Employing International Students in Germany as Skilled Workers

Foreign students who complete their studies in Germany are a valuable addition to your company. Find out here how you can employ and integrate these students in your company while they are still studying.

Foreign students at German universities are a group with high potential. In addition to their professional qualifications, they are usually already familiar with the cultural side of Germany as well as the language. Moreover, you can save time when recruiting foreign students because they are already inside the country.

Employment of foreign students during their studies

Students from third countries who are in possession of a **residence permit** for studying **(Section 16b of the Residence Act [AufenthG])** are allowed to work up to 140 full days or 280 half-days a year without the approval of the **Federal Employment Agency (BA)**. The following rules apply:

- Working hours of up to four hours count as a half-day, otherwise they count as a full day.
- Alternatively, students from third countries as well as those from EU and **EFTA** member states are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week during the lecture period, just like German students. During the semester break, they are allowed to earn money unrestrictedly.

For student jobs, e.g. student assistants at higher education institutions or jobs in close relation to the studies, this rule does not apply. These jobs can be pursued unrestrictedly in regard to the working hours.

Apart from this, according to **Section 16b (4) of the Residence Act (AufenthG)**, there are alternative prospects for international students from third countries after or even before graduating:

- **Working as a skilled worker:** on special conditions, a job offer as a **skilled worker** can already be accepted during the stay as a student. This entails a change of residence permit to a **residence permit for qualified employment** without having to graduate prior to that. In this context, it is important that the employment is not temporary. You can obtain detailed information on this topic at the competent **foreigners authority**.
- **Vocational training instead of studying:** instead of studying, completing qualified vocational training is also an option. In order to start vocational training, the residence permit must be changed according to the new purpose. A residence permit to complete vocational training requires an assessment of the Federal Employment Agency (BA) and additional special requirements must be met. You can find further information on this residence permit in the "**Visa for vocational training**" section. If you wish to receive detailed information, please contact the competent foreigners authority.

Employment after successful completion of studies in Germany

After completing their studies in Germany, foreign graduates can immediately take up **qualified employment**. In order to look for a job in Germany, they will usually receive a residence permit valid for up to 18 months.

Campus-Initiative for International Talents of the DAAD

The DAAD's "Campus Initiative for International Talents" supports German universities to better prepare international students and graduates for the German labour market. This includes the programmes "FIT" (Promotion of international talents for integration into studies and the labour market) and "Profi plus" (Academic Training for the German Labour Market). There are more than 100 projects in total at many different universities. The offers range from language courses to mentoring programmes. As a company, you can get in touch with a participating university in your region to meet international talents. You can find all the programmes and universities in this **interactive map**.

Video: From studying to working in Germany – a success story

Information on the web

Federal Employment Agency (BA)

Information on admission to the labour market

KOFA (Centre of Excellence for securing a supply of qualified professionals)

International students at German universities: qualified professionals for international market

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