

Vigencia

Executive Decree No. 6 of 2026 entered into force on March 24, 2026, i.e., the day following its publication.

At Alcogal, our immigration team advises individuals and institutions on the structuring and processing of immigration permits in accordance with Panama's legal framework.



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