

Job search opportunity card

Are you interested in coming to Germany to look for a suitable job? Learn about the requirements for a job search opportunity card here.

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The opportunity card (Section 20a of the Residence Act [AufenthG]) improves your chances of making contact with German employers and finding [qualified employment](#) in Germany.

To find out if you need to apply for an opportunity card [visa](#) to enter Germany, please refer to the [Do I need a visa?](#) section.

What are the requirements for an opportunity card?

Are you from a country outside the EU/EEA or Switzerland and would like to apply for an opportunity card under Section 20a of the Residence Act [AufenthG]? The following options are open to you:

Option 1: You have a foreign non-academic vocational or academic qualification that is fully recognised in Germany. Alternatively, you obtained your academic or non-academic vocational qualification in Germany.



Tip

If you obtained your academic or non-academic vocational qualification in Germany, you can immediately apply for a residence permit for jobseekers under Section 20 of the Residence Act [AufenthG]. This gives you more time to look for a job (18 months instead of one year) and you can work part-time without restrictions during this time. For more information, see the “[Prospects after graduation](#)” section and the “[Prospects after your vocational training](#)” section.

Option 2: You score a minimum of six points in the points system in addition to meeting the following requirements:

- **You have successfully completed vocational or academic training.** It is important that the qualification is recognised by the country in which you obtained it. In addition, your [non-academic vocational qualification](#) must have required at least two years of vocational training. To support your visa application, you will need a positive result for this qualification, which you can apply for online at the [Central Office for Foreign Education \(ZAB\)](#).



Tip

If you completed Category A vocational education and training at a German Chamber of Commerce Abroad (AHK) that meets the requirements of the Vocational Training Act [BBiG], this qualification may also be suitable. For more information, please contact the AHK where you obtained your qualification. For general information, visit the [Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training \(BIBB\) website](#) .

- **Proof of language proficiency:** You either have German language skills of at least level A1 as defined by the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages \(CEFR\)](#) or English language skills of at least level B2 (CEFR).

Ability to cover living costs:

For both Option 1 and Option 2, you must have sufficient financial resources to fund your job search in Germany. During the visa process, you can demonstrate this ability with a [blocked bank account](#) (containing a minimum of €1,091 net per month, amount applicable in 2025) or a [declaration of commitment](#).

How does the points system for opportunity cards work?

The points system is only relevant if Option 2 applies to you, i.e. if you are unable to demonstrate that you have a German qualification or that your foreign qualification has been fully recognised. To apply for an opportunity card visa, you must also provide evidence of formal qualifications and the necessary language skills. You can score points for the following criteria:

- **Equivalence of qualification:** If you have already applied for recognition of your foreign qualification and it has been found to be partially equivalent, you will receive four points. You will still receive the four points if, in the case of a regulated profession, you are required to participate in compensatory measures before obtaining a [licence to practise](#) your profession.
- **Qualification in a shortage occupation:** If your formal qualification is in a shortage occupation, you will get one point. To find out which occupations are considered to be in short supply, consult the [List of shortage occupations](#).
- **Professional experience:** You will also be awarded points for your previous professional experience in relation to your formal qualification that you gained after graduating. Two points will be awarded if you can demonstrate that you have at least two years' professional experience within the last five years. If you have at least five years' professional experience within the last seven years, you will get three points.
- **Language skills:** You will also earn points if your German language skills are above level A1 (CEFR). One point is awarded at level A2, two points at level B1 and three points at level B2 or above. An additional point will be awarded if you have English at level C1 or above, or if you are a native speaker.
- **Age:** You also receive points if you are a certain age. People who are no older than 35 get two points until the day they turn 35. All those aged between 35 and 40 are awarded one point.
- **Previous stays in Germany:** Have you already lived in Germany? If you can prove that you have resided legally in Germany for a continuous period of at least six months in the last five years, you will receive one point. Examples of such stays include study, language and work stays. Stays for the purpose of tourism or

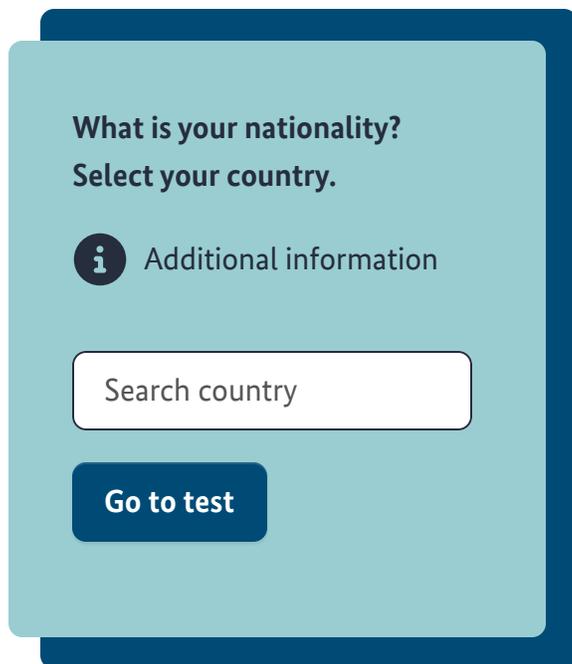
visiting people do not count. Copies of old passports and the visas and entry stamps they contain can be submitted as evidence.

- **Skilled worker potential of spouses or life partners:** Are you married or in a partnership and would like to come to Germany with your partner on an opportunity card? If your partner already meets the requirements for an opportunity card, you will be awarded one point in the points system. With this in mind, he or she can also do the [self-check: opportunity card](#).

Please note that all information you provide in the above categories must be supported by appropriate evidence or certificates for the visa application.

Self-Check: Opportunity card

Simply answer the questions in the self-check: opportunity card to find out if you are eligible to apply for an opportunity card.



What is your nationality?
Select your country.

 Additional information

Search country

Go to test

Did you get a positive result in the self-check? Congratulations! You can now apply for an opportunity card at your diplomatic [mission abroad](#). To find the contact address, please refer to our [world map](#). If you are already living in Germany with a valid [residence title](#), please contact your [local foreigners authority](#) .

What opportunities does the opportunity card offer?

Opportunity cards are issued initially as job search opportunity cards for a maximum of one year. The card allows you to look for gainful employment in Germany, i.e. you can seek employment or become self-employed.

While you are looking for gainful employment, you are allowed to have one or more part-time jobs ([secondary employment](#)) totalling 20 hours a week. You can also do job trials for a maximum of two weeks per employer as part of your job search. The aim of the job trial must be either to obtain qualified employment, an apprenticeship or a qualification programme.



Tip

To get the most out of your job search stay, you should start preparing for your job search as early as possible: How should your application be structured to convince a German employer? Which contact points can help you? For more information, please refer to the [“Finding a job”](#) section.

If you have found a specific job or apprenticeship, or if you want to become self-employed, you can apply to your local [foreigners authority](#) for one of the existing residence permits for qualified employment, for [vocational training](#), for the [recognition of your qualifications](#) or for [self-employment](#). If your job meets the requirements for qualified employment but you are not eligible for any other residence title, your opportunity card will be extended for up to two years (opportunity card extension).

Explainer video: How do I get the job search opportunity card in Germany?

Information on the web

Federal Foreign Office (FFO)

[You can find out which visa you need in order to come to Germany with the Visa-Navigator.](#)

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)

[Centre of Excellence for Asylum, Migration and Integration in Germany.](#)



Do you have any questions?

Let us advise you on your opportunities to work and live in Germany. Our experts will support you with questions regarding job search, visa, recognition and learning German.

You can find out more about the various contact options by clicking on one of the icons in the bar below.

 E-Mail	 Hotline	FAQ FAQ
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URL: <https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa-residence/types/job-search-opportunity-card>

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