



Residence permit for the purpose of seeking employment

Information on requirements, entitlements and the application process

The German Skilled Immigration Act, which was adopted in March 2020, provides new opportunities for skilled workers from non-EU countries who do not have a job offer yet, but who are still looking for a job in Germany. The residence permit for the purpose of seeking employment enables both skilled workers with vocational qualifications and skilled workers with academic qualifications to come to Germany for a limited period of time in order to look for employment as a skilled worker.

Requirements

If you are a skilled worker who wants to come to Germany for job-seeking, the following requirements apply in order to receive a visa:

- **vocational training certificate** or **university degree**
- 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 that require vocational training: **certificate of recognition** demonstrating the full equivalence of your qualification
- for non-regulated occupations in Germany that require an academic qualification: **statement of comparability**
- evidence of sufficient **German language skills** for skilled workers with a vocational training qualification (at least language level B1); for persons with an academic qualification there is no specific language skills requirement
- **proof of sufficient financial means** to cover your living expenses, e.g. through a blocked bank account or a Declaration of Commitment (in 2020/2021: 10.332 € per year)

Entitlements

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

- obtain a **residence permit** for job-seeking skilled workers for six months (no extension possible)
- engage, for a maximum of ten hours per week, in **trial employment** for which you have the necessary qualification. Working on a self-employed basis is not permitted.

Please note: the residence permit does not entitle your family to accompany you. However, if you find employment in Germany within six months, you may 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 you and your family
- proof of basic German language skills of your spouse

Application process in three steps



1. Recognition of qualification

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

If you want to work in an occupation requiring vocational qualification or in a regulated occupation requiring academic qualification, 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 residence permit for the purpose of seeking employment.

Website “Recognition in Germany”

www.anerkennung-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 need to go through the 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

German language skills are not only very helpful for finding a job in Germany, but also for a successful overall integration. For skilled workers with a vocational qualification who want to come to Germany to look for a job, the proof of German language skills is a mandatory requirement. In many countries, various language schools offer – mostly fee-based – **courses of German as a foreign language**. In order to prove your German language skills, you need a **language certificate** from a certified exam provider. In many countries, the Goethe-Institute offers language courses and conducts certified exams. There are a number of other certificates that are also often accepted (see selection below). It is best to

check with the German embassy or consulate in your country which certificates will be accepted by them.

Goethe-Institute

www.goethe.de/en/

Austrian German Language Diploma (ÖSD)

www.osd.at/en/

The European Language Certificate (TELC)

www.telc.net/en

Test German as Foreign Language (TestDAF) >> website in German language only

www.testdaf.de

German Language University Entrance (DSH)

<https://en.dsh-germany.com>

German Language Diploma (DSD) >> website in German language only

<https://www.kmk.org/themen/deutsches-sprachdiplom-dsd/>

3. Visa application

Before heading to Germany in order to find a job or take up employment, skilled workers from non-EU countries 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 job-seeking skilled workers (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. 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

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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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