

Immigration to Germany for the purpose of taking up employment: Western Balkans regulation and Skilled Immigration Act

You currently have two possibilities to enter Germany to take up employment:

1. To nationals of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, the so-called "Western Balkans regulation" applies. This regulation expires at the end of 2023. According to the regulation, the Federal Employment Agency can grant approval for the exercise of any employment with the so-called "Vorrangprüfung", the priority examination (from 1 March 2020). However, you need an employment contract or a binding job offer. **The recognition of your qualification is not a prerequisite for this.** Unless you work in a regulated profession (e.g. doctor), in which case your qualification must be recognised. Due to the great demand, waiting times for visa application appointments at German embassies in the above-mentioned countries are currently well over one year.

2. You can seek immigration through the new "Skilled Immigration Act", which will come into force on 1 March 2020. **For this you need a concrete job offer as well as the recognition of your qualifications** in order to apply for a visa. Under certain conditions you can also enter the country to look for a job. However, it is important that you first have your foreign qualification recognised by the competent authority in Germany. You can apply from abroad. You can find further information on the recognition procedure and your competent authority here: <https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/>.

You can apply for the recognition of your qualification before 1 March 2020. However, you can only make an appointment at the German Embassy for a visa once you have received recognition of your university degree or vocational qualification from Germany. This usually takes a few months. If your qualification has not been fully recognised, you also have the possibility to take up training and skill developments in Germany in order to obtain full recognition.

We would like to point out a new procedure created by the law, the so-called "beschleunigtes Fachkräfteverfahren" (Expedited procedure for qualified professionals), in which your future employer in Germany can initiate the procedure at the competent immigration authorities for a separate fee. This procedure is associated with shortened processing times for the authorities involved, including the visa offices.

Here you will find useful information on entering Germany via the new "Skilled Immigration Act": <https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa/kinds-of-visa/work/skilled-immigration-act/>