

COUNTRY GUIDE: GERMANY

**SMITH
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Immigration Practice

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Before working in Germany, nationals of certain countries may be required to apply for a visa. In this guide, we explore who needs a visa to work in Germany, and look at the work permit options available.

GERMAN EMPLOYMENT VISAS

EU citizens can work in Germany without a visa. Nationals of Australia, Israel, Japan, Canada, South Korea, New Zealand, the USA, the UK and Northern Ireland can enter Germany without a visa or a job offer, on the basis of their passports.

However, citizens from the above countries who intend to stay and work in Germany must apply for a work and residence permit once they have found a job. Within 2 weeks of arrival in Germany, they must register at the Town Hall responsible for their place of residence. After this, they can apply for a residence permit at the (Ausländerbehörde) Foreign Office. In order to receive the residence permit, the applicant must have a work permit approval from the responsible labour office. Applicants must have an employment contract or at least a job offer in order to apply for a work permit, and they may only start work in Germany after they have been seen by the Foreign Office.

All other non-EU citizens need a visa before entering Germany with the intention of taking up employment. The application can be made in person at the German Consulate or Embassy. The visa can then be converted into a residence permit in Germany. The length of the resident permit usually aligns with the length of the contract.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for a German work permit, the basic requirements for the employee and the German company are as follows:

- The potential employee has to be employed on equal terms as a German employee.
- German or other European nationals are not available to fill the position.
- Usually the employee must have a university degree or comparable qualification. For some positions there are special requirements.
- The German company must be registered at the Labor Authorities in Germany and apply for a Corporate Registration Number. (For Intra-Company transfers only).



SCHENGEN VISAS

A Schengen visa is a short-stay visa which allows its holder to enter, freely travel within and leave any of the 26 Schengen member countries on a single permit. Find out more about Schengen visas [here](#).

INTRA-CORPORATE TRANSFERS

Across most European member states there is a common work permit option known as Intra Corporate Transfer (ICT) which allows individuals to be transferred within company branches from one country to another. Find out more about the EU ICT Permit [here](#).

EU BLUE CARD

The EU Blue Card is a work and residence permit for non-EEA nationals. The Blue Card gives highly qualified workers from outside the EU the permission to live and work in an EU country, provided they have high-level professional qualifications, and an offer of employment with a high salary. Find out more [here](#).



THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- **Step 1: Work Permit Pre-Approval Application:** (Estimated process time: 2 - 4 weeks after receipt of all required documents and information). Once the work permit has been approved, we will courier documents before proceeding to Step 2.
- **Step 2: Work / residence visa application at German Embassy / Consulate General:** (Estimated Process Time: 2-4 weeks)
- **Step 3: Issuance of work / residence visa:** The applicant will receive notification from the German Embassy/Consulate General via email when the visa has been approved, with details about when and how to pick it up (this may vary between Embassies). The visa will be valid for 90 days/180 days and must be exchanged for a long-term Work/Residence Permit after arrival in Germany. The assignee will be able to start working immediately upon arrival in Germany on the work visa.
- **Steps 4 & 5: Local Registration and Application of Long-Term Work/Residence Permit:** Upon arrival (Estimated Process Time: 2-3 months)

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Everyone must be registered at their place of residence in Germany (including Germans, EU-nationals and non-EU-nationals). If one moves house, they have to be re-registered at their new address. There are no government charges for registering in Germany. One must register at their address within 2 weeks of arrival, but one can start working in Germany before one is registered (if they hold permission that allows them to work).

Local registration in Germany at a hotel address is not possible. It is only possible to be registered at an “apartment/hotel” or an apartment. If one is living in a temporary address for the initial registration, one must be re-registered at the permanent address. Only after the local registration is completed, can we submit the application documentation for a long-term work/residence permit to the foreign office. We must wait for confirmation of an appointment. This could take between 4-12 weeks depending on the location.

Please contact Smith Stone Walters for more information.

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