



EU Blue Card

Information on requirements, entitlements and the application process

The EU Blue Card enables skilled workers from non-EU countries with a university degree to work in Germany. By introducing the EU Blue Card in 2012, Germany has implemented the “EU Council Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment”.

Requirements

If you are a skilled worker with an academic background who wants to work in Germany, the following requirements apply in order to receive a visa:

- **university degree** from a German or a foreign academic institution
- for all regulated occupations in Germany: **certificate of recognition** demonstrating the full equivalence of your qualification as well as **professional practice permit**
- for non-regulated occupations in Germany: **statement of comparability**
- no specific requirements regarding **German language skills**; it is your future employer’s responsibility to examine if your language skills are sufficient
- **work contract** or **job offer** that matches your qualification; employment in related occupations is not allowed
- a work contract or a job offer with a **minimum salary** of 56.800 € per year for “regular occupations” (2021) or 44.304 € per year for “shortage occupations” (2021). Shortage occupations are specific occupations for which there are not enough qualified personnel in Germany, currently e.g. natural scientists, mathematicians, architects, urban / traffic planners, engineers, physicians, experts in information and communication technology. All other occupations can be seen as regular occupations
- for shortage occupations only: **approval of the German Federal Employment Agency** regarding the working conditions

Entitlements

If you meet the above-mentioned requirements, you are entitled to:

- obtain an **EU Blue Card** for up to four years – or less if your employment contract has a shorter term
- request a **residence permit** for the immigration of your **spouse and children** (under the age of 18), if you fulfil the following criteria:
 - adequate residential space for you and your family
 - sufficient financial means to cover living expenses for yourself and your family
- apply for a **permanent residence permit** after 33 months (precondition: you have basic German language skills), if you fulfil the following criteria:
 - highly-qualified employment requiring academic qualification for at least 33 months
 - receipt of the above-mentioned minimum salary for 33 months
 - contribution to the German pension fund for 33 months

Please note: If you can prove more than basic German language skills (at least language level B1), you can already apply for a permanent residence permit after just 21 months.

Good to know: Due to the minimum salary requirement, obtaining an EU Blue Card is rather difficult. If you do not fulfil this requirement, you may instead consider applying for a residence permit for the purpose of taking up qualified employment for occupations that require vocational training in Germany. In this case, you have to go for a "residence permit for the purpose of taking up qualified employment" and not for the EU Blue Card. But you have to make sure that your academic qualification is in relation to the occupation that you want to work in. For example, an academic with specialisation in German studies may work as a foreign language assistant, but not as a salesperson.

Application process in four steps



1. Recognition of qualification

As a skilled worker from a non-EU country who wants to work in Germany you need to prove that your foreign qualification is **fully equivalent / comparable** to the German reference occupation.

If you want to work in a regulated occupation requiring academic qualification in Germany, you have to go through the **recognition procedure**. In order to receive a **certificate of recognition**, please contact the "Service Center for Professional Recognition" (ZSBA), accessible via the hotline "Working and Living in Germany". The ZSBA advisors will support you in identifying the appropriate reference occupation in Germany, compiling the application documents and identifying the responsible recognition authority in order to obtain your certificate. The recognition procedure costs between 100 € and 600 € and can take up to four months. Only if the certificate of recognition states that your qualification is fully equivalent, you may apply for the EU Blue Card.

Website "Recognition in Germany"

www.anererkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/index.php

Hotline "Working and Living in Germany"

+49 30 1815 1111

If you want to work in a non-regulated occupation in Germany that requires an academic qualification, you do not have to go through the above-mentioned recognition procedure, but you must prove that your foreign academic qualification is comparable to a German university degree through a **comparative assessment**. As a first step, you should check whether your university degree is listed in the database "Recognition and evaluation of foreign qualifications" (ANABIN). If ANABIN confirms comparability between your foreign university degree and the reference university degree in Germany, a printout of the result is sufficient. If your foreign degree is not listed in the database, you have to request an individual **statement of comparability** from the "Central Office for Foreign Education" (ZAB). You can request the statement of comparability online, and it costs 200 €.

ANABIN database: Recognition and evaluation of foreign qualifications >> website in German language only

www.anabin.kmk.org

ZAB: Statement of comparability

<http://www.kmk.org/kmk/information-in-english>

2. German language skills

There are no specific requirements regarding German language skills – except for a few occupations for which the proof of German language skills is mandatory by law. Nevertheless, it is recommended that you have at least basic German language skills in order to support your professional life and your overall successful integration in Germany. In many countries, various language schools offer – mostly fee-based – **courses of German as a foreign language**. Here is a small selection of language schools that offer German language courses as well as certified exams that are accepted by the German authorities.

Goethe-Institute

www.goethe.de/en/

Austrian German Language Diploma (ÖSD)

www.osd.at/en/

The European Language Certificate (TELC)

www.telc.net/en

3. Work contract / job offer

There are numerous online resources available for those looking for a job in Germany. Germany's largest online **job exchange** is the job portal of the German Federal Employment Agency. If you want to apply for a job, you usually have to submit the following documents to the employer:

- a covering letter, explaining your motivation for the job
- a curriculum vitae, ideally using the Europass format
- certificates of your qualifications from the educational institution(s) that you attended
- if available: reference letters from previous employers

Once you have found a job, your future employer has to fill in the **Declaration of Employment** (only in the case of shortage occupations). The declaration contains information on the functions and responsibilities of the employee, the working time and the salary as well as some other details. This declaration is needed as the German Federal Employment Agency will examine the working conditions and the suitability of your qualification for the job.

Job portal of the German Employment Agency >> website in German language only

www.jobboerse.arbeitsagentur.de

Job portal "Make it in Germany"

www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/jobs/job-listings

Form "Declaration of Employment" >> website in German language only

www.arbeitsagentur.de/weiterleitung/1478916163404

4. Visa application

Before taking up employment in Germany as a skilled worker from a non-EU country, you need a **visa**. On the website of the German Foreign Office, a "visa navigator" helps potential applicants to check which visa they need.

First of all, you have to make an appointment at the **German Mission Abroad** (embassy or consulate). You have to bring to the appointment translated and certified copies of the required documents for the residence permit for qualified employment (see listed requirements above) and the following documents:

- completed and signed application form
- biometric passport photos

- valid passport
- approval of travel health insurance
- visa fee

The German Mission Abroad will then examine your application documents and request an approval from the German Federal Employment Agency – if necessary. The waiting time for a confirmation or rejection of a visa application differs from place to place.

“Visa navigator” of the German Foreign Office

<https://visa.diplo.de/en/#/vib>

Visa regulations of the German Foreign Office

www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/einreiseundaufenthalt/-/215870

Please note: Once you have a concrete job offer, you may authorise your future German employer to apply for the so-called **fast-track procedure**. This newly introduced process helps to speed up the administrative procedures for obtaining your certificate of recognition of foreign qualifications as well as your visa. The fee for this procedure is 411 € and is paid by the employer.

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Registered offices
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Programme Migration & Diaspora
Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5
65760 Eschborn
Germany

T +49 61 96 79-0
F +49 61 96 79-11 15

E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de

Author:
Isabel K. Schäfer (AMBERO Consulting Gesellschaft mbH)

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