



Residence permit for the purpose of vocational training

Information on requirements, entitlements and the application process

The residence permit for the purpose of vocational training enables non-EU citizens to come to Germany and undergo vocational training. The permit includes preparatory German language courses, especially if they are job-related. After successful completion of the vocational training, graduates are permitted to stay in Germany for another 12 months to look for a job.

Requirements

If you want to come to Germany to undergo vocational training, the following requirements apply in order to receive a visa:

- evidence of sufficient **German language skills** (at least language level B1); a proof of language skills is not required if the training institution that offers the vocational training has already assessed your language skills or if a language course is planned in Germany prior to your vocational training
- **training contract** or **training offer** from a vocational training institution in Germany
- **proof of sufficient financial means** to cover your living expenses (in 2020/2021: 10.332 € per year), e.g. through the training salary stipulated in the training contract, a blocked bank account or a Declaration of Commitment
- in case of company-based vocational training: **approval of the German Federal Employment Agency** regarding the working conditions
- **priority review** by the Federal Employment Agency, i.e. examination of whether applicants from Germany or other EU countries are eligible for the training and have to be prioritised

Entitlements

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

- obtain a **residence permit** for the purpose of vocational training for the duration of the training programme
- engage, for a maximum of ten hours per week, in **secondary employment** alongside the vocational training; work on a self-employed basis is not permitted
- obtain, after successful completion of your vocational training, a **residence permit for the purpose of seeking employment** for 12 months or apply for a **residence permit for the purpose of taking up qualified employment** in case you find a job
- apply for a **permanent residence permit**, if you fulfil the following criteria:
 - possession of a residence permit for the purpose of qualified employment for 24 months
 - work contract and contributions to the German pension fund for 24 months
 - good knowledge of German language (at least language level B1)

Good to know: As a non-EU citizen who wants to undergo vocational training in Germany, but has not found a vocational training programme yet, you may also receive a **residence permit for the purpose of seeking a vocational training place** if you fulfil the following criteria:

- you are under the age of 25 years
 - school-leaving qualification from a German School Abroad or another school-leaving certificate which entitles you to enter higher education in Germany
 - good German language skills (at least language level B2)
 - sufficient financial means to cover your living expenses (in 2020/2021: 11.365,20 € per year)
- If you find a vocational training programme within six months, you can request a residence permit for the purpose of vocational training.

Application process in three steps



1. German language skills

The proof of German language skills is a mandatory requirement for non-EU citizens who want to come to Germany for the purpose of vocational training. 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 as to 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)

<http://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/>

2. Vocational training contract / offer

There are numerous online resources available for those looking for a vocational training in Germany. One of the most important online sources for finding vocational training vacancies in Germany is the **job portal** of the German Federal Employment Agency. Depending on the desired profession, you should also have a look at the **apprenticeship exchange** of the German Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Chambers of Skilled Crafts. There are also numerous private resources available that can support you in finding a vocational training programme in Germany.

Job portal of the German Employment Agency >> website in German language only
www.jobboerse.arbeitsagentur.de

German Chambers of Commerce and Industry >> website in German language only
www.ihk-lehrstellenboerse.de

German Chambers of Skilled Crafts >> website in German language only
www.lehrstellen-radar.de

3. Visa application

Before taking up vocational training in Germany, 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 your appointment translated and certified copies of the required documents for the residence permit for the purpose of vocational training (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 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 for in-company vocational training, you may authorise your future German employer to apply for the **fast-track procedure**. This newly introduced process helps to speed up the administrative procedures for obtaining your visa. The fee for this procedure is 411 € and is paid by the employer.

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