

Residence permits at a glance



Residence permit/ Purpose of stay	Duration/ Time limit	Extension	Employment	Residence in another EU member state	Settlement permit	Family reunification of spouses and single, underage children	Access to labour market for family members	Parental allowance	Child benefit
EU Blue Card (Section 19a Residence Act)	Up to 4 years; if employment contract shorter limited to duration of contract + 3 months	Possible if basic requirements still met	Exercise of employ- ment commensurate with qualification	Possibility after 18 months of settling with family in an- other EU state and applying for an EU Blue Card there	After 33 months or with sufficient language skills after 21 months if other requirements met	Spouse receives residence permit for purpose of family reunification	Residence permit entitles holder to take up gainful employment	Yes	Yes
Skilled employment (Section 18 Residence Act)	Limited to duration of employment contract	Possible if respective conditions met	The employment stated on the resi- dence permit may be exercised	Up to 3 months' freedom of travel to other Schengen states	Possible after 5 years if general require- ments are met	Possible under the general conditions of family reunification	Possible under same conditions as for spouse concerning access to labour market	Yes, if no upper time limit on residence permit (Section 18 (2))	Yes, if no upper time limit on residence permit (Section 18 (2))
To seek employment (Section 18c Residence Act)	Up to 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not possible Can be renewed only if at least the same amount of time spent abroad as was spent see- king employment in Germany 	Not permitted	Residence for up to 3 months in Schengen zone	Time taken into account	/	/	/	/
Self-employment (Section 21 Residence Act)	Up to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be extended Possibility of settle- ment permit after 3 years if require- ments met 	Entitled to exercise a self-employed occupation	Residence for up to 3 months in Schengen zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible after 5 years if general require- ments are met Possible after 3 years if specific require- ments are met 	Possible under the general conditions of family reunification	Residence permit entitles holder to take up gainful employment	Yes	Yes
Research (Section 20 Residence Act)	Up to 1 year or limited to duration of research project	Extension possible if research project is extended or new one in prospect	Entitled to research activity in named re- search establishment and to teach	Residence for up to 3 months in Schengen zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible after 5 years if general require- ments are met 	Entitled to residence permit for purpose of family reunification	Residence permit entitles holder to take up gainful employment	Yes	Yes

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University degree/ Doctorate (Section 16 (1))	At least 1 year, max. 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible if purpose of stay not fulfilled, usually up to 10 yrs. • Possible for up to 18 months after completion of studies to seek employment commensurate with qualification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 120 whole or 240 half days a year • Student jobs (must not substantially delay studies) 	Up to 3 months' freedom of travel to other Schengen states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible for graduates after 5 years, towards which half the period of study counts, if general requirements are met • Graduates of German universities: under certain conditions 2 years after graduating (Section 18b Residence Act) 	Possible under the general conditions of family reunification	Consent of Federal Employment Agency required if job subject to approval	/	/
Applying to study (Section 16 (1a))	Up to 9 months	Not possible	Not permitted	Up to 3 months' freedom of travel to other Schengen states	Time taken into account	/	/	/	/
Internship (Section 17 Residence Act)	Limited to the duration of the internship (up to 12 months)	Possible if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the maximum duration of 12 months has not expired • A current work plan exists • Student status still applies 	Not permitted in parallel to internship	Up to 3 months' freedom of travel to other Schengen states	Not possible	/	/	/	/
Recognition of foreign professional qualifications (Section 17a Residence Act)	Up to 18 months	After full recognition of the professional qualification may be extended by up to 1 year for finding a job corresponding to qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment independent of training for up to 10 hours a week • No limitation on hours if employment is closely related to the profession pending recognition, and if there is a specific job offer for a subsequent employment in that profession 	Residence for up to 3 months in any six-month period in the Schengen zone	Half the period is taken into account	Possible under the general conditions of family reunification	Residence permit entitles holder to take up gainful employment	/	/

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Vocational training (Section 17 Residence Act)	Limited to the duration of the training course	Can be extended after completion of training for up to 1 year to find commensurate employment	When training serves to acquire a vocational qualification (at least 2 yrs.), students may take a job for up to 10 hours per week	Up to 3 months' freedom of travel to other Schengen states	Time taken into account	Possible under the general conditions of family reunification	/	/	/
Settlement permit for highly qualified foreigners (Section 19 Residence Act)	No time limit	/	Possible with no restrictions	Residence for up to 3 months in Schengen zone	/	Spouse is entitled to a residence permit	Residence permit entitles holder to take up gainful employment	Yes	Yes
Settlement permit (Section 9 Residence Act)	No time limit	/	Entitled to exercise gainful employment	Residence for up to 3 months in Schengen zone	/	Possible under the general conditions of family reunification	Residence permit entitles holder to take up gainful employment	Yes	Yes