

Working in Germany

The contribution made by labour migration, ensuring the availability of specialists in Germany



Your future in Germany

Specialists are welcome in Germany. The success of our economy is based in great measure on the excellent skills of our workers. In order to be able to maintain and expand this strong position in the global economy, the German Government has opened up access to the labour market to graduates from all over the world.

Germany is one of the leading nations in many cutting-edge technologies. This includes biotechnology, nanotechnology and information technology. Many German enterprises are among the world market leaders in mechanical engineering, as well as in the electrical and automobile industries. The German environmental technology sector (wind energy, photovoltaic, biomass) also has a strong position on the international stage.

It is, however, highly likely that there will soon be shortages of graduates on the

labour market, and this may impair economic development. There are already complaints of a shortage of engineers in mechanical engineering and in the IT

This is how you can work in Germany _____ Page 2

Working in Germany after completing studies _____ Page 3

Graduates of German schools abroad _____ Page 4

sector. Despite its considerable domestic potential, Germany also depends on the immigration of specialists. For this reason, the opportunities for the immigration of highly-qualified individuals have been expanded and the rules for the employment of highly-skilled foreigners have been simplified. Virtually all immigration restrictions for EU-graduates and their families were abolished in January 2009. For specialists from other countries, only a priority examination by the Employment Agency is required. This makes it attractive for such specialists to take up work in Germany. Anyone opting to work in Germany can now be assured that a career in a German enterprise will not be impeded by bureaucratic hindrances.

This is how you can work in Germany

The following may work without a priority examination:

- All graduates (university or technical college graduates) from EU member states and their family members
- Highly-qualified individuals, in particular specialists and managers with special vocational experience, who are offered a job in Germany where they earn more than €64,800 per year. They immediately receive an unlimited settlement permit, entitling them to take up employment. Their family members may also take up employment without a priority examination.
- Managers and persons with company-specific knowledge, if they are transferred to Germany within a group of companies, and their family members
- Foreign graduates of German universities, for employment appropriate to their vocational qualification
- Former students of German schools abroad who wish to undergo skilled in-company training in Germany. No priority examination is required for subsequent employment in the occupation learned. The same applies if a German or foreign academic qualification is submitted if employment



is entered into which corresponds to this qualification.

The following may work following a priority examination:

- Graduates from third states (outside the EU). The family members of such persons are, however, not required to undergo the priority examination.
- Citizens of the new EU member states in any qualified employment which requires three years' vocational training in Germany

What is a priority examination?

The priority examination entails the Employment Agency examining whether applicants who have priority are available for a specific job. Those who have priority are Germans, EU citizens, citizens from EEA states, citizens of Switzerland, citizens of new EU member states who have a work permit, and third-state nationals with unrestricted access to the German labour market. Information on the priority examination is available from your Employment Agency.

Useful terms:

Priority examination = **Vorrangprüfung**
Work permit = **Arbeitsberechtigung**
EU work permit = **Arbeitsberechtigung-EU**
Settlement permit = **Niederlassungserlaubnis**
Employment Agency = **Agentur für Arbeit**
Residence Act = **Aufenthaltsgesetz**
Exceptional leave to remain = **Duldung**



Working in Germany after completing studies

Anyone who has completed their studies in Germany may remain and work in Germany if:

- they take up employment matching the qualification which they acquired at a higher education institution, and
- payment and the other working conditions of the job offered are not less favourable than those of comparable German employees.

Graduates from the new EU member states require a restricted-validity EU work permit in order to take up employment. This is available from the Employment Agency in whose district the operational headquarters of their future employer is located. This EU work permit is initially issued for one year, after which graduates are entitled to an unrestricted-validity EU work permit, which provides free access to the labour market.

Graduates from third states can remain in Germany for up to one year

on conclusion of their studies in order to look for work (section 16 subsec. 4 of the Residence Act). When they have found a job, a “residence permit for the purpose of employment” (section 18 of the Residence Act) is required for taking up employment. They will receive this from the immigration authority. The general preconditions under the law on residence must be met. In particular, individuals must provide proof that their livelihood is secure and hold a valid passport. Furthermore, the approval of the Employment Agency must be obtained.

Specialists residing with exceptional leave to remain may receive a “residence permit to exercise employment matching their qualification” subject to the following preconditions:

- On conclusion of a certified (three-year) vocational training course or of higher education in Germany, or
- after two years’ employment in Germany in an occupation which corresponds to the higher education qualification acquired abroad, or



- after three years’ employment in Germany in an occupation which is subject to a certified (three-year) vocational training course.



Starting up in business in Germany: Freedom to establish businesses has applied to nationals of the new EU member states since accession. Foreigners from third states may also establish themselves in Germany on a self-employed basis after completing their studies (section 21 of the Residence Act). This is subject to the following conditions:

- a superior economic interest or a special regional need,
- a positive effect of the activity on the economy, and
- secure funding.

As a rule, these preconditions are met if at least €250,000 is invested and five jobs are created.



Former students of German schools abroad

Former students of German schools abroad have had easier access to the German labour market since 1 January 2009. They are now permitted to remain in Germany not just for higher education, but also for any certified (three-year) in-company training course in a state-recognised or comparably-regulated training occupation.

If former students of German schools abroad:

- have concluded three years of training in Germany, or
- have concluded higher education in Germany or abroad, they may be admitted to any employment in Germany that is appropriate to their vocational skills.

They receive the “residence permit for the purpose of employment” required to this end if:

- the general entry requirements are met (cf. p. 3), and
- the working conditions are not less favourable than those of comparable German employees. This applies in particular to the amount of remuneration.

Helpful addresses

Clear, concise information in English on the German economy, the most important sectors and research in Germany: www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de

- > **English**
- > **Economy**

The Federal Employment Agency has compiled information for job-seekers from abroad on how to look for work in Germany: www.ba-auslandsvermittlung.de

Information in English about everything that is important for foreign employees in Germany. The necessary formalities are also explained. There is a large number of helpful links regarding questions about Germany and work:

- www.bund.de
- > **English**
- > **Working in Germany**

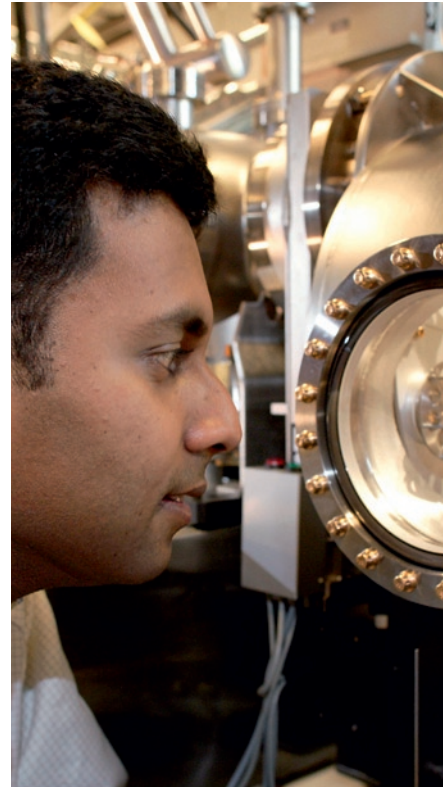
Descriptions of the recognition procedures for foreign educational qualifications and the agencies responsible: www.berufliche-erkennung.de

Database on the recognition of foreign qualifications: www.anabin.de

Click on “Search for a job” and you can search vacancies in Germany and 30 other European countries: <http://europa.eu.int/eures>

Here, EU citizens will find an overview of the regulations for taking up employment in another EU state:

- <http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope>
- > **Informations for citizens**
- > **Working in Europe**



www.bmas.de

Ordering address

Order no.: A 388
Tel.: +49 (0) 180-515 15 10*
Fax: +49 (0) 180-515 15 11*

Postal address: Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
Postfach
53107 Bonn, Germany

e-mail: info@bmas.bund.de
Internet: <http://www.bmas.de>

* Subject to charges: Check the prices charged by your telephone service provider – usually 14 cents/minute from the German land line network.

Published by

Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
11017 Berlin, Germany