

Table of Contents

Work and training	2
Work and training in the District of Cuxhaven	2
General information	2
Job Applications	2
Find training or a job	3
Forms of education	6
Job Centre, Employment Agency and Youth Employment Agency	7
Forms of paid employment	10
Self-employment	11
Legal information about work	12
Unemployment and social benefits	12
Labour contract	14
Working times	14
Overtime	15
Minimum wage	15
Salary statement	15
Taxes and social security payments	16
Holiday	17
Illness	18
Accident at work	18
Labour exploitation and undeclared work	18
Handing in your notice	19
Works councils and unions	19
Job Reference	20
Recognition of a foreign vocational training qualification	20
Internships	21
General information about an internship	21
Important rights and duties when doing an internship	22
Vocational orientation internship	23
Entry qualification	24
Ten tips for interns	24
Voluntary Year of Social Service and Federal Voluntary Service	24

Work and training

Work and training in the District of Cuxhaven

General information

To find a good job in Germany, it is important to have completed vocational training or a degree.

On the following pages you will find **information and contacts for training and starting a career**.

Do you have questions about education? Or would you like information on careers? On the website of the [Federal Employment Agency](#) you will find an overview of various educational programmes for people from abroad who are new to the district of Cuxhaven. You will also find a lot of important information there.

Links to apprenticeship exchanges can also be found in this app under the heading [Offers](#).

Depending on your residence status, different conditions apply under which you are allowed to work. You can find information on this [here](#).

If you have already completed qualifications or vocational training abroad, you should endeavour to have these qualifications recognised. You can find more information on this under [Recognition of foreign qualifications](#).

There are around 400 training occupations in Germany. If you want to do vocational training, you can find information on this under [Forms of training](#) (dual and full-time school-based).

As a young person or young adult, you must attend a vocational school (BBS). This applies if you are doing vocational training, but also otherwise. The [vocational schools](#) in the district of Cuxhaven also offer various educational programmes. These prepare you for vocational training or for starting a career. Take advantage of the counselling services offered by the vocational schools in the district. The [youth employment agencies](#) and the [youth migration service](#) can also advise you.

Job Applications

What does an application include?

A written application is important for a successful search for an apprenticeship or job. When you have found an interesting job, you have to write an application. In your application, you describe your qualifications and experience.

An application consists of three parts:

- **Cover letter:** In the personal cover letter, you briefly introduce yourself and describe why you are suitable for the vacant position.
- **Curriculum vitae (CV):** The CV lists your entire professional experience and is set out in the form of a table. Write the dates during which you worked with each company. Include where you undertook training or a course of studies. Specify where you went to school and what type of qualification you left with. You do not have to include a photo in your CV, but many companies prefer it if you do.
- **Certificates:** It is very important that you send copies of your certificates. Certificates are school-leaving certificates, university degrees or job references from the past.

Applications can be submitted in hard copy, online by email or online on the company's website.

Always find out exactly what form of application the employer wants.

The Employment Agency, Job Centre and the Youth Employment Agency offer support with the preparation of application documents by an education partner.

Where can I get help writing an application?

If you need help writing your application and a contact person throughout the application process and while searching for a job, feel free to contact the [Youth Employment Agency](#) (up to 25 years) or the [Federal Employment Agency](#) (over 25 years).

You can find more information and videos on the subject of application documents at [here](#).

Find training or a job

There are different ways to find training or a job:

- [Job board of the Federal Employment Agency](#) or
- [Chamber of Crafts \(Handwerkskammer\) Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Stade](#)
- [Skilled worker exchange of the Chamber of Crafts \(Handwerkskammer\) Hanover](#)
- Search portals like [workbeer](#) (work, training, internship)
- [Apprenticeship exchanges](#)
- Company websites
- Career information fairs
- Daily and weekly newspapers
- Social media
- Ask people in your circle of friends
- Ask or call the companies personally
- Look for notices on or in shops

Help in finding work is also offered by the employment agency or career counselling services provided by the [Employment Agency](#).

If you are receiving support from the [Job Centre](#), you will get help there.

If you are under 25 years old, the [Youth Employment Agency](#) will support you.

The "Start Guide Cuxland" project

"Start Guide Cuxland" aims to support as many immigrant youths and young adults as possible in integrating into Lower Saxony's training and labour market.

Together with you, Start Guide develops integration planning and education planning. Start Guide mediates between immigrants and employers.

Contact person

Antje Mehrtens-Hoffmann

@antje.mehrtens@aboee.de

[☎04706930778](tel:04706930778) or [015259628447](tel:015259628447)

[📍Start Guide Aböe](#)

Project Office Cuxhaven

[📍Ohldorpsweg 1c, 27607 Geestland](#)

[☎047439138250](tel:047439138250)

Chamber of Crafts (HWK; Handwerkskammer)

The Chamber of Crafts (HWK) is responsible for craft trades. The Chamber of Crafts has special contacts for those who wish to start training in this field. It supports the search for training courses or an initial qualification, which can precede training.

There are special rules for craft professions. The Chamber of Crafts is responsible for this.

For example:

- Baker
- Mason
- Painter

Handwerkskammer Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Stade

[📍Friedenstraße 6, 21335 Lüneburg](#)

[☎041317120](tel:041317120)

@info@hwk-bls.de

[📍HWK Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Stade](#)

Elbe-Weser district craftsmen's association:

[📍Deichstraße 13a, 27472 Cuxhaven](#)

[☎0472138061](tel:0472138061)

@info@handwerk-elbeweser.de

[📍Cuxhaven district craftsmen's association office](#)

Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK, Industrie- und Handelskammer)

The Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) is responsible for professions in industrial manufacturing, trade and services. Here, for example, it concerns plant mechanics or traders in wholesale and foreign trade. The Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Industrie- und Handelskammer) in Hanover also has special contacts who provide advice on training, entry qualification and internships:

IHK Stade for the Elbe-Weser region

📍 Am Schäferstieg 2, 21680 Stade

☎ [041415240](tel:041415240)

@info@stade.ihk.de

🌐 [IHK Stade](#)

Cuxhaven office:

📍 Altenwalder Chaussee 7, 27474 Cuxhaven

☎ [0472172160](tel:0472172160)

🌐 [IHK Cuxhaven office](#)

IHK welcome guide

Refugees who are looking for a job or training can be advised and supported by the [Chamber of Industry and Commerce welcome guide](#):

Bettina Doneit

☎ [04412220478](tel:04412220478)

@doneit@oldenburg.ihk.de

Chamber of Agriculture (Landwirtschaftskammer)

The Chamber of Agriculture (Landwirtschaftskammer) is responsible for the so-called "[green professions](#)". These include, for example, jobs such as farmer, fish farmer, gardener, from housekeeping to milking technology.

📍 Mars-la-Tour-Straße 1 - 13, 26121 Oldenburg

☎ [04418010](tel:04418010)

@info@lwk-niedersachsen.de

🌐 [Lower Saxony Chamber of Agriculture \(Landwirtschaftskammer\)](#)

Cuxhaven office:

📍 Bismarckstr. 61, 27570 Bremerhaven

☎ [0471924690](tel:0471924690)

@ast.cuxhaven@lwk-niedersachsen.de

🌐 [LWK Cuxhaven office](#)

LWK welcome guide

Refugees who are looking for a job or training in the field of "green professions" can be advised and supported by the [welcome guide of the Chamber of Agriculture \(Landwirtschaftskammer\)](#):

Lydia Vaske

☎ [0441801239](tel:0441801239)

@lydia.vaske@lwk-niedersachsen.de

Forms of education

In training, you are taught **specialised knowledge** and **skills** in a profession. Most trainings last three years. They end with a final examination.

Further information on the various forms of training (in German) can be found [here](#).

Full-time education

With school-based training, you learn everything in a **vocational school**. You do not have an employer. In addition, you often **don't get any money** during the training. Examples are:

- Educator
- Nursing specialist
- Technical assistants

To finance your education, you have the option of applying for [Bafög](#) or an [education loan](#).

Dual training

Dual training is the most common form of training. Vocational school takes place 1 to 2 times a week. There you will be taught **theoretical knowledge**. You spend the remaining working time at your employer's premises. However, there can also be block teaching. This means that, for example, there is one week of school and three weeks of work per month. You are entitled to a **salary** for this training. The amount is stated in the employment contract. Some examples are:

- Skilled crafts and trades (bricklayer, welder, electrician, roofer, joiner, road builder, etc.)
- Administrative assistant, information technology assistant, office administrator
- (Dental) medical assistant, retail sales assistant

One-year training

A one-year apprenticeship lasts only one year. That way you can work very quickly. The training is almost **exclusively theoretical**. The training is **not paid**. Examples are:

- Beautician
- Elderly care assistant, curative education assistant
- Paramedic, flight attendant

You must [apply for](#) all training courses. The best thing to do is to look for available training places in your area or get advice from the [Employment Agency](#) or the [Youth Employment Agency](#).

The "[Planet Beruf](#)" platform also offers guidance

You can find internships and apprenticeships at the [IHK \(Chamber of Industry and Commerce\) apprenticeship and internship exchange](#) or the [apprenticeship radar](#).

Job Centre, Employment Agency and Youth Employment Agency

District of Cuxhaven Job Centre

Basic benefits for jobseekers (Social Security Code (Sozialgesetzbuch; SGB) II) are provided by the Cuxhaven District Job Centre. The Job Centre is spread over three locations: Cuxhaven, Wesermünde and Hemmoor.

The Job Centre (SGB II) is responsible for **recognised persons entitled to asylum and contingent refugees** (citizen's income).

All **services** are processed there, such as

- standard benefits to safeguard subsistence
- integration into the labour market
- the costs of accommodation and heating and the initial provision of housing and clothing.

In addition to matters relating to benefits, the Job Centre advises, places and promotes its clients with the **aim of taking up employment** and thus earning a living.

Various **qualifications** such as continuing vocational education, retraining, job opportunities, and benefits for employers are available for this purpose.

Contact:

Service hotline


 [04721710100](tel:04721710100)

 Monday to Friday 08:00 to 18:00

Cuxhaven Job Centre

Responsible for the City of Cuxhaven

 [Konrad-Adenauer-Allee 1, 27472 Cuxhaven](#)

 [04721710200](tel:04721710200)


 @jobcenter-cuxhaven@jobcenter-ge.de


 [Cuxhaven Job Centre](#)

 [Book appointment online](#)

Wesermünde Job Centre

Responsible for Beverstedt, Geestland, Hagen, Loxstedt, Schiffdorf and Wurster Nordseeküste

 [Grimsbystraße 1, 27570 Bremerhaven](#)

 [04719449200](tel:04719449200)

 @jobcenter-cuxhaven.wesermuende@jobcenter-ge.de

 [Cuxhaven Job Centre](#)

 [Book appointment online](#)

Hemmoor Job Centre

Responsible for Hemmoor, Börde Lamstedt and Land Hadeln

📍 [Lamstedter Straße 14, 21745 Hemmoor](#)

☎ [04771580260](tel:04771580260)

@ jobcenter-Cuxhaven.Hemmoor@jobcenter-ge.de

📍 [Cuxhaven Job Centre](#)

💡 [Book appointment online](#)

Cuxhaven Employment Agency

The Employment Agency (SGB III) is responsible for **asylum seekers and persons with exceptional leaves to remain (Duldung)** who receive [benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act](#) .

Job placement service

You are looking for a job or want to further your professional development? You can discuss these and many other questions with the employment agency.

Benefits from the Employment Agency:

- Job placement
- Consultations that focus on starting work
- Advice on all aspects of continuing vocational training
- Information on jobs and job searches

Many of your questions can be clarified in a personal conversation, arrange your consultation appointment, also by telephone.

Contact:

Cuxhaven Employment Agency

📍 [Holstenplatz 2, 27472 Cuxhaven](#)

☎ [04141926900](tel:04141926900) available by telephone Monday to Thursday 08:00 to 16:00, Friday from 08:00 to 14:00

@ Cuxhaven@arbeitsagentur.de

📍 [Stade/Cuxhaven Employment Agency](#)

🕒 Opening hours: Monday, Tuesday and Friday: 08:00 to 10:00

Mailing address:

Stade Employment Agency
21676 Stade

Youth Employment Agency (JBA)

The three locations of the JBA are in the urban area of Cuxhaven, in Cadenberge and in Wesermünde (in Bremerhaven and in Schifffdorf). In the JBA, the Job Centre (U25 job placement), the Employment Agency (career counselling) and the District of Cuxhaven (advice centre AHOI) work together under one roof.

The JBA is aimed at all **young people up to the age of 25** who live in the District of Cuxhaven. The focus is on the **phase of life between school and work**. It supports social, professional and societal integration

Berufsberatung (Career Guidance)

The career counselling service of the Employment Agency is attached to the locations of the Youth Employment Agency.

The career counselling service supports you in your choice of studies and career, during your training and at the beginning of your working life. In a personal consultation, you can clarify important questions about your professional future.

The following persons can be advised

- Schoolchildren
- Apprentices
- Students and
- University graduates.

In addition, all those who are seeking vocational training for the first time or want to reorient themselves professionally.

Career guidance can help you, for example,


- to find a suitable profession or a suitable study programme,
- to clarify questions about the contents of an apprenticeship or study programme,
- to find a training place and to apply accordingly,
- to develop alternatives, if the desired occupation does not work,
- to use funding opportunities,
- to obtain information on the training or labour market.

Contact:

 [Youth Employment Agency District of Cuxhaven](#)

 [Flyer](#)

Youth Employment Agency City of Cuxhaven

 Bahnhofstraße 6 – 8, 27472 Cuxhaven

 [04721500440](tel:04721500440)

 jugendberufsagentur@landkreis-cuxhaven.de

Youth Employment Agency Cadenberge

📍 Am Markt 1, 21781 Cadenberge
☎ 04721500440
✉ @jugendberufsagentur@landkreis-cuxhaven.de

Youth Employment Agency Wesermünde

📍 Grimsbystraße 1, 27570 Bremerhaven
☎ 04721 500440
✉ @jugendberufsagentur@landkreis-cuxhaven.de

Youth Employment Agency Schiffdorf

📍 Zum Feldkamp 7, 27619 Schiffdorf
☎ 04721500440
✉ @jugendberufsagentur@landkreis-cuxhaven.de

Forms of paid employment

There are many different ways of working. Depending on how much you work, you earn different amounts of money and have to pay different taxes on it. If you are a refugee, you **absolutely** need a [work permit](#) to work in Germany.

Small-scale employment (mini-job)

- A maximum of 538 euros may be earned tax-free
- The statutory [minimum wage](#) applies
- No social insurance contributions
- No acquisition of an entitlement to unemployment benefit
- No pension rights

Part-time

- Usually comprises a number of hours between 20 and 30 hours per week
- The salary is adjusted compared to the full-time positions
- At least the statutory minimum wage applies
- Entitlement to holidays
- Social security contributions
- Entitlement to pension

Full-time

- Usually comprises a number of hours of 39 or 40 hours per week
- Full salary
- At least the statutory minimum wage applies
- Entitlement to at least 20 days paid leave per year
- Social security contributions
- Entitlement to pension

Temporary work

- The employment contract is concluded with the labour hire company
- The labour hire company employs you for a limited period with customers, maximum 18 months
- At least the statutory minimum wage applies
- Pension scheme contributions
- Entitlement to paid leave

Self-employment

What does self-employment mean?

If you are self-employed or have a self-employed occupation, you have your own shop or business, for example. So you don't work for a company, you are your own boss. This can have many advantages but also disadvantages and risks. In general, there is freedom of trade in Germany, which means that every person may exercise any profession independently. For some professions, however, you have to have the right [qualifications](#) first.

Who can start their own business in Germany?

If you are still in the asylum determination process, your application has been turned down or you have an exceptional leave to remain (Duldung), self-employed work is prohibited. All others have, in principle, the possibility to start a business in Germany if they have a [work permit](#).

Important information for self-employment

There are many things to consider and bear in mind when you want to start your own business. It is a long road with many rules from your first idea to a well-run business. Therefore, you should definitely seek advice before starting a business. Topics you should consider are for example:

- Business plan
- Financing
- Taxes
- Insurance
- Risk assessment

Start-up subsidy

Under certain conditions, the Employment Agency can provide you with financial support for your start-up. Ask for it when you are at the counselling session.

More information

[Online guide "GründerZeiten"](#) (German)

[Business start-up portal](#) (German, French, Italian, Russian and Turkish)

[Guide "Simply Starting a Business in Germany \(Einfach gründen in Deutschland\)"](#) (German, English)

The [agency for business development](#) or the [Employment Agency](#) will be happy to advise you.

Legal information about work

Unemployment and social benefits

Entitlement to unemployment benefit from the Employment Agency

You are unemployed if you are fit for work but not in employment. So you don't earn money to live on. Since Germany is a welfare state, it helps people who cannot, or can only partially, secure their own livelihood.

However: Basically, everyone should be able to earn their own living through work.

You receive unemployment benefit when you lose your job. To do so, you must have worked in Germany for at least 12 months in the past 30 months. Under certain circumstances there are other conditions.

Whether you receive unemployment benefit is decided by the Employment Agency.

1. Sign up for a job!

You have been given notice of termination, you have resigned or your fixed-term employment contract is about to end. The Employment Agency (Agentur für Arbeit) supports you in your search for a new job. Together with you, we will also determine whether you are entitled to financial support.

It is important that you contact us immediately to **look for work**. Register as a jobseeker at least 3 months before the end of the employment relationship. If you only find out about it later, contact us at the latest 3 days later looking for work.

You can do this in different ways:

- on site at your Employment Agency
- By telephone at ☎ [0800/4555500](tel:08004555500) (toll-free)
- [Online](#) at the Employment Agency

2. Personally declare yourself unemployed.

You must register as unemployed with your Employment Agency in person or online on the first day without employment at the latest. This is a prerequisite for receiving unemployment benefit.

3. Fill in the application for unemployment benefit.

Apply for unemployment benefit [online](#) on the internet. Alternatively, you can obtain an application form from your Employment Agency to submit the application in writing.

[Here](#) you will find further information.

Entitlement to citizen's income at the Job Centre

You get the citizen's income if you:

- are unemployed and are not entitled to unemployment benefits.
- receive unemployment benefit, but this is not sufficient to secure your livelihood.
- your monthly income is less than the subsistence level.

You will receive:

- a standard amount (money for daily needs for food, clothing, hygiene, etc.)
- Accommodation costs (costs for rent or accommodation fees)
- Costs of health insurance and long-term care insurance
- Initial equipment for home and newborn child
- Benefits for education and participation
- Support in finding a job or qualifying for the labour market

Contact the [Job Centre](#).

 **Benefits from the Job Centre are subordinate to all other financial support and your own income.**

Entitlement to benefits under the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act with the District of Cuxhaven


Asylum seekers and tolerated persons receive **benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act**.

You will receive the benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act if you:

- are a foreigner without a residence permit.
- are a foreigner with a residence permit according to asylum law, have a toleration certificate or are obliged to leave the country
- have no income or assets.
- earn too little in your job and need support to make a living.

You receive:

- A form of pocket money and another amount for food, clothing and health care
- Cover in the event of illness
- costs of the flat and heating
- Benefits for education and participation

 **Benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act are subordinate to all other financial support and your own income.**

Contact the [Social Welfare Office of the District of Cuxhaven](#)

Labour contract

Anyone who starts work is given an employment contract. The employment contract regulates the most important conditions of an employment relationship such as

- working hours
- holidays
- amount of salary and
- notice periods

Both parties must adhere to these agreements.

Only sign the contract once you have understood the content. The employment contract then becomes legally binding.

Please note:

- An employment contract cannot only be concluded in writing. It can also be concluded verbally or tacitly through conclusive behaviour! Conclusive behaviour can be assumed, for example, through integration into the company and "letting the employee work" without objection.
- If you have worked, your employer must pay you for it, even if there is not (yet) a written employment contract!

Types of contract:

Open-ended employment contract

There is usually a probationary period of three or six months. During this period, an employment relationship can be terminated by either the employer or the employee at short notice within two weeks. After this, a permanent employment relationship begins with longer protection against dismissal. Working hours are up to 40 hours per week.

Fixed-term employment contract

The employment relationship ends at the agreed time without the need for notice of termination.

Working times

How long can I work?

According to the Working Hours Act (Arbeitszeitgesetz), you may not work more than 8 hours a day.

In exceptional cases, the working time may be extended up to 10 hours if an average of 8 hours per day has not been exceeded within 6 months.

You are entitled to breaks:


- From 6 hours upwards, you must take a break of at least 30 minutes.
- From 9 hours upwards, you are entitled to a break of at least 45 minutes.

Overtime

Overtime may only be demanded from you if it is regulated in the contract.

Overtime must also be paid.

Instead of a payment, there is also time off in lieu. This must be stipulated in the contract or you as an employee must agree to it.

 **Important:** Always document your working hours daily! So you can always prove how much overtime you have worked.

Minimum wage

How high is the current minimum wage?

Germany has a statutory minimum wage. The current minimum wage per hour is 12.41 euros (as of 01/01/2024). The amount is increased regularly.

The minimum wage may not be reduced by working longer hours than contractually agreed without corresponding wage compensation.

The minimum wage does not apply to:

- Young people under the age of 18 without completed vocational training
- [Apprentices](#)
- Long-term unemployed persons during the first six months of their employment after the end of unemployment
- Interns in certain [forms of internship](#) (school or study-related internship or for the purposes of job orientation for up to three months)
- Voluntary activities
- [Self-employed](#)

Salary statement

If you are an employee, you will receive a salary statement or payslip after you have worked your first month. Some employers will continue to send you a monthly statement; others only if there is something different in the month in question (e.g. Christmas bonus, increase in insurance contributions, etc.).

These details must be shown in the salary statement or payslip:

- Name and address of the employer
- Name, address, date of birth of the employee

- Insurance number of the employer
- Date of beginning the employment
- Tax category and tax identification number
- Accounting period
- Gross salary (salary without deductions)
- Type and amount of surcharges or bonuses
- Type and amount of deductions
- Net amount (after all deductions)

The net amount is usually the amount you receive. Exception: If there were advance payments, or loans from the company or salary seizure (if you have debts), further amounts will be removed from the net amount.

Taxes and social security payments

Every employee in Germany pays part of their wages as taxes and social contributions. Self-employed persons must also pay taxes.

Income tax

Income tax is a contribution to financing federal, state and local government spending. With the money from taxes, streets and schools are built or social benefits are financed, for example.

- If you have an employer (i.e. are “angestellt”), you will receive the net sum of your salary from your employer – in other words, your taxes have already been deducted.
- If you are self-employed, you need to calculate your taxes yourself.

Tax ID number

All working persons receive a “Tax ID number” when they start work. The tax ID is a 11-digit number and is used for income tax. It is valid for the whole of your life. Children born in Germany receive a letter with their personal tax ID within three months after the birth; this is required to apply for child benefit (Kindergeld) for example.

If you work in Germany, you will need the number at various times, for example to give to your employer. If you do not know the number, you can ask for it personally at the Meldebehörde (registration office) or in writing from the Bundesamt für Steuern (federal tax office).

If you do not know your number, you can reapply here:

 [Federal Central Tax Office \(Bundesamt für Steuern\)](#)

Tax return

In the annual tax return, you can claim various expenses from the Tax Office to reduce the amount of tax you pay. You can receive refunds or you may have to pay additional payments to the Tax Office. Many people are obliged to complete a tax return. It is best to ask the Tax

Office if this applies to you.

If you need help with your tax return, it is best to contact your local [income tax assistance association](#). If you have any further questions, the Tax Office can also help you.

Social security payments

Social security contributions are the contributions to social insurance that employees have to deduct from their gross monthly wage in addition to taxes. This is legally obligatory and is automatically calculated by the employer. **Part of social insurance is also paid by the employer.**

The social security payments finance the German social insurance system. If people can't find work, or are no longer able to work, their key living costs will still be covered. Ultimately, the social security payments ensure that everyone is insured – if you become unemployed, for example and have paid unemployment insurance for a certain time, you are entitled to [unemployment benefit](#). With your monthly contribution to pension insurance, you also obtain the entitlement to a state pension when you get older.

The contributions to social insurance are made up of payments towards:

- Pension insurance
- Unemployment insurance
- Health Insurance
- Long-term care insurance

The amount depends on your individual income. The contributions are automatically deducted from your gross salary.

There are exceptions for foreign workers, for example if they are sent by a foreign company to Germany, work in several countries or are self-employed or affected by other exemptions.

“Sozialversicherungsnummer” (national insurance number)

Deutsche Rentenversicherung (the German state pension insurance company) automatically sends you your social security number the first time you take up employment in Germany.

If you lose this number you can request to have it sent to you again:

Telephone number of the Deutsche Rentenversicherung:

 [0800/10004800](tel:080010004800) (free of charge from the German landline network)

More information:

 [German pension insurance](#)

Holiday

You have at least 24 working days of annual leave per year. Working days are from Monday to Saturday. If you work less than 6 days a week, your holiday must be reduced.

In other words:

5-day week: 20 days holiday

4-day week: 16 days holiday

3-day week: 12 days holiday

Illness

If you are working, doing an internship or attending a German course and are ill, you must call in and report sick. As a rule, your doctor must certify that you are not able to work (=certificate of incapacity for work (Arbeitsunfähigkeitsbescheinigung - AU))

Ask your employer or language course provider when you have to submit a certificate of incapacity for work.

In case of illness, you will be paid for 6 weeks. The prerequisite is that the employment relationship has already existed for at least 4 weeks.

From the 7th week you will receive sickness benefit from the health insurance fund. Sickness benefit is 70% of your gross pay and is paid for a maximum of another 72 weeks.

💡 **Note:** Illness is not a form of protection against dismissal!

Accident at work

If you have an accident during work or on your way to work, this is defined as an accident at work.

In this case, you are covered by accident insurance through the company.

If you go to the doctor or hospital you must tell them that it's an accident at work. The treatment is then not paid for by the health insurance company, but by the employer's accident insurance. You can find out the name of the accident insurance company from your employer.

If you have an accident at work and

- are unfit for work for more than one day or
- require medical treatment for longer or
- get sick again at a later date

you need to see a so-called accident insurance consultant .

So-called "Durchgangsärzte" (transit doctors) can be found on the website of [Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung](#)

Labour exploitation and undeclared work

Labour exploitation

Is when labour is exploited under unfair conditions or without the consent of those affected.

Slavery and forced labour are prohibited in Germany!

Human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation or forced sex work is prohibited in Germany!

Other forms of labour exploitation are also punishable by law:

- Not paying money, despite work performed.
- Working longer hours than contractually agreed for the same wage (circumventing the minimum wage).
- Refusal of additional wage benefits to which the employee is entitled. These can be continued payment of wages during illness or paid holidays.

Undeclared work

This refers to earning money **without paying taxes**. You also do not pay social security contributions. This is **illegal** and will be **prosecuted and penalised**. If you take up work, you must inform the authorities.

The money is then paid out in cash and not transferred to your account. There is no employment contract, no receipts or payslips.

The **skilled trades** are particularly affected. This is why **customs inspect** construction sites from time to time. There they ask about employment contracts, residence permits and check tax liability.

If you receive social benefits and are caught working illegally, you can be sent to **prison**. In addition, benefits are significantly reduced or cancelled.

Handing in your notice

If you want to hand in your notice as an employee, you must submit your notice in writing - preferably by post - to your employer.

If you have been dismissed by your employer and want to do something about it, you only have 3 weeks. You must file a complaint with the help of a lawyer and/or at the "Rechtsantragsstelle" (Legal Application Office) at the "Arbeitsgericht" (Labour Court).

The notice period for employers is normally 4 weeks to the end of a month.

The period for employees depends on the duration of the employment relationship:

For example, at 5 years: 2 months' notice

Probationary period up to a maximum of 6 months 2 weeks' notice

Works councils and unions

In Germany, employees have the right to have a say in the workplace, in the company and in the economy as a whole and to stand up for their interests.

Works council

Above a certain size, the law provides for employee representation in the form of a works council (in the public sector: staff council). A works council represents the interests of the employees in a company and has co-determination rights. It is elected by the employees in accordance with the legal requirements.

Trade unions

Employees join together in trade unions in order to jointly represent and assert their economic and social interests vis-à-vis employers.

There are eight different trade unions in Germany, covering all occupational sectors. They advise their members on labour and social law issues, negotiate collective agreements and support works councils. Membership of a trade union is not free.

German Federation of Trade Unions

The German Federation of Trade Unions (Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund; DGB) is the umbrella organisation of all German trade unions.

 [Learn more about trade union membership.](#)

Who's it for: Employees, apprentices, those studying at higher education institutions and pensioners

Job Reference

Job Reference

When you have finished a job, you are entitled to a **reference**. This shall be issued in writing. A **simple job reference** contains personal details as well as the type and duration of employment.

A **qualified job reference** also contains information about the activity and an assessment of the services rendered.

Recognition of a foreign vocational training qualification

Have you completed **vocational training** abroad? Have it checked whether this training is recognised in Germany. Often the respective **chamber** (Chamber of Crafts, Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Chamber of Agriculture) is responsible for this. Chambers are **contact points** for various training and professions. However, there are many other competent bodies (for example ministries).

The [Recognition and Qualification Advisory Service \(Anerkennungs- und Qualifizierungsberatung\)](#) in the IQ-Netzwerk supports you in the recognition of your training qualification.

You can find more information on the recognition of foreign school-leaving qualifications or degrees [here](#).

Internships

General information about an internship

Before starting a job with an employment contract or an apprenticeship, you can **try out with an internship to see if the job fits**. Most employers do not want to pay money for an internship.

With an internship, your future employer can also find out whether you are **suitable for the job** and would like you to **work on a trial** basis. However, this is not allowed without permission and without payment. But there are several possibilities.

You would like to do an apprenticeship, but you are not sure whether the work meets your expectations? Then a [job orientation internship](#) is the right thing for you.

Or your German is not yet sufficient (no B2 yet), so that vocational school will be difficult? Then an [entry qualification](#) is good. In the period up to the start of training, it is important to learn German intensively.

Important:

- No internship is possible if you are not allowed to work.
- All internships must be approved by the Immigration Office.
- The same regulations apply to refugees with residence permits as for Germans.

How do I find an internship?

- Ask at a company of your choice,
- Enquire at the Employment Agency,
- If you or your parents receive citizen's income, ask your Job Centre adviser,
- Search job boards on the Internet.

The most important kinds of internships

Compulsory internship:

- Internship for school pupils:

During their time at school, school pupils often do an internship. An internship for school pupils often takes just one or two weeks. The idea is for school pupils to get an idea of what working life is like and get some initial ideas about what direction their careers should take.

- Internships whilst at university:

In order to graduate, it is often necessary to do an internship. The schedule and duration are usually determined by academic regulations. The compulsory internships allow students to acquire their first professional experience.

Voluntary internship:

Anyone can do a voluntary internship – whether a school pupil, a student or an adult. The intern and the company or business determine the duration of the internship together.

Payment

Interns are sometimes paid in their internship. But not always. This depends on many factors. For example, the type of internship, the duration, and the sector.

Interns have a right to be paid if

- the internship lasts for more than three months
- and it is voluntary.

This regulation does not apply to compulsory internships which take place in the context of academic studies. The rule also does not apply to interns under the age of 18.

Important rights and duties when doing an internship

Internship contract:

You do not have to have an internship contract. It is a good idea to have an internship contract, however. This is because it specifies the rules of the internship.

Hours of work:

Depending on your age, there are different regulations about working hours during an internship:

- For children and adolescents under the age of 15, it is forbidden to work, generally. Examples of exceptions include work experience for school pupils or, from the age of 13, easy tasks, such as delivering newspapers or providing private tutoring. For adolescents below the age of 15, there is special protection: They are only allowed to work for 7 hours per day, and for no more than 35 hours per week.
- For teenagers between 15 and 18 years of age, the rule is: They are only allowed to work for 8 hours per day, and for no more than 40 hours per week.
- For interns who are older than 18, standard working hours of 8 hours per day apply. However, standard means: It does not always have to be the case. If there is lots to do, interns are allowed to work for more than 8 hours. It is not allowed to work for more than 10 hours per day.

Breaks:

Interns can, and must, have breaks too. For interns below the age of 18, the rule is: For working hours of between 4.5 and 6 hours, they must have a break of 30 minutes. For more than 6 working hours, it has to be 60 minutes.

Interns who are older than 18 must have a break of 30 minutes if their working hours exceed 6 hours. For working hours of more than 9 hours, it has to be 45 minutes.

Confidentiality:

During an internship, interns learn a lot about how a business or a company is run. Much of this information is confidential. In other words: Interns are not allowed to mention any of this information to anyone. This is known as “Schweigepflicht” (confidentiality).

For example:

Somebody might be doing an internship at a doctor’s surgery. There, they will learn a lot about the patients. The patients’ names and the illnesses they have, for example. They are not allowed to mention any of this information to anyone.

Illness:

If an intern falls ill, the business providing the internship must be told straight away. Interns often need a medical certificate from their doctor. Interns should ask the company they are doing the internship with whether they need a medical certificate.

Days off:

During a compulsory internship, interns have no entitlement to days off.

During a voluntary internship, it is possible to have days off. This only applies to internships which last for longer than 4 weeks. The number of days off depends on the age of the intern and the length of the internship.

Behaviour in the workplace:

Hosting interns involves a lot of time and work for the host business. Interns ought to be aware of this. They should behave accordingly. You can find tips on this under [“Ten tips for interns”](#).

Entitlement to an internship certificate:

Interns have a right to a Praktikumszeugnis (internship certificate). In other words: The company or business must provide an internship certificate.

The internship certificate is important for the intern. It will help when applying for an apprenticeship or work later on.

Vocational orientation internship

The vocational orientation internship offers several advantages:

- before beginning a dual vocational training / study course, to see whether the training you envisage is suitable
- possible for up to 3 months without payment
- Permission of the “Ausländerbehörde” (Immigration Office) required
- informal application to the Immigration Office (letter from the company: Mr X/Ms Y would like to do a vocational orientation internship with us from ... to ...). Since no approval from the Federal Employment Agency is required, this is done quite quickly.

- from the 4th month of the internship, there must be a [minimum wage paid](#) retroactively from the 1st day

Entry qualification

You know what you want to be? But you were unable to find a training place by 30 September? Then you can do a longer internship under certain conditions. This prepares you for vocational training. It is called an **entry qualification (EQ)** and lasts between 6 and 12 months.

The entry qualification starts on 1.10. for 11 months or on 1.3 for 6 months.

If you are interested, please ask your personal contact at the [Employment Agency](#). The approval of the Immigration Office may also be necessary.

Attention: with an EQ, it is not possible to apply for a postponement of deportation due to vocational training (Ausbildungsduldung) !

Further information from the Federal Employment Agency can be found [at](#) .

Ten tips for interns

1. Learn about the business where you will be doing your internship before you start (e.g. on the internet).
2. Be polite, on time, and reliable.
3. Show interest and motivation.
4. If there is something you would like to know, or if something is unclear, ask.
5. If there are any problems, raise the issue. But be friendly when you do.
6. Accept criticism and learn from it.
7. What's private is private: For example, avoid making private telephone calls or checking your smartphone all the time.
8. Dress appropriately.
9. Make new contacts. These contacts could be helpful to you later, when you are looking for a job.
10. Apply for an internship certificate. The internship certificate could prove to be helpful later, when you are looking for a job.

Voluntary Year of Social Service and Federal Voluntary Service

What is a “Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr (FSJ)” or “voluntary social year”?

A good alternative to an internship is the voluntary social year. If you **have completed compulsory education and** are under 27 years old, you can take an FSJ. You can gain valuable experience at a social or cultural institution.

Where can I do an FSJ?

- Medical-nursing tasks
(especially in hospitals, in care for the elderly, in centres for people with disabilities)
- Educational-pedagogical tasks
(especially in kindergartens, schools, youth welfare, social work, church communities)
- Administrative and office tasks
(especially in parishes, cultural institutions, youth work)
- Domestic and caretaker duties
(possible in all social centres, as in centres for elderly or disabled people)

Where can I find services?

On the right-hand side of the page of the [Lower Saxony State Office for Social Affairs, Youth and Family](#) you will find a [list of FSJ](#) providers with all the recognised providers who offer a Voluntary Year of Social Service.

In order to find a place in your desired field of activity for a social year, you should **apply for an FSJ at as early as possible**. Preferably half a year in advance. Sometimes, it is also possible to start an FSJ at short notice within four weeks.

Is an FSJ paid?

Voluntary service is paid. The payment for the FSJ is an allowance. This amounts to **about 360 euros** per month. The amount consists of 320 euros allowance and 40 euros food allowance. The allowance is paid out by the organisation for which you are volunteering. Some places of employment offer an FSJ position with free accommodation.

Will I get a certificate?

At the end of your voluntary service, you will receive a **certificate** about your work at the assignment location. You will also receive a **certificate** confirming days spent in an educational setting.

What are the advantages of an FSJ?

- Social commitment and doing good
- Personal development, broaden your own horizon and experience new things
- Professional orientation in the FSJ - not only in the social sector
- Getting practical experience
- FSJ for a university of applied sciences, pre-study internship, probationary year
- Take time out and gain more time

Please note: An FSJ must be approved by the “Ausländerbehörde” (Immigration Office) if an unrestricted work permit is not available.

BufDi - Federal Voluntary Service

What is a Federal Voluntary Service (BufDi)?

Asylum seekers and **recognised refugees** can take up employment in the Federal Voluntary Service (BufDi). **Young people who have completed their compulsory education** work for 6 - 24 months in a social or cultural institution. The Federal Voluntary Service is a **service to women and men of all ages** to commit themselves to the common good outside of work and school - in the social, ecological and cultural field or in the field of sport and integration, as well as in civil defence and disaster control.

Which advantages does a BufDi have?

- Gain practical experience and knowledge
- Gain initial insight into the professional world
- Learn from the rich life experience of older people
- and much more!

Where can I become involved the Federal Voluntary Service (BufDi)?

- Health care
- Help for people with disabilities
- Integration
- Child and youth welfare, youth education, youth work
- Culture, monument preservation, adult education
- Senior citizens' aid
- Sports
- Environment, nature conservation and sustainability
- Welfare work
- Civil protection and disaster relief

Once completed, you will also receive a **certificate**.

Note: A BufDi must also be approved by the “Ausländerbehörde” (Immigration Office).

Here you can find [further information](#) on the Federal Voluntary Service.