

Recruiting professionals from abroad: a step-by-step guide



Employers considering recruiting staff from abroad often face new challenges and open questions reach the foreign professionals abroad? Is a visa required? How can the integration be ensured? In overview of the most important steps in recruiting professionals from abroad is outlined – from put advertisement to the legal regulations and the arrival of the foreign professional in Germany.

In many fields the lack of professionals is coming to head. In the 1st quarter of 2021, the business 24% of SMEs in Germany were hampered by skills shortages, according to the KfW-ifo Skilled Lab. Against this background, many companies are considering looking for staff abroad. However, many to proceed.

Approaching the target groups appropriately is the first step

Employers who want to hire foreign professionals should keep a few things in mind right from the start with **addressing and recruiting** applicants. A company that is open to employing foreign staff should reach outwards.

The employer services and the **Virtual Welcome Center** [of the Federal Employment Agency](#) support the recruitment of foreign professionals. Furthermore, at the beginning of the process employers can check if there are current placement projects for their sector and region that support the placement, prepare the integration of the professionals. A selection of **current projects** [can be found here](#) on the portal.

If a company is looking for employees on its own, it should adapt its **job offers** [to the target groups](#) in **several languages**, especially in English. This way, interested parties can find out about the recruitment early stage, even if they do not speak perfect German yet. The company thus signals a cosmopolitan and can present itself as an attractive employer.

Employers can publish vacancies on the **"Make it in Germany" job listings**, for example. The advantage of this platform is that the job offers are made directly accessible to an international audience. This **guide** explains the publishing works.

If an interesting application has been received and the employer would like to get to know the professional better, **interviews** are a good option, owing to the possible great distance. To be able to better assess the professional when getting to know each other, employers can inform themselves about **country and occupational requirements** and prepare a list of questions.

Taking the legal framework into account

Before recruiting staff from abroad, employers should inform themselves about the regulations on professional recognition.

Recognition of foreign qualifications:

For persons from abroad, access to the German labour market depends on their acquired qualifications. If a qualification was obtained abroad, it must generally be recognised in Germany or be comparable to a German qualification. Particularly for persons from third countries (i.e. who do not come from the EU, Switzerland, Liechtenstein or Iceland), a **recognition of the professional or university degree** is usually required to obtain the entry visa. Certain occupational groups, e.g. in the medical field, require a licence to practice a profession.

Good to know: For the specific case that the professional needs to acquire additional skills in Germany, a **visa for the recognition of foreign qualifications** can be issued.

Visa and residence regulations:

EU and EFTA nationals do not need a visa or special permit to enter, stay or work in Germany. According to the Freedom of Movement Act/EU, professionals from these countries are given the same rights as German citizens. Professionals from all other countries² generally need a visa or residence permit to enter and work in Germany.

In order to obtain a [visa for the purpose of employment](#) the professional must usually provide a **written employment contract** or a concrete job commitment when applying for a visa.

In the visa procedure, the **approval of the Federal Employment Agency (BA)** for employment in Germany is an internal procedure between the authorities. This approval is granted

- if the qualification of the skilled worker matches the job requirements.
- if the working conditions (working hours, salary, etc.) are comparable to those of German employees.



Tip: The employer can ask the Federal Employment Agency in advance to check whether the required approval is met before the visa or residence permit is applied for. The agency does the examination in the form of a **"Declaration of Employment"** [link](#), which has been completed in full and signed by the employer.

Info-Box

Foreign students [link](#) already living in Germany as well as university graduates enjoy easier access to the German labor market: they can switch between studies and employment with few hurdles.

Fast-track procedure for skilled workers:

If the skilled worker and the company have found each other and do not want to wait long, or if there are bottlenecks at the competent German embassy, the fast-track procedure for skilled workers can be used. The employer requests the procedure at the competent Foreigners Authority for a fee of 411 euros. For an overview of the **points of contact** [link](#) for the fast-track procedure in the federal states on our portal.

Arrival and onboarding

Once the new employees have arrived in Germany or are about to arrive, it is time for employers to address questions of **integration**.

Integration into the company:

Possible **support needs** – linguistic and technical – should be clarified at the latest at the time of a qualified professional. Companies can appoint a contact person for newcomers, compile a welcome package, and sensitise the staff through intercultural trainings, if necessary. Such measures not only benefit the professional directly, but also bind them to the company, create a good working atmosphere and make the company attractive to other prospective employees from abroad.

Promote integration into society:

In addition to in-company integration measures, employers can help their newly hired skilled workers by supporting them in their everyday lives – for example, in finding a place to live and dealing with the bureaucracy. The continued active promotion of language skills is also crucial for successful integration. If the **foreigner is supported in language acquisition** [link](#), it will be noticeable in their everyday work. The Federal Government and Refugees provides financial support for **vocational language courses** [link](#) if there is a need for them.

Further information on the portal

- [Make it in Germany - For employers](#) [link](#)
- [At a glance: Attracting professionals from abroad](#) [link](#)
- [Guide "How can I recruit a qualified professional from abroad? What employers need to know"](#) [link](#)

Sources :

[1] [KIW-Ifo-Skilled Labour Barometer](#) [link](#)

[2] Nationals of Australia, Israel, Japan, Canada, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the USA do not require a visa to enter Germany. The required residence permit can be applied for in Germany. If employment is to be started in Germany, it is nevertheless advisable to apply for an entry visa for the purpose of employment at the competent mission abroad.