

Settlement permit

Would you like to stay in Germany on a permanent basis? Find out about the requirements for obtaining a settlement permit.

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Staying in Germany indefinitely: the settlement permit

Are you already working and living in Germany on a temporary **residence permit** and would like to stay here permanently? As a **skilled worker**, you may, under certain conditions, be able to apply for a permanent **residence title**, also known as a **settlement permit**, under [Section 18c of the Residence Act \(AufenthG\)](#) .

A settlement permit opens many doors: you can live in Germany with your family without any restrictions. Additionally, you are allowed to take up employment as either an employee or a self-employed person.

There is a fee for applying for a settlement permit, which varies according to the status group. The fee, up to approximately €150, must be paid at the time of application. Please contact your local **foreigners authority** to find out about the exact amount.

Settlement permit for skilled workers

According to the Residence Act (AufenthG), you are considered a “skilled worker” if you belong to one of the following groups of people:

- Persons who have successfully completed qualified vocational education and training in Germany or who hold a foreign vocational qualification that is equivalent to one acquired in Germany ([Section 18a of the Residence Act \[AufenthG\]](#) in conjunction with [Section 18 \(3\) No. 1 of the Residence Act \[AufenthG\]](#))
- Persons with a German **university** degree, a recognised foreign university degree or a foreign university degree comparable to a German degree ([Section 18b of the Residence Act \[AufenthG\]](#) in conjunction with [Section 18 \(3\) No. 2 of the Residence Act \[AufenthG\]](#))
- **EU Blue Card** holders ([Section 18g of the Residence Act \[AufenthG\]](#))
- International researchers in accordance with [Directive \(EU\) 2016/801](#) (Section 18d of the Residence Act [AufenthG])

What are the settlement permit requirements for skilled workers?

- You have held a residence title under Sections 18a, 18b, 18d or 18g of the Residence Act (AufenthG) for three years.
- You are able to cover your living costs without assistance from the state.
- You have paid compulsory or voluntary contributions to the statutory pension insurance scheme for at least 36 months.
- You have a job that your residence permit allows you to do.
- You are able to demonstrate German language skills at level B1 of the **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)**.

- You have a basic knowledge of the legal and social system and way of life in Germany. This is usually proven by the “[Living in Germany](#)” test.
- You have sufficient living space for yourself and any family members living with you.

If you meet these requirements, we recommend that you make an appointment to apply for a settlement permit at your [local foreigners authority](#) . The foreigners authority can also tell you what documents you need to submit.

Please beware: in some cases, a settlement permit can be issued under facilitated conditions. This is the case if you belong to one of the following groups of people:

- EU Blue Card holders
- People who have completed higher education or vocational training in Germany
- Highly skilled workers
- Self-employed persons

Settlement permit for EU Blue Card holders

If you are an EU Blue Card holder (Section 18g of the Residence Act [AufenthG]), you can request a settlement permit under the facilitated conditions set out in [Section 18c \(2\) of the Residence Act](#)  (AufenthG). The following requirements apply to you:

- You have been in **qualified employment** for at least 27 months and have paid into the statutory pension insurance scheme.
- You are able to demonstrate German language skills at level A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). If you can demonstrate knowledge of German at level B1 CEFR, the period is reduced from 27 to 21 months.
- You have a basic knowledge of the legal and social system and way of life in Germany. This is usually proven by the “[Living in Germany](#)” test.
- You can demonstrate that you have sufficient living space.
- You can demonstrate that you are able to cover your living costs.

Settlement permit after vocational training or academic studies

If you have successfully completed higher education or vocational training in Germany, special provisions also apply to you with regard to the settlement permit:

- You have held a residence permit for employment as a “skilled worker” (residence permit under Sections 18a, 18b, 18d or 18g of the Residence Act [AufenthG]) for at least two years.
- You have a job that your residence permit allows you to do.
- You have paid into the statutory pension insurance scheme for 24 months.
- You are able to demonstrate German language skills at level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and have a basic knowledge of the legal and social system and way of life in Germany. This is usually proven by the “[Living in Germany](#)” test.
- You can demonstrate that you have sufficient living space.

Settlement permit for highly skilled workers

In special cases, highly skilled workers can obtain a settlement permit under [Section 18c \(3\) of the Residence Act](#) [↗](#) (AufenthG) immediately, without having to spend a certain period of time in Germany first.

For example, if you are a scientist with special technical knowledge or a teacher in a prominent position with several years of professional experience, you can obtain a settlement permit immediately upon entering Germany.

In this case, it is important that:

- you can prove you have completed academic training and
- there is reason to assume that you will be able to integrate into the way of life in Germany and cover your living costs without assistance from the state.

Ideally, you should have all the necessary documents ready before entering Germany so that you can obtain your settlement permit immediately.

Settlement permit for self-employed persons

If you have a residence permit for **self-employment** under [Section 21 of the Residence Act \(AufenthG\)](#) [↗](#), you can request a settlement permit ([Section 21 \(4\) of the Residence Act \[AufenthG\]](#) [↗](#)) after just three years. To obtain a settlement permit, you must meet the following requirements:

- At the time of application, you have a valid residence title allowing you to be self-employed.

- You must have been self-employed for three years.
- The work you are currently doing gives reason to expect that it will continue to develop in a sustainable way, given the success and longevity of your business activities.
- You can demonstrate that you and your family members are able to cover your living costs on a permanent basis.

If you do not belong to any of the above migrant groups, visit the [website of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees \(BAMF\)](#)  to find out what you can do to obtain a settlement permit in Germany.

Settlement permit for spouses of skilled workers

Have you moved to Germany to join your spouse (registered civil partner)? After a certain period of time, you will receive your own settlement permit if you meet the following requirements.

- Your spouse (registered civil partner) has a settlement permit for skilled workers under Section 18c of the Residence Act (AufenthG).
- You have had a residence permit for at least three years.
- You work at least 20 hours per week and have the required work permit.
- You and your spouse cohabit as partners.
- You are able to demonstrate German language skills at level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).
- You have a basic knowledge of the legal and social system and way of life in Germany. This is usually proven by the “[Living in Germany](#)” test.

Staying in the EU indefinitely: the permanent EU residence permit

The permanent EU residence permit ([Section 9a of the Residence Act \[AufenthG\]](#) ) is a permanent residence permit that is generally comparable to the settlement permit. Holders of this residence title can migrate to almost every EU country and get a residence permit under facilitated conditions.

You get the permanent EU residence permit if you meet the following requirements:

- You have legally lived in Germany for at least five years;
- you can financially support yourself and your family members;

- you have a sufficient command of German and basic knowledge of the legal and social system and way of life in Germany;
- you have enough living space for yourself and your family;
- you have paid the compulsory or voluntary contributions to statutory pension insurance for at least 60 months.

For certain residence titles, it is not possible to obtain the permanent EU residence permit, e.g., those in possession of a residence permit for educational purposes or for certain humanitarian reasons.

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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Date: 2026-09-22 12:26:21 GMT