



Visa for freelance business

Would you like to be self-employed in a non-regulated profession? To do so, you will need a residence permit and you will have to meet certain requirements.

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> **Visa for freelance business**

In Germany, there are two ways of setting up your own business: you can either work as a freelancer (*Freiberufler*) or set up a business as a self-employed entrepreneur (*Gewerbe*). Find out more about the best approach for you in the article on [types of new businesses](#).

If you would like to embark on a freelance career as a *Freiberufler*, you will have to apply for a “residence permit for the purpose of freelance employment” (*Aufenthaltserlaubnis zur Ausübung einer freiberuflichen Tätigkeit*) at the competent authority. You will be granted a permit if you can prove that you will be able to finance your undertaking, make a living for yourself, and have the permission to practise in your profession, where needed. If you are older than 45 years of age, you also require adequate pension provisions.

Special rules apply to self-employed artists. You can find out more about this in the "[Special regulations for artists](#)" section.

[Advisory services](#) will help you assess whether you fulfil these requirements.

Term of your residence permit

If your business idea is successful and you are able to make a living for yourself and your family as a result of your business, you can have your [residence permit](#) extended, which is initially limited to a maximum of three years. After five years, you can obtain a [settlement permit](#), which will allow you to settle down in Germany for an unlimited period.

Fees

When you apply for a [visa](#), a residence permit, settlement permit or an extension of these documents, you generally have to pay a fee. The fee depends on your location, the duration and the purpose of your stay. A residence permit will cost you a maximum of €100 while a settlement permit will cost €147 at most. As a rule, the fee for visas is €90. Please consult the competent [foreigners authority](#) or mission abroad about the fees you can expect.

Documents

When you apply for a residence permit, you generally have to present the following documents:

- Completed application form
- Valid passport
- [Business plan](#)
- Proof of health insurance
- [Researchers and academics](#): current employment contract
- Graduates from German universities: copy of your [academic degree](#)
- People over the age of 45: proof of adequate pension provisions

It would be wise to also submit documents on the following topics:

- Your references
- Your entrepreneurial experience



Note: Individual requirements may apply when submitting your application

This list is not exhaustive or universal, since the documents you require will depend on the circumstances of your individual case. The best approach is to contact your mission abroad or foreigners authority before you apply and ask them for an information leaflet. There, you can also find out about your requirements for proof of health insurance. Your competent mission abroad or foreigners authority will also be able to determine whether your pension provisions are adequate.

Information on the web

Start-up Portal

[Requirements under residence law](#)

BMWK Authority Finder

[The Authority Finder will guide you to the right local public authorities and agencies for your requirements](#)

Recognition in Germany

[Information on the recognition of foreign non-academic vocational qualifications and a list of contact points](#)



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