



Federal Office  
for Migration  
and Refugees

# EU Blue Card

Working and living in Germany

ENGLISCH



**The EU Blue Card** enables third-country nationals with an academic degree and a labour contract (or a binding job offer) guaranteeing a certain minimum annual income to live and work in Germany. It promotes the immigration of skilled workers, particularly in shortage occupations. Furthermore, it provides fast track opportunities into permanent residence and facilitates family reunification.

## Advantages of the EU Blue Card

### ■ Planning certainty

The EU Blue Card offers planning certainty for both immigrants and companies, as there is a legal entitlement to an EU Blue Card if the conditions are met. Holders of an EU Blue Card also benefit from an entitlement to family reunification and a fast track to a permanent settlement permit.

### ■ Facilitation of family reunification

EU Blue Card holders can bring their family members to Germany on simplified conditions. For example, spouses are entitled to a residence permit even if they do not speak German. This also entitles them to pursue gainful employment.

### ■ Fast track to a permanent settlement permit

Persons who have an EU Blue Card and basic knowledge of the German language (level A1) will be given a settlement permit in Germany after 33 months if they have been working as a highly qualified employee during this time and have made contributions to a pension insurance scheme. For those with sufficient knowledge of German (level B1), the period is shortened to 21 months.

### ■ Facilitated mobility in the EU

Persons in possession of an EU Blue Card from another EU Member State for at least 18 months can enter Germany for the purpose of employment without an employment visa. The EU Blue Card has to be applied for at the relevant immigration office within one month of entering the country.

# To apply for an EU Blue Card, the following conditions have to be fulfilled:

- a German academic degree, a foreign academic degree recognised in Germany or a comparable higher education qualification,
- an employment contract or a binding job offer in Germany **and**
- a specific minimum annual salary.

The current minimum salary limits and further information can be found at: [www.bamf.de/blauekarte](http://www.bamf.de/blauekarte)

## **Conditions for skilled workers in jobs in shortage occupations**

Lower salary limits apply to employment in the occupational fields of **mathematics, information technology, natural sciences, engineering and human medicine** (excluding dentistry); the latest information on the annual minimum gross salary can be found at: [www.bamf.de/blauekarte](http://www.bamf.de/blauekarte).

In these shortage occupations, the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) has to provide its approval for recruitment. This is to ensure that foreign workers are not employed on worse working conditions than German workers.

In order to shorten the approval procedure and thus the processing time until the EU Blue Card is issued, the approval of the Federal Employment Agency can already be applied for prior to entry via the pre-approval procedure at the Central International and Specialist Placement Service (ZAV).



**You can find more information at:**  
[https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/en/  
german-labour-market](https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/en/german-labour-market)



## Legal basis

Highly qualified non-EU nationals (third-country nationals) enjoy, under certain conditions, special rights within the EU on the basis of EU Directive 2009/50/EC.

An EU Blue Card can be applied for in all EU Member States except Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom. There are differences with regard to the preconditions, such as the amount of the minimum annual salary.

This leaflet is for information purposes only, does not claim to be exhaustive and is not legally binding. Detailed requirements and the applicable procedures are set out in the Residence Act (AufenthG). In the event of uncertainty, the formulation of the law takes precedence:

- §§ 18, 18b-c and 19f AufenthG
- EU Directive 2009/50/EC



**You can also find more information at:**  
**[www.bamf.de/bluecard](http://www.bamf.de/bluecard)**

# Application

The EU Blue Card is issued by the local immigration offices in Germany, which are also your contacts for all further questions. You can find the immigration office responsible for your (future) place of residence at: [www.bamf.de/webgis-abh](http://www.bamf.de/webgis-abh)

## The path to the EU Blue Card



Card.

Persons who have a residence permit in Germany should contact the immigration office responsible for their place of residence to obtain an EU Blue



Persons who have been holding an EU Blue Card from another EU Member State for at least 18 months can enter Germany for the purpose of employment without an employment visa. The EU Blue Card must then be applied for at the relevant immigration office within one month of entering the country.



Third-country nationals who live neither in Germany nor in another EU Member state usually require a visa for the purpose of gainful employment. This is issued by the German mission abroad in the country of residence. The EU Blue Card must then be applied for at the competent immigration office before the expiry of the visa.

The EU Blue Card will be issued for a period of four years. If the duration of the employment is less than four years, the residence permit will be issued for the duration of the employment contract plus three months. Basically, an extension is possible.

Within the first two years of employment, any change of work must generally be approved by the competent immigration office.

Hotline  
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*Make it in Germany*

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