

Prerequisites for naturalisation



If you are not German by birth, you can be naturalised if you meet the following requirements:

- You have been living in Germany legally for at least eight years.
- You have an indefinite right of residence in Germany (for example as an EU citizen with Freedom of movement, or as the holder of a **settlement permit**), or a limited residence permit that can be converted to an indefinite residence title. However, a residence permit for studying is insufficient.
- You are able to support yourself and your dependents without social welfare benefits and unemployment benefit: You satisfy this requirement especially if at the time you apply for naturalisation you are in adequately paid employment.
- You have sufficient knowledge of German: You do not need to have a perfect command of the German language to obtain naturalisation. It is enough to be able to prove your oral and written German skills in a language exam to at least Level B1 (Common European Framework of Reference). A German school-leaving certificate or a vocational training diploma or university degree from Germany are also proof of your German-language skills.
- You have passed a naturalisation test. By passing the **naturalisation test** [↗](#), you provide proof of your knowledge of the German legal and social system. Do you have a German school-leaving certificate or a degree in law, social or political science in Germany? If so, you are not usually required to take the naturalisation test: your German school-leaving certificate or degree will usually suffice in that case. You will find a **questionnaire** [↗](#) to prepare for the naturalisation test on the Internet
- You have not been convicted of any criminal offence: If you have been convicted of a crime or are under investigation in Germany or abroad on suspicion of a crime, you must notify the naturalisation authorities. The naturalisation authorities will only be able to make a decision about your application when the investigation has been completed.
- You accept the Basic Law: The Basic Law (Grundgesetz) is the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany. If you apply for German nationality you must acknowledge in writing and orally that you will respect the Basic Law and the laws of the Federal Republic of Germany and refrain from doing anything that could harm it. You make your acknowledgement to the naturalisation authorities.
- You give up your previous nationality: When you are naturalised you will have to give up your previous nationality. There are exceptions to this rule for certain countries of origin, however. For example, nationals of the EU member states and of Switzerland are allowed to keep their previous nationality when they obtain German citizenship. Other exceptions exist for certain states such as Morocco, Iran and Algeria. Deprivation of nationality is deemed unacceptable in these states.

As the issue of naturalisation includes many specifics and each case is different you should talk to the naturalisation authorities before applying. For example, underage children and the spouses of migrants who are entitled to naturalisation may also be naturalised at the discretion of the naturalisation

authorities even if they have not lived in Germany for eight years.

You can find out which naturalisation office is responsible for your case from your local town hall or district authority, or the foreign nationals' registration authority of the municipality where you live.

Regulations concerning children

Principle of parentage and principle of birthplace: German nationality is based on the principle of parentage. That means that a child who has at least one parent with German nationality automatically obtains German nationality at birth. The principle of birthplace is also valid. According to this, a child of foreign parents can automatically obtain German nationality if born in Germany if one of its parents has lived legally in Germany for at least eight years and held a settlement permit or an indefinite residence title at the time of the birth.

Dual nationality: Children of foreign parents who were born in Germany can have German nationality in addition to the nationality of their parents. The prerequisite is that they grew up in Germany. According to the law, a person grew up in Germany if, by the time they turn 21, they:

- have lived in Germany for eight years, or
- have attended a school in Germany for six years, or
- have completed their schooling or vocational training in Germany.

Information on the web

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)

Centre of Excellence for Asylum, Migration and Integration in Germany

Preparatory questionnaire for naturalisation test

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa/living-permanently-in-germany/naturalisation/prerequisites>

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