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## Education, Work und University Studies

### Information

The conditions with which you may work in Germany depend on your residence status. For basic information and the relevant contact persons when looking for work, see [access to the job market](#).

If you have already completed school or vocational education abroad, you should make sure that these qualifications are recognised. For more information, see the section on [recognition of foreign qualifications](#).

In Germany there are about 400 training occupations. If you are looking for vocational training, please find further information and contact details in this section: [Vocational training \(dual and full-time school-based\)](#).

Children and youths must go to school from the age of six years old. General schooling is attended before starting training or university studies.

If you would like to study, you can find suitable information and contact persons in this section: [University studies](#).

### Occupational Health and Safety Act

The **Occupational Health and Safety Act (ArbSchG)** is a law that lays down rules for work. It applies to all types of occupations.

It states:

- What bosses must do to ensure that their employees are safe and stay healthy at work.
- What tasks and rights employees have.
- How to check that everyone is adhering to the rules.

This law therefore helps to ensure that nobody falls ill or injures themselves at work.

If a workplace can be dangerous, certain protective measures must be taken. The boss must ensure that these measures are actually adhered to. Employees should receive regular explanations on how they can protect themselves.

Employees also have responsibilities:

They must observe the safety rules, must not put anyone in danger at work and must let us know if they notice something that could be dangerous.

### 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 insured via the company (your employer) through accident insurance.

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

## **Irregular and illegal employment**

If you work and receive money for it, but this work is not registered with the tax office or health insurance fund, this is called "illegal work" or "irregular employment". This is prohibited. In Germany, you have to pay taxes and pay social security contributions - for example, for health insurance or your pension. If you don't do this, you could face a fine or even a prison sentence.

If you receive unemployment benefit or other support from the state, for example from the job centre or social welfare office, you are not allowed to work secretly and still keep the money. This is also known as "illegal employment" or "undeclared work". This is also prohibited and against the law. If you want to work while you are receiving money from the state, you must always report this in advance - i.e. inform the office. You are allowed to earn some extra money, but the office must then recalculate how much money you will receive. Important: You must report any work and any earnings immediately.

Even if someone is not allowed to work, for example because of a ban, and works anyway, this is illegal employment. Depending on which country someone comes from or why they are in Germany, this can mean that they are no longer allowed to work for a long time or even forever.

## **Food instruction**

If you work in a restaurant, bakery or shop with food, you must first undergo special training from the health authority. This is called food instruction. There you will learn how to handle food safely so that nobody gets ill.

This rule applies to anyone who regularly prepares, sells or distributes food.

You can find further information [here](#).

You can find the forms in different languages [here](#).

## **Looking for work**

### **Access to the Job Market**

### **Regulations on access to the job market**

If you are looking for work and have moved from the EU, you have full access to the job market, because of freedom of movement for workers.

Refugees' rights to work vary according to their residence status. This is explained below. You will also find information on related advice centres below.

### **Asylum seeker with proof of arrival or temporary residence permit (Aufenthaltsgestattung):**

As long as you are living in an AnKER facility or Initial Reception Facility (EAE) (maximum 18 months, extension up to 24 months possible, families with children maximum 6 months), you are not allowed to work at all for 9 months. After 9 months you usually have the right to an employment permit. It is always the [Immigration Office \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#) that decides whether you are allowed to work or not. You must therefore submit an application for an employment permit to the [Immigration Office](#). There are certain rules you must follow.

### **The following conditions are important for deciding whether you are allowed to work:**

- Asylum seeker with proof of arrival (Ankunftsnachweis) or temporary residence permit (Aufenthaltsgestattung) in AnKER /EAE:
- 9-month ban on working
- After 9 months, claim to work permit if not from safe countries of origin or asylum application rejected by the BAMF without good reason.
- The priority check is not applicable. However, the working conditions will be examined by the Bundesagentur für Arbeit.

### **Asylum seeker with proof of arrival (Ankunftsnachweis) or temporary residence permit (Aufenthaltsgestattung) outside of AnKER/EAE:**

- 3-month ban on working
- After 3 months, work permit at the discretion of the Immigration Office, if not from safe countries of origin with asylum application after August 31, 2015
- After 9 months, claim to work permit if not from safe countries of origin with asylum application after August 31, 2015, or asylum application rejected without good reason.
- The priority check is not applicable. However, the working conditions will be examined by the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit).

### **Persons with exceptional leave to remain (Geduldete):**

It is always the [Immigration Office \(Ausländerbehörde\)](#) that decides whether you are allowed to work or not. You must therefore submit an application for an employment permit to the Immigration Office. The Bureau for Foreigners (Ausländerbehörde) can impose a general work ban on you. There are certain rules you must follow.

### **Persons with exceptional leaves to remain (Geduldete) in AnKER:**

- After 6 months of an exceptional leave to remain period, work permit at the discretion of the Immigration Office, if not from safe countries of origin with asylum application after August 31, 2015

- Persons with an exceptional leave to remain (Duldung) because of unclear identity (§ 60b AufenthG) are always prohibited from working.
- The priority check is not applicable. However, the working conditions will be examined by the Bundesagentur für Arbeit

### **Persons with exceptional leaves to remain (Geduldete) outside of AnKER:**

- 3-month ban on working
- After 3 months, work permit at the discretion of the Immigration Office, if not from safe countries of origin with asylum application after August 31, 2015
- Persons with an exceptional leave to remain (Duldung) because of unclear identity (§ 60b AufenthG) are always prohibited from working
- The priority check is not applicable. However, the working conditions will be examined by the Bundesagentur für Arbeit.

### **Refugees with residence permits (Aufenthaltserlaubnis):**

If you have been recognised by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) as a person entitled to asylum, refugee or subsidiary protection, the Immigration Office gives you a residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis). This entitles you to do any kind of job and therefore also gives you full access to the job market.

There are different rules for [self-employment](#)! The prerequisite for the aforementioned applications is ALWAYS a specific job offer.

### **Labour contract**

When you start a job, you are given an employment contract. This contract sets out the most important rules for the employment relationship, such as working hours, holidays, salary and notice periods. Both sides - the employer and the employee - must adhere to these rules. The contract becomes legally valid when you sign it. You should therefore only sign it once you have understood everything.

#### **Types of contract:**

- **Open-ended employment contract:**  
There is usually a probationary period of three or six months. During this period, the contract can be terminated by either party (employer and employee) with two weeks' notice. After the probationary period, there is more protection for the employee. Working hours are usually up to 40 hours per week.
- **Fixed-term employment contract:**  
The contract ends automatically on a specific date without the need for notice.
- **Mini-job:**  
With a [mini-job](#), you earn a maximum of 556 euros a month, and this money is tax-free.

#### **Labour law:**

In Germany, there are many laws that regulate the rights of employees. These include, for example

- Regulations on working hours
- The minimum wage
- Holiday entitlement
- Protection against dismissal
- Works councils (representatives of the employees in the company)
- Regulations on the work of trade unions
- And many other things

### **Taxes and social security contributions:**

Every employee pays a portion of their salary in taxes to cover the state's expenses. Employers also pay social security contributions for their employees. The German social security system helps people when they are out of work or can no longer work by covering basic needs.

### **Tax identification number:**

The tax identification number is an 11-digit number that is important for tax calculations. The employer needs this number. If you do not have it, you can obtain it from the registration office or the Federal Tax Office.

### **National insurance number:**

You will need a national insurance number for a job. You can get this from your health insurance company (e.g. AOK, DAK).

### **Undeclared work:**

Undeclared work means that someone performs work and is paid for it, but this work is not registered with the tax office and health insurance company. This is illegal. Anyone who does undeclared work risks fines and even imprisonment. Even if someone receives unemployment benefit or social assistance and works at the same time, but does not tell the job centre or employment agency, this is illegal employment. In this case, you are wrongly receiving state benefits even though you are earning money.

### **Job applications and interviews**

If you would like to start a vocational training programme (Ausbildung) or get a job in Germany, you need to submit a written application.

Usually, you apply to a company that posted a job vacancy online or in a newspaper. Posting a vacancy means that the company is looking for new employees. The job advertisement describes what type of work or vocational training it involves and what the company expects of the employee. It is also stated there where and how you have to apply.

If the company is interested in you, you will normally be invited to a job interview, which gives you a chance to introduce yourself in person. Please schedule enough time for the interview and always make sure to arrive on time for your appointment. Before the interview, you should prepare thoroughly and research the company. Visit the website and read through the

company's history; find out about the products or services. Arriving on time for your appointment and asking questions during the interview demonstrates your motivation for and interest in the vocational training programme or job.

## **An application usually consists of three parts:**

### **Cover letter:**

In your personal cover letter, you briefly introduce yourself and say why you are suitable for the vacant position. For example, describe what previous experience you have gained in your home country. Find out about the company and explain why you want to work there. Your covering letter should fit on one page. Sign your covering letter. There are many templates and guides online. It is important not simply to copy something you find. Your cover letter needs to be unique to you and suitable for the position.

### **Curriculum vitae:**

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 and references:**

It is very important that you include copies of your credentials and references in the application (do not send the original documents!). They include your school- leaving certificate, your university degree and any job references from the past. They should be in German or English – if they are not, you should have them translated. You should also send certificates from any internships, work-relevant professional development courses, or German courses you have taken. The job advert provides information about how to apply. Please read it carefully.

### **In writing:**

Buy a nice application folder and insert your cover letter, CV, and credentials and references. Then mail the application to the address mentioned in the job advertisement.

### **E-Mail:**

These days, many applications are sent by email. Bring your covering letter, your CV and your certificates and references together into a single PDF file. Add the PDF file as an attachment to the email. Write a short text in the email to the person who will receive your application.

### **Online:**

Large companies have their own website through which you have to apply. You need to register with your email address before you can send your application through the website.

- You can find helpful tips for the application at [Planet Beruf](#).

- [Europass](#) is a multilingual (more than 20 languages) online platform that helps immigrants make their skills and expertise obvious to others. It offers a free online tool for creating a "language passport" or CV. You can also find important tips on writing good applications on Europass.
- At [Bewerbung.net](#), [StepStone](#) and [Lebenslauf2go](#) you can have a CV and cover letter created for you free of charge. You may also be able to import your data from Xing or LinkedIn. It is also possible to write your own text within the template or import files.
- You can find more information and templates for cover letters and CVs here: [Bewerbung2go](#), [BewerbungsWissen](#), [Karrierebibel](#)

## Language practice

You can find exercises for practising job applications and general aspects of starting a career on [VHS-Lernportal "Ich will Deutsch lernen"](#) and on the [Goethe-Instituts "Deutsch für dich"](#) website. You can learn more about the professional world and improve your German language skills.

## Looking for Work - Advice and Help

The following organisations in Hagen offer support for job-seekers:

[Migration advice service centres for adult migrants \(aged 27 and above\)](#)

[Youth Migration Services for young people aged 12 to 27](#)

[Employment Agency](#)

[Job Centre](#)

## BIWAQ project

Are you unemployed? Are you looking for a job or an apprenticeship? Do you live in Altenhagen or Wehringhausen? Then you can get support from the BIWAQ project. It will help you to find a job again.

BIWAQ stands for education, business, work in the neighbourhood. The project is funded by the Federal Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Building and by the European Union via the European Social Fund Plus (ESF Plus).

The aim of BIWAQ is to improve people's participation in social life in the Hagen neighbourhoods of Altenhagen and Wehringhausen. It also aims to facilitate access to the labour market. You can take part if you are 18 years old and live in Altenhagen or Wehringhausen.

Participation is free of charge. Get in touch if you live in Altenhagen or Wehringhausen and need support in finding work or a training place. The staff at BIWAQ will be happy to support you.

The services offered by BIWAQ include the following measures:

- Cultural and social engagement in the neighbourhoods of Altenhagen and Wehringhausen
- Help with job applications



- Support in finding work and training
- Joint search for a suitable qualification
- Free language courses
- Counselling for everyday problems
- Women's café
- Advancement of women
- Commitment to equal opportunities

The city of Hagen is implementing the project in cooperation with ALZ Arbeit-Leben-Zukunft GmbH and Caritasverband e.V. Hagen in the districts of Altenhagen and Wehringhausen. The sub-project partners have opened two advice centres. You can obtain information and support there.

The BIWAQ project is supported by the Hagen Job Centre in terms of expertise and personnel.

Please get in touch with the following contacts:

### **Sub-project partners:**



#### **Altenhagen:**


Caritasverband e.V. Hagen

 [https://www.caritas-hagen.de/fachdienst-fuer-integration-und-migration\\_BIWAQ](https://www.caritas-hagen.de/fachdienst-fuer-integration-und-migration_BIWAQ)



Boeler Str. 3


58097 Hagen

 [023319713312](tel:023319713312)



Monday-Thursday, 9:00-12:30 and 13:00-16:00

Fridays are closed.

 Please note: Counselling is only possible by appointment.

**Wehringhausen:**

Arbeit-Leben-Zukunft (ALZ) GmbH

 <https://www.diakonie-mark-ruhr.de/tep-programm-teilzeitberufsausbildung-einstieg-begleiten-perspektiv>



Södingstr. 18

58095 Hagen



Monday-Friday, 9.00-16.00

 [023313751700](tel:023313751700)

**Fachhochschule  
Dortmund**

University of Applied Sciences and Arts

Dortmund University of Applied Sciences, Department of Applied Social Sciences

Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts is providing scientific support for the BIWAQ V project in Hagen under the direction of Prof Dr Michael Boecker.

Prof. Dr. Michael Boecker

 [@biwaq\\_hagen@fh-dortmund.de](mailto:@biwaq_hagen@fh-dortmund.de)

 [www.fh-dortmund.de/projekte/fis.import.proj.de.205.php](http://www.fh-dortmund.de/projekte/fis.import.proj.de.205.php)



City of Hagen, BIWAQ V project management

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 [023312072226](tel:023312072226)

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<https://www.hagen.de/irj/portal/040101-06>

Further information on the ESF federal programme "Bildung, Wirtschaft, Arbeit im Quartier - BIWAQ" can be found [here](#).

[FlyerBIWAQ.pdf](#)

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## Immigration of Skilled Workers

### The Skilled Workers Immigration Act (Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz)

The Skilled Workers Immigration Act makes it easier for skilled workers with vocational, non-academic training to immigrate to Germany for work purposes. Existing regulations for skilled workers with university degrees will be maintained and in some cases made even easier.

## **1. For companies:**

- **Accelerated skilled worker procedure:** With the power of attorney of the skilled worker, employers can file an accelerated skilled worker procedure with the competent Immigration Office in Germany. An agreement must be concluded between the company and the Immigration Office. Among other things, the agreement must contain the powers of attorney and responsibilities of the employer, the skilled worker and the public authorities involved (Immigration Office, Bundesagentur für Arbeit, recognition offices, diplomatic representation abroad) as well as a description of the procedures including the parties involved and deadlines.
- The **fees** for the accelerated skilled worker procedure at the Immigration Office come to 411 euros. In addition, there is a visa fee of 75 euros as well as any other applicable fees (certified copies, translations).
- **The Immigration Office advises the employer** and supports them in carrying out the procedure for the recognition of the foreign qualification of the skilled worker. The Immigration Office shall obtain the approval of the Bundesagentur für Arbeit and check the conditions for granting the permit under aliens law. The recognition offices and the Bundesagentur für Arbeit must decide within the specified deadlines.
- If all **requirements** are met, the Immigration Office will issue a so-called advance approval, which it will then send to the employer for forwarding to the skilled worker. The skilled worker then books an appointment with the diplomatic representation abroad to apply for the visa, which will take place within three weeks. At this appointment, the original advance approval must be presented together with other documents required for the visa application.
- Once the completed **visa application** has been submitted by the skilled worker, a decision will normally be made on it within an additional three weeks.
- The **accelerated procedure** for skilled workers also includes the skilled worker's spouse and underage, unmarried children if they meet the legal requirements for family reunification.

## **2. For skilled workers**

- **Definition of skilled worker:** Skilled workers are defined as persons with a university degree or qualified vocational training of at least two years. A prerequisite for both groups is that their foreign qualifications have been recognised by the competent authority in Germany.
- **Labour market entry:** Entry into the labour market will be made easier: The qualified skilled worker must have an employment contract and a concrete job offer and a qualification recognised in Germany. The so-called priority review by the Bundesagentur für Arbeit no longer applies. This means that it is no longer necessary to check whether an applicant from Germany or the EU is available for the specific job. The examination of working conditions by the Bundesagentur für Arbeit remains in place.
- **Employment opportunities:** A skilled worker may be employed in an occupation that their qualification allows them to do. This means that it is possible to work in related professions. Additionally, skilled workers with an academic education are allowed to work outside of jobs that require a university degree. They may also be employed in other qualified occupations which fall within the professional context of the qualification and for which, in principle, vocational, non-academic training is required. Assistant professions and training professions are excluded, it must be qualified employment in all cases. The EU Blue Card always requires employment appropriate to the professional qualification, which usually requires an academic degree.

- **Skilled workers with vocational training:** The employment of skilled workers with vocational, that is, non-academic training is no longer limited to occupations with shortages. With a vocational training that has been recognised in Germany, residence permits (Aufenthaltstitel) for qualified employment will also allow these skilled workers access to all professions in which their qualifications allow them to work.
- **Entering the country to find a job:** Skilled workers with qualified vocational training are also able to enter the country to look for a job. You will receive a residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis) for up to six months. Prerequisites are that the foreign qualification has been recognised by the competent authority in Germany, that your livelihood is secured for the duration of your stay and that you have the appropriate knowledge of German for the job you are seeking. As a rule, a minimum knowledge of German at level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is required. During your stay while looking for a job, trial employment of up to ten hours a week is possible. This allows employers and foreign skilled workers to test whether they are suitable for each other. Trial employment is also possible for skilled workers with recognised academic qualifications, who are also allowed to enter the country for up to six months in order to look for work, as before.
- **Residence for qualification purposes:** The possibilities of staying in Germany for qualification purposes are being expanded. The prerequisite for this is generally that a recognition procedure from abroad has been carried out at the competent authority in Germany, in which deficits have been identified in the acquired foreign qualification in comparison to the German training (notice of recognition). An additional requirement for the issue of a visa for the purpose of undergoing qualification programmes is above all a knowledge of German corresponding to the qualification programme. These are usually at least sufficient German language skills (corresponding to language level A2). For example, the 18-month residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis) can now be extended by six months to a maximum period of two years for this purpose. After expiry of the maximum period of the residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis), a residence permit may be issued for the purpose of training, study or employment.
- **Settlement permit (Niederlassungserlaubnis) for skilled workers** from abroad: Foreign skilled workers can obtain a settlement permit (Niederlassungserlaubnis) in Germany after only four years (previously five years).

### **3. For training and studies**

- **Entering the country to find a training placement:** It is already possible for prospective students to enter the country in search of a university placement. Under the new regulation, people interested in training can also enter the country to look for a training placement. Requirements are a level B2 knowledge of German, a degree from a German school abroad or a graduation certificate that entitles the holder to enter university, a maximum age of 25 years and independent livelihood provisions.
- **German language course** in preparation for training: With a residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis) for a qualified vocational training course, a German language course or a job-related German language course may be attended in preparation.
- **Expanded changeover possibilities for international students in Germany:** International students already have the opportunity to change to other residence permits (Aufenthaltstitel) even before they have completed their studies. For example, instead of continuing their studies, they can start vocational training and receive a residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis) for vocational training. The Skilled Workers Immigration Act has expanded the possibilities for such changes: Under special conditions and after examination by the [Bundesagentur für Arbeit](#), a job offer as a skilled worker can be accepted even during

a study visit or a stay for vocational training or further education. This is accompanied by a change to a residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis) for qualified employment.

- **Settlement permit (Niederlassungserlaubnis) for graduates** of an apprenticeship in Germany: Under the new law, foreign graduates of vocational training in Germany can, just like university graduates, obtain a settlement permit (Niederlassungserlaubnis) after only two years.

🌐 This and more information can also be found on the page [Make it in Germany](#)

🌐 Here you can also perform a [quick test](#) to see your possibilities!

## Independence

In Germany, almost anyone can set up their own business. This means, for example, that you can open a small shop or your own hairdressing salon.

If you are still waiting to see whether you are allowed to stay in Germany (i.e. if your asylum application is still being examined), if your application has already been rejected or if you are only allowed to stay in Germany temporarily (tolerated stay), then you are **not** allowed to work independently.

For all others: You are allowed to become self-employed and set up a business or company.

### You can find more information here:

- [Online guide: "GründerZeiten"](#) (German and Arabic)
- [Business start-up portal](#) (German, French, Italian, Russian and Turkish)
- [Homepage of the IQ Centre for Migrant Economy](#)

## Berufsschule

Vocational schools offer teenagers and young adults over the age of 15 a variety of opportunities after they stop attending a general-education school. Vocational schools train students for a specific profession, and there is also the option of completing general-education school degrees. Children and adolescents in Germany are required to attend school until the age of 18 (compulsory education)!

### The following types of schooling exist at vocational schools:

#### **career-entry (Berufseinstiegsjahr - BEJ) year or career-preparatory year (Berufsvorbereitungsjahr - BVJ)**

These are programmes for students with or without a certain type of secondary-school diploma (Hauptschulabschluss) who are not yet sure what kind of career they are interested in and do not yet have a vocational training placement (apprenticeship). They are introduced to various professions and can build on either a secondary school degree (Hauptschulabschluss) or acquire a "Hauptschulabschluss".

#### **Vocational school (Berufsschule):**

At these schools, training is through a dual-track system. This means that part of the vocational training focuses on theory, which is learned at the school, while the other part involves getting practical experience at a company that provides vocational training.

### **Vocational schools for specific professions (Berufsfachschule):**

This type of vocational school offers 1 to 3 years of basic vocational education, preparation for a specific profession or professional qualification. Students can obtain a degree ranging from a secondary school degree one level above the one they have to a basic secondary school degree. Vocational schools are usually split into the following professional fields:

- commercial/business professions
- home economics/socio-educational care or nursing
- business/technical professions

### **Preparatory training school (Fachschule):**

This type of preparatory training school offers one- or two-year programmes for professional development. This means that students are building on their previously completed vocational training programme and corresponding employment, and further developing the qualifications they have already acquired. These schools prepare students for mid-level management or self-employment. The preparatory training schools (Fachschulen) are also divided into the following subject areas:

- Engineering
- Economics
- Social work
- Agricultural economics
- Design

### **Vocational college (Berufskolleg):**

Vocational colleges, which offer programmes from one to three years, build on a basic secondary-school degree, and students aim to achieve a more advanced professional qualification or qualification for higher education at a technical university (eligibility for university study) . There are vocational colleges for the following fields:

- Engineering
- Economics and administration
- Social education
- Health and nursing
- Home economics

### **Upper secondary vocational school (Berufsoberschule):**

To attend an upper secondary vocational school, you need to have already completed a vocational training programme (apprenticeship) and, at minimum, a basic secondary school degree (mittlerer Schulabschluss). These schools' programmes usually last two years and

prepare students for a subject-specific university entrance certificate or, if they speak a second foreign language, a general university entrance certificate. This makes them eligible to study at a university. The following types of upper secondary vocational schools exist:

- Technical upper secondary school (Technische Oberschule)
- Upper secondary school for economics (Wirtschaftsoberschule)
- Upper secondary school for social work (Oberschule für Sozialwesen)

### **Vocational grammar school (Berufliches Gymnasium):**

Students with a basic secondary-school degree and an average grade of 3.0 in the main subjects may attend a three-year vocational grammar school. The vocational grammar school ends with a general university entrance certificate (Abitur) and makes the student eligible to study at any research university or university of applied sciences. This type of school is likewise split up into corresponding subject areas:

- Technical subjects
- Economics
- Social work and healthcare
- Agricultural sciences
- Biotechnological subjects
- Nutritional science

### **Education (dual training and full-time school)**

In Germany, it is a great advantage to have a **vocational qualification** before going to work. People with professional qualifications earn more money on average over the course of their lives, are less likely to be unemployed, and are less likely to have temporary contracts than those without professional qualifications.

### **Dual training**

A special feature in Germany is the dual training system. About one third of the time, dual vocational training takes place at the vocational school and about two thirds of the time at a training company. You can learn the theory and practice at the same time while earning money at a company during your apprenticeship.

Depending on the type of profession you would like to learn in dual training, you should contact the right place:

### **Chamber of Crafts (HWK; Handwerkskammer)**

The Chamber of Crafts (HWK) is responsible for craft trades. In this case, professions like baker, brick mason or painter.

[Kreishandwerkerschaft Dortmund Hagen Lünen](#)



📍 [Handwerkerstraße 9, 58135 Hagen](#)

## **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.

[Südwestfälische Industrie- und Handelskammer zu Hagen](#)

📍 [Bahnhofstraße 18, 58095 Hagen](#)

## **Preschool education at the vocational school**

In Germany, however, not only is there the option for dual training, but there is also full-time school-based training at a vocational school (Berufsfachschule). This type of training provides a completed vocational training in theory and practice outside of the dual training system (without an apprenticeship at a company). It usually lasts two to three and a half years. The course is full-time and includes general subjects in addition to the professional subjects. Since the vocational schools differ greatly in terms of their faculties, admission requirements, training duration and further education possibilities, it is advisable to make enquiries at the school in question.

You can find an overview of the vocational schools in Hagen [here](#).

## **Studies**

### **General information**

In Germany, there are many different courses of study. There are also different types of universities:

Universitäten = universities (more academically focused)

Universities of applied sciences and universities (practice-oriented)



Duale Hochschulen = "dual universities" (very practically focused)

Kunsthochschule, Filmhochschule and Musikhochschule (colleges for artistic subjects)

There are public and private universities. Private universities are not necessarily better than public ones – however, students usually have to pay high tuition fees at private universities.

## You can find many helpful sites online

- [Hochschulkompass](#) (All degree programmes and universities in Germany)
- [Study in Germany](#) (Information for refugees)
- [Agentur für Arbeit Studienorientierung](#)
- [Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst](#)

If you want to study in Germany, you need a university entrance qualification. If you do not have an Abitur degree from a German school, you need to check whether the secondary school degree you obtained in your home country is sufficient for you to enter a German university. Further information can be found on the website  [Anabin](#), in the  [Informationsportal "Anerkennung in Deutschland"](#) and at



[Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienst DAAD](#).

You must also bring proof that you have a good knowledge of German (language level C1), for example TestDaF, DSH or telc Deutsch C1 Hochschule.

It is also possible to get support from the educational counselling organisation Garantiefonds Hochschule.

Some universities also offer preparatory semesters during which you can learn German.

You should get information directly from the university at which you would like to study. Most universities have counselling services available. Also make note of the deadlines by which you need to apply for a course of study!

## Tuition fees for international students from non-EU countries

No tuition fees are charged at public universities in North Rhine-Westphalia. However, a semester fee is charged for each lecture period (semester). The semester fee must be paid upon enrolment or re-registration for the coming semester; this amount includes administrative fees and social contributions. The social contribution helps the Studentenwerk to finance the Mensa and halls of residence. Sometimes a bus and train ticket (semester ticket) is also included in the semester fees in order to be able to use local transport. The semester fees vary depending on the university.

At private universities you usually have to pay a tuition fee.


## Financing


Many people work in order to finance their studies. However, during term time (semesters), you must not work more than 20 hours a week. You can also try to get financial support from the government.

## BAföG = Federal Training Assistance Act

With BAföG, students receive a monthly stipend for a limited period of time. The amount of money you will receive depends on your individual circumstances. Not every student is eligible for BAföG. If you receive asylum seekers' benefits, you cannot receive BAföG. BAföG is only provided for full-time students.

## **Bursary**

A grant or scholarship is financial support which can be used for university studies, for example. There are many grants for which you can apply. And not just for the first semester but for your whole course of studies. You can get an overview on the website  <https://www.stipendiumplus.de>. Some take account of social engagement, political orientation, degree programme, grades or personal circumstances. Some organisations also cooperate with certain Hochschulen.

The “Deutschlandstipendium”  [www.deutschlandstipendium.de](http://www.deutschlandstipendium.de), available in simple language, English and German, itself has a wide range of support offers, which also means that it can be accessible to many students.

## **Without a university entrance qualification**

If you are able to study in your home country but not in Germany with your school-leaving qualification, you might be able to enter university via a preparatory college (Studienkolleg). There, foreign university applicants are given targeted preparation for future studies at a German research university or university of applied sciences.

## **University system in Germany**

### **There are three different types of universities in Germany**

- Universities
- “Hochschulen für Angewandte Wissenschaften” or “HAW” (Universities of Applied Sciences), also known as “Fachhochschulen”, as well as
- Colleges for artistic subjects (arts, film, music)

All types of university offer bachelor's and master's programmes.

There are both state and private universities. Most universities in Germany are financed by the state. Private universities sometimes impose high tuition fees.

### **Universities**

- are very academically oriented
- if you want to do a doctorate, a university is the right place

### **“Hochschulen für Angewandte Wissenschaften” or “HAW” (Universities of Applied Sciences)**

- Studies are very practice-oriented
- the vocational training is tailored to the concrete requirements in professional life, while a study programme includes internships and practical semesters
- Under certain conditions, a doctorate at an HAW is possible

## Colleges for artistic subjects (arts, film, music)

- The focus is on artistic subjects such as visual arts, acting, dance, industry and fashion design, graphics, instrumental music or singing as well as modern media (directors, cameramen, scriptwriters)
- In addition to face-to-face study, there is also the option of taking up distance learning.

## University-level study


### General information


In Germany, there are many different courses of study. There are also different types of universities:

- Universitäten = universities (more academically focused)
- Fachhochschulen, Hochschulen = universities of applied sciences; polytechnics (more practically focused)
- Duale Hochschulen = “dual universities” (very practically focused)
- Kunsthochschule, Filmhochschule and Musikhochschule (colleges for artistic subjects)

There are public and private universities. Private universities are not necessarily better than public ones – however, students usually have to pay high tuition fees at private universities.

### Helpful websites

 [Hochschulkompass](#) (All degree programmes and universities in Germany)

 [Study in Germany](#) (Information for refugees)

 [Agentur für Arbeit](#) (Study orientation)

 [Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst](#) (DAAD - All study programmes in Germany)

### Prerequisites

If you want to study in Germany, you need a university entrance qualification. If you do not have an Abitur degree from a German school, you need to check whether the secondary school degree you obtained in your home country is sufficient for you to enter a German university.

You can find more detailed information on the [Anabin](#) website, through the “Recognition in Germany” information portal and on [Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienst DAAD](#)..

You must also bring proof that you have a good [knowledge of German](#) (language level C1) for example [Test Deutsch als Fremdsprache \(TestDaF\)](#), [Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang \(DSH\)](#) or [telc Deutsch C1 Hochschule](#).

It is also possible to get support from the [Bildungsberatung Garantiefonds Hochschule](#).

Some universities also offer preparatory semesters during which you can learn German.

You should get information directly from the university at which you would like to study. Most universities have counselling services available. Also make note of the deadlines by which you

need to apply for a course of study!

## **Without a university entrance qualification**

If you are eligible to study at university in your home country, but not in Germany, you may be able to get access to higher education through a preparatory college (Studienkolleg) . There, foreign university applicants are given targeted preparation for future studies at a German research university or university of applied sciences.

## **Study in Hagen**

### **FernUniversität Hagen**

Hagen has been one of the most important study locations in Germany for many years. Hagen is home to Germany's first and only state distance-learning university. At the [FernUniversität](#) 69,982 students are enrolled (as of March 2023). With almost 70,000 students, the FernUniversität Hagen is one of the three largest universities in Germany. The degrees awarded by the Fernuniversität are regular university degrees. It awards Bachelor's and Master's degrees. All faculties have the right to award doctorates and habilitations. The Fernuniversität in Hagen also offers preparatory courses, academic studies and partial studies for professional or personal development. The tasks of the Fernuniversität include teaching, studying, research and continuing education. The faculties cover a wide range of study programmes.

### **Main research areas**

- Lifelong learning, digitalisation and diversity
- Energy, environment and sustainability
- Digital culture

### **The faculties of the Fernuniversität:**

- [Faculty of Cultural and Social Sciences](#)
- [Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science](#)
- [Faculty of Psychology](#)
- [Faculty of Economics](#)
- [Faculty of Law](#)

### **The study programmes**

- [Bachelor degree programmes](#)
- [Master degree programmes](#)

### **International profile**

The FernUniversität uses established university networks to drive forward its cooperation policy and the development of sustainable partnerships. It is a member of, among others:

- [Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst \(DAAD\)](#)
- [GATE-Germany](#) – Konsortium Internationales Hochschulmarketing
- [European University Association](#) (EUA)
- [European Association of Distance Teaching Universities](#) (EADTU)
- [European Universities Continuing Education Network](#) (EUCEN)
- [International Council for Distance Education](#) (ICDE)

**Contact:**

Zentrale Studienberatung

☎ [023319871588](tel:023319871588)

@ [studienberatung@fernuni-hagen.de](mailto:studienberatung@fernuni-hagen.de)

🕒 Monday to Thursday: 10:00 – 12:00 Uhr und 14:00 – 16:00 Uhr

## Study at the South Westphalia University of Applied Sciences

The [Fachhochschule Südwestfalen](#) has its headquarters in Iserlohn. Other locations are in Hagen, Meschede, Soest and Lüdenscheid. The different locations have different study programmes and research focuses. Around 2,800 students are currently enrolled at the Hagen site with the two faculties of Technical Business Administration and Electrical Engineering and Information Technology. Here, students can lay a strong foundation for a successful professional future. Here you will receive customised training in small groups, state-of-the-art laboratories and a direct link to the local economy. All these factors lead to decisive advantages on the labour market.

**The subject areas are:**

- Agricultural economics
- Design management and product development
- Health and natural sciences
- Information technology and digitalisation
- Education and psychology
- Technology and engineering
- Environment and sustainability
- Economy and law

You can find the study programmes for Hagen [here](#).

- [Bachelor degree programmes](#)
- [Master degree programmes](#)

## **North Rhine-Westphalia University of Applied Sciences for Police and Public Administration (HSPV NRW)**

The [North Rhine-Westphalia University of Applied Sciences for Police and Public Administration](#) offers dual study programmes that train students for the higher civil service in local and state administration, pension insurance and the police. Direct “enrolment” for studies at the HSPV NRW is not possible. Students are selected via the recruiting authorities.

Information on the [requirements/admission](#)

[Contact form](#)

You can contact the International Office [here](#).

## **Counselling services for international students in Hagen**


### **International students can find general information about studying in Germany on the following pages:**


- [DAAD](#)
- [Campus Germany](#)
- [Hochschulkompass der Hochschulrektorenkonferenz \(HRK\)](#)
- [www.study-in-germany.de - DAAD](#)
- [Studieren im Netz](#)
- [anabin - Informationssystem zur Anerkennung ausländischer Bildungsabschlüsse](#)
- [studieren.de](#)
- [Ruhr-Universität-Bochum](#)
- [Deutsches Studentenwerk](#)
- [Technische Universität Dortmund](#)
- [Arbeitsagentur Hagen](#)

## **Services of the FernUniversität for students with a foreign degree:**

Do you want to study with a foreign qualification? Find out everything you need to know [here](#). [Here](#) you can find information about your educational qualifications obtained abroad. If you have any questions, please contact the [International Office of the FernUniversität Hagen](#).

## Contact of the International Office of the FernUniversität Hagen:

 [023319872444](tel:023319872444)

 Office hours by telephone:

Monday to Friday from 08:00 bis 15:30 Uhr

### Visiting address:

Please make an appointment in advance for personal visits!

## Services of the FernUniversität for refugees:


The FernUniversität would like to help and support refugees with their integration in Germany. The distance learning programme is flexible and mobile and is particularly suitable for refugees who are able to study. Under certain conditions, you can enrol directly on a degree programme or start by taking individual courses via an academy course. Employees of the FernUniversität provide advice, check foreign educational qualifications and inform refugees about the necessary German courses. The study programme at the FernUniversität is taught in German.


[Here](#) you can find out everything about the services for refugee students.

[Here](#) you can find information for refugee students from Ukraine.

### Contact

 [info@fernuni-hagen.de](mailto:info@fernuni-hagen.de)

 [023319872444](tel:023319872444)

 Universitätsstraße 11 (IZ), 58097 Hagen.

## Fachhochschule Südwestfalen (South Westphalia University of Applied Sciences)

[Here](#) you will find general information for applications from foreign nationals

- [Language skills](#)
- [Application procedure](#)
- [Application documents](#)
- [Qualified](#)


[Contact for Hagen](#)

## Coordination of refugee-related activities for Hagen, Iserlohn and Lüdenscheid


The South Westphalia University of Applied Sciences welcomes refugees in Germany and would like to support them in their start.



## **Contact:**

 [023715661244](tel:023715661244)

### Hausanschrift:

 Frauenstuhlweg 31, 58644 Iserlohn  
Raum: H.117

### Postanschrift:

Postfach 2061  
58590 Iserlohn

## **Financing and Scholarships**

As a student in Germany, it is possible to receive financial support through the Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz, a federal act for promoting higher education referred to as BAföG for short. The BAföG payments are made monthly and, in the best case, continue for the duration of your course of study. The monthly sum provided by the BAföG can be somewhere between €399 and €735. Half of the BAföG total must be paid back after course of study has been completed. The exact information on the BAföG changes regularly and can therefore be found under the following link:

 [Webseite BAföG für Geflüchtete und Migranten](#)

The amount of BAföG funding you receive will depend on the respective personal requirements. Relevant things are:

### **Nationality:**

In principle, anyone who has German citizenship can receive BAföG. However, citizens of the European Union, as well as migrants and refugees living in Germany, are also eligible for funding. The basic rule is: If foreign nationals have the prospect of staying in Germany and are socially integrated, they are considered eligible for support.

### **Age:**

For BAföG funding, you must not be older than 30 years at the beginning of the Bachelor's degree programme, and not older than 35 years before beginning the Master's programme.

### **Suitability:**

If you want to receive BAföG funding, you should essentially be in a position to actually achieve the educational goal you are striving for.

## **Private income and assets:**

BAföG is available to young people whose families cannot pay for their education alone. The extent to which income and assets are taken into account will be examined as part of the application process.

Depending on which university you are studying at, you can find your responsible Office for Educational Support at [www.bafög.de](http://www.bafög.de).

You can also find more information [here](#).

## **Bursaries**

As an alternative to the BAföG, it is also possible to get a scholarship. In contrast to the BAföG, a scholarship usually does not need to be paid back, so it's important to perform well in your studies and take on voluntary commitments in order to be awarded a grant. The amount is often calculated in line with the BAföG. There is also an additional 300 euros paid monthly, this is known as "Büchergeld".

There are numerous bursaries you can apply for – not only for the first semester, but throughout your studies. These services are often very different. In some cases, emphasis is placed on social commitment or on political orientation, course of study, grades or personal circumstances. Some organisations also cooperate with certain Hochschulen.

The [„Deutschland-Stipendium“](#) is a Germany-wide bursary programme for gifted students at state and state-recognised universities. The "Deutschlandstipendium" supports students of all nationalities at higher education institutions whose previous educational path is characterised by outstanding academic achievements. In addition to notable successes at school and/or university, the eligibility criteria also include a student's social commitment. Consideration is also given to overcoming particular biographical hurdles resulting from a person's family or cultural background.

You can find more information on bursaries in the Ruhr area at [„Stipendienkultur Ruhr“](#)

Organisations that award scholarships are often described as foundations that offer scholarships. The following foundations offer programmes, among other things, especially for refugees. Please refer to the respective websites for application guidelines and requirements.

🌐 [Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung \(FES\) - Scholarships for Refugees](#)

🌐 [Böckler-Aktion Bildung der Hans-Böckler-Stiftung](#)

🌐 [Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung \(KAS\) - Scholarships for Refugees](#)

🌐 [Villigst - Unser Stipendium für Geflüchtete](#)

🌐 [Brot für die Welt - Flüchtlingsstipendienprogramm](#)

One exception is, for example, the guarantee fund by Otto Benecke Stiftung. The programme is aimed at migrants who are new in the country and who would like to get the higher education entrance qualification, prepare to go to university, and start their academic career. There is also the Deutschland-Stipendium that provides 300 euros monthly as financial support. The Deutschland-Stipendium is awarded through the respective universities.

 [Garantiefond Hochschule der Otto Benecke Stiftung in Bonn](#)

 [Deutschlandstipendium: Stipendiat werden](#)

You will find further information on the website for the 'Hochschulaktion für Geflüchtete' (College action for refugees) and from the database at the German Ministry for Education and Research (Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung - BMBF).

 [Datenbank Stipendienangebote \(BMBF Stipendienlotse\)](#)

## **Financial aid:**

Many students have a job alongside their studies. It is important that you do not neglect your studies. Please note that the pursuit of gainful employment for international students is only possible to a limited extent and is regulated by law ([Aufenthaltsgesetz \(Residence Act\) Section 16 Studies](#)).

During your studies, you may work 120 full days or 240 half days per calendar year. A half working day is defined as a day on which up to half of the collectively agreed, customary (for the local area) or company working time is worked. Any employment beyond these limits must be applied for at the competent Immigration Office and usually requires the approval of the Zentralen Arbeitsvermittlung (ZAV) of the Bundesagentur für Arbeit.

Special case: Part-time student jobs (such as working as a tutor or student assistant), on the other hand, are permitted without restriction.

In principle, this is regulated by the state and stipulates that students may not work more than 20 hours per week during the lecture period (semester). If you exceed this maximum number of hours, you may be expelled from the Hochschule. You also need to note that there is a maximum number of semesters to complete a bachelor's or master's degree, which you may not exceed.

## **Working student**

You can become a working student in the first semester or later on. In many degree programmes, there is also the opportunity to work as a working student at a company. This gives you the chance to gain professional experience and earn money at the same time. Most companies offer contracts on a 10-20 hour per week basis. Another advantage is that working students who perform well are often taken on after graduation, which means you could potentially secure a job early on. Find out about companies in your area. The concept of the working student is well-established.

## **Work-study programme**

For this type of course, vocational training is combined with studying. As a rule, one works in the company during the semester break. The company will finance you during your studies, even if you do not work during this time.

## **Student assistant**

These are jobs advertised at Hochschulen. Many of these can be found on the notice boards at central locations across the university (such as in the library or in the "Mensa" [refectory]), or

you can enquire at the university in person. As a student assistant you work at a fixed hourly rate per week (max. 20 hours). The tasks to be performed concern helping a lecturer, a chair or an organisation of the university. This is usually remunerated with minimum wage.

## **Minijob/ 520 euros base**

Many students also work in the catering trade (as bartenders, waitresses and the like), give private lessons or offering help with childcare.

There are always many job advertisements on the notice boards of universities, which can be found in central places such as the library or the cafeteria.

Most students work in a minijob (520 euros base). The advantage is that a student is then considered to be in "minor employment" – and, therefore, no tax or social security contributions are owed (unemployment, health and nursing care insurance). This can be easily combined with studying. More information is available at [www.minijob-zentrale.de](http://www.minijob-zentrale.de) (available in German and in easy-to-understand language).

## **Recognition of credentials**

### **Recognition of foreign educational qualifications**

If you have qualifications issued abroad, you can have them recognised in Germany. During the recognition procedure, your qualification will be compared with a comparable German qualification. If your qualification has been recognised, you will be issued with a certificate.

### **Where can I have my qualifications recognised?**

Different bodies are responsible for recognising qualifications depending on whether you need a school, academic or vocational qualification recognised. It is worthwhile to seek advice in advance. Advice centres can explain to you which office is responsible for recognising your qualification, what the next steps are and how you can finance the recognition procedure.

### **School certificates:**

### **Responsible public authorities**

Depending on the school-leaving qualification, different public authorities are responsible for the recognition of your certificate:

#### **An intermediate school-leaving qualification ("Mittlere Reife") and / or secondary-school diploma (Hauptschulabschluss)**


📍 Bezirksregierung Köln  
Zeughausstraße, 2-10, 50606 Köln

☎ [02211472048](tel:02211472048)

## Telephone consultation hours:


9:00 – 11:30 (Monday+Wednesday) and  
13:00 – 15:00 (Tuesday+Thursday)


## Visitors' day:

 Thursday 8:30 – 15:00

You can find the application form and additional information [here](#).

## “Allgemeine Hochschulreife” (general university entrance qualification)

 Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf  
Am Bonnhof 35, 40474 Düsseldorf

 [02114750](tel:02114750)

You can find the application form and additional information [here](#).

[Here](#) you will find information on:

- Which professions require recognition?
- How does the recognition procedure work?
- Where can I find counselling and help?

## Academic degrees:

Academic degrees can be recognised by the "Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen" (abbr: ZAB). You can check the [anabin](#) database in advance to see whether your degree is recognised.

[Explanatory video: How can I use anabin to compare my degree? \(Subtitles in 5 languages\)](#)

You submit your application for recognition directly to the ZAB. You can find more information on the [website of ZAB](#).

## Professional qualifications:

For vocational qualifications, you can find out which body is responsible for recognising qualifications for this profession via the page [Recognition in Germany](#).

## Translations and certifications of documents for recognition:

As a rule, translations must be done by a professional translation agency. You can find an overview of the interpreters accredited in Germany [here](#).

You often need official certifications of your certificates. These bodies can do this: public authorities, for example city administrations (city hall), district administrations, mayors and notaries.

## **Advice centres in Hagen**

### **Caritasverband Hagen e. V.**

[Migrationsberatung für erwachsene Zuwanderer \(MBE\)](#)

📍 [Focus Altenhagen](#), Friedensstraße 107, 58097 Hagen

📍 Caritasverband Geschäftsstelle, [Bergstraße 81, 58095 Hagen](#)

### **AWO Hagen - Märkischer Kreis**

[Migrationsberatung für erwachsene Zuwanderer \(MBE\)](#)

📍 Frankfurter Str. 89, 58095 Hagen

### **Industrie- und Handelskammer Hagen**

With regard to IHK professions, the [IHK Hagen](#) provides advice.

## **Recognition subsidy**

If you want to have your foreign professional qualification recognised in Germany and do not receive any other support, you will receive a recognition grant. In particular, employees who work below their completed qualification and only have a low income have been able to recover the costs since 1 December 2016. The recognition grant amounts to a maximum of 600 euros. The application can be submitted to the central funding agency, the [Forschungsinstitut Betriebliche Bildung \(f-bb\)](#) gGmbH.

Information on the recognition grant can be found [here](#).

## **Internet information portals**

[Here](#) you will find further information, including about recognition of school and other academic qualifications and exam results

[This portal](#) is aimed specifically at women. It provides detailed information about recognition,

education and training, university study and work, including explanations of key terms.

### **Official authentication of certificates/credentials**

Official authentication confirms that a document is genuine. This is necessary, for example, for enrolment at a university. All photocopies of your credentials must be officially authenticated.

You can obtain official certifications from the [Citizen Centre \(Bürgeramt\) in Hagen](#). You can find more information [here](#).