Work visa

Qualified skilled workers from third countries need a visa to work in Germany. Find out here what the requirements are for a work visa.

Skilled workers from third countries must generally apply for a **visa** at the German embassy in their country of origin before entering Germany. The presentation of a signed employment contract is an important requirement.

Work contract possible before visa approval

A non-EU applicant may (conditionally) sign the employment contract before obtaining a valid visa. You can state in the contract that it will only take effect once a valid visa has been issued.

Different types of work visa

The following types of work visa exist, depending on the applicant's level of qualification:

- Visa for skilled workers holding a **university** degree (**Section 18b of the Residence Act [AufenthG]**)
- **EU Blue Card** (**Section 18g of the Residence Act [AufenthG]**)
- Visa for skilled workers with vocational training qualifications (**Section 18a of the Residence Act [AufenthG]**)
- Visa for employment in the case of practical professional knowledge (**Section 19c (2) of the Residence Act [AufenthG]** in conjunction with **Section 6 of the Ordinance on the Employment of Foreigners [BeschV]**)

There are also special regulations for certain groups of professionals, such as **healthcare assistants and professional drivers**, and for nationals of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia (**Western Balkans Regulation**).

In the "**Visa**" section of the Make it in Germany portal for skilled workers, you can find out what the requirements are for each type of visa and how the visa process works.

Taking up employment after entering Germany

Once a foreign **skilled worker** has arrived in Germany, they can take up the intended job with the visa issued for the purpose of taking up employment. During the validity of the entry visa, they must apply for a **residence permit** from the local **foreigners authority** in good time before the visa expires.

Visa must match intended purpose of stay

Entry visas are usually issued for a specific purpose. When your potential employee applies for a visa, they must state the correct purpose of their stay so that they can start work as soon as they are in Germany. Entering the country with a short-stay (Schengen) visa, e.g. for tourist purposes, does not entitle the holder to take up employment in Germany.

Here you find an **overview** of how to secure your livelihood according to the purpose of stay.

Video: Extending work visas

Opportunity Card allows trial work and part-time employment

If your potential skilled worker is in possession of an **opportunity card** for the purpose of seeking employment, they are entitled to perform trial work for a maximum of two weeks per employer and / or part-time employment of up to 20 works per week. This will enable you to get to know the candidate better and assess their skills profile at work. If you then decide to employ the skilled worker full time, they will first need to apply for a residence permit for taking up employment from the local foreigners authority in Germany.

Information on the web

Federal Employment Agency (BA)

Information on admission to the labour market (available in German)

Print page

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