Opportunity Card for Jobseekers in Germany: Requirements and Points System

Are you interested in coming to Germany to look for a suitable job? Learn about the requirements for a job search opportunity card here.

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The **opportunity card** (**Section 20a of the Residence Act [AufenthG]**) improves your chances of making contact with German employers and finding **qualified employment** or a **qualification measure** for recognition in Germany.

To find out if you need to apply for a **visa** to enter Germany, please refer to the "**How do I apply for a visa?**" section. Please note: The opportunity card is not a requirement for coming to Germany. Alternatively, you can search for a job from your home country. With an offer of qualified employment, you can then apply for **other types of visas**. With the **Quick Check**, you can quickly find out what options you have for entering Germany.

In this video: How to get the job search opportunity card

Requirements for the opportunity card: what you should know

Are you from a country outside the EU or the **EFTA** and would like to apply for an opportunity card under Section 20a of the Residence Act [AufenthG]? There are two options for applying for the opportunity card, each subject to different requirements:

1. you have a **non-academic vocational qualification** or **academic degree** which is recognised in Germany, or
2. you obtain at least six points in the points system.

Basic requirement: you must have sufficient financial resources to fund your job search in Germany. During the visa process, you can demonstrate this ability with a blocked bank account (containing a minimum of **€1,091 net per month**, amount applicable in 2026) or a **declaration of commitment**.

Option 1: Opportunity card with a qualification recognised in Germany ("skilled worker")

The following applies to this option:

- You have a foreign vocational or academic **qualification** that is fully **recognised** in Germany.
- Alternatively, you have obtain a non-academic vocational qualification or academic degree **in Germany**.

If one of these applies to you, you are considered a **skilled worker** and do not have to go through the points system.

Please note: For option 1, you do not need to prove your language skills – however, German language skills are recommended to improve your chances of finding a job in Germany.

Job search immediately after completing your studies or vocational training in Germany

If you obtained your academic or non-academic vocational qualification in Germany, you can immediately apply for a **residence permit** for jobseekers under Section 20 of the Residence Act [AufenthG]. This gives you more time to look for a job (18 months instead of one year) and you can work part-time without restrictions during this time. For more information, see the "**Prospects after graduation**" section and the "**Prospects after your vocational training**" section.

Option 2: Opportunity card via the points system

If you do not have a German qualification or a qualification recognised in Germany, the following requirements apply in order to obtain the opportunity card:

- **You have successfully completed vocational or academic training.** It is important that the qualification **is recognised by the country in which you obtained it**. In addition, your non-academic vocational qualification must have required at least two years of vocational training. To support your visa application, you need a positive result from the **anabin information portal** or a **Statement of Comparability (Zeugnisbewertung)** if you have a foreign **university** degree. If you have a vocational qualification, you need a positive "**Digital Statement on Professional Qualification" (Digitale Auskunft zur Berufsqualifikation)**.
  - **AHK certificates:** Have you completed training at a German **Chamber of Commerce Abroad (AHK)**? Your certificate (category A) may be suitable if the legal requirements for vocational training are met. The chamber where you obtained your qualification can tell you whether this applies to your qualification. General information on this can be found at **the website** of the **Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)**.
- **Proof of language proficiency:** You either have German language skills of at least level A1 as defined by the **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)** or English language skills of at least level B2 (CEFR). Even if you apply for the opportunity card without a certificate of German language proficiency, knowledge of German will improve your chances of finding a job in Germany.
- **6 points achieved:** You score at least 6 points in the points system. You can find out how to score points in the next section.

The points system for the opportunity card simply explained

The points system is only relevant for you in **Option 2**. This means if you cannot demostrate a German educational qualification or full recognition of your foreign qualification. To apply for an opportunity card visa, you must provide evidence of a formal qualification and the required language skills (in addition to the points).

You must score a total of at least 6 points in the points system to receive an opportunity card.
You can collect points for the following criteria:

- **Equivalence of qualification:** If you have already applied for **recognition** of your foreign qualification and it has been found to be **partially equivalent**, you will receive four points. You will still receive the four points if, in the case of a regulated profession, you are required to participate in compensatory measures before obtaining a **licence to practise** your profession.
- **Qualification in a shortage occupation:** If your formal qualification is in a shortage occupation, you will get one point. To find out which occupations are considered as **shortage occupations**, consult the **List of shortage occupations**.
- **Professional experience:** You will also be awarded points for your previous professional experience in relation to your formal qualification that you gained after graduating. Two points will be awarded if you can demonstrate that you have at least two years'professional experience within the last five years. If you have at least five years' professional experience within the last seven years, you will get three points.
- **Language skills:** You will also earn points if your German language skills are above level A1 (CEFR).
  - One point is awarded at level A2,
  - two points at level B1 and three points at level B2 or above.
  - An additional point will be awarded if you have English at level C1 or above, or if you are a native speaker.
- **Age:** You also receive points if you are a certain age at the time of your visa application. People who are no older than 35 get two points until the day they turn 35. All those aged between 35 and 40 are awarded one point.
- **Previous stays in Germany:** Have you already lived in Germany? If you can prove that you have resided legally in Germany for a continuous period of at least six months in the last five years, you will receive one point. Examples of such stays include study, language and work stays. Stays for the purpose of tourism or visiting people do not count. Copies of old passports and the visas and entry stamps they contain can be submitted as evidence.
- **Skilled worker potential of spouses or life partners:** Are you married or in a partnership and would like to come to Germany with your partner on an opportunity card? If your partner already meets the requirements for an opportunity card, you will be awarded one point in the points system. With this in mind, he or she can also do the **self-check: opportunity card**.

Please note that all information you provide in the above categories must be supported by appropriate evidence or certificates for the visa application.

Self-Check

Self-Check "opportunity card": do you meet the requirements?

Answer a few questions and get an initial assessment of whether the opportunity card is an option for you. Start by selecting your nationality.

Please select country

Did you get a positive result in the self-check? Congratulations! You can now **apply for an opportunity card online**. If you are already living in Germany with a valid **residence title**, please contact your **local foreigners authority**.

Do you have any further questions about applying for the oportunity card? The "**Questions and answers regarding the opportunity card**" section addresses common concerns, for example, how to demonstrate that you meet the individual requirements.

Prospects with the opportunity card after entry

Jobsearch in Germany

Opportunity cards are issued initially as job search opportunity cards for a maximum of **one year**. The card allows you to look for gainful employment in Germany, i.e. you can seek employment or become self-employed.

Finding a job successfully in Germany

To get the most out of your job search stay, you should start preparing for your job search as early as possible: How should your application be structured to convince a German employer? Which contact points can help you? For more information, please refer to the "**Job Search and Application"** section.

Part-time jobs and trial work: this is permitted

While you are looking for gainful employment, you are allowed to have one or more part-time jobs (**secondary employment**) totalling 20 hours a week. You can also do job trials for a maximum of two weeks per employer as part of your job search. The aim of the job trial must be either to obtain qualified employment, an apprenticeship or a qualification programme.

Once you have found a job

If you have found a specific job or apprenticeship, or if you want to become self-employed, you can apply to your local **foreigners authority** for one of the existing residence permits for qualified employment, for **vocational training**, for the **recognition of your qualification**s or for **self-employment**. If your job meets the requirements for qualified employment but you are not eligible for any other residence title, your opportunity card will be extended for up to two years (**opportunity card extension**).

Apply for the opportunity card online

Do you meet the necessary requirements? Then you can apply for the opportunity card online here: **Consular Services Portal of the Federal Foreign Office**.

Coming to Germany with the Opportunity Card

Information on the web

Federal Foreign Office (FFO)

You can find out which visa you need in order to come to Germany with the Visa-Navigator.

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)

Centre of Excellence for Asylum, Migration and Integration in Germany

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