



July 2024

## Opportunity card (Sections 20a + 20b Residence Act)

### Basic information

- Documents not in the German or English language must be submitted with a certified German translation.
- **Processing time is approximately 6 weeks**, but can be longer in individual cases.
- Flight reservations are not required to apply for a visa – please only book when you have received your visa.
- The visa section reserves the right to request further documents.
- Incomplete applications delay the process and can result in your application being rejected. So please try to submit your application in full, that is, with all required documents. If you have questions as you complete your application, we are happy to help.

### General information

The opportunity card (available from 1 June 2024) is a new feature in the German Residence Act allowing eligible people to come to Germany to look for a job. As well as looking for a job, successful applicants can also take part in additional training for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications in Germany.

There are two ways to obtain the opportunity card:

- Third-country nationals who can prove full equivalence of their foreign qualification and are thus considered to be skilled workers can receive an opportunity card without meeting any other special requirements if they provide evidence that they can support themselves.
- All other applicants have to provide proof that they have completed a degree from a foreign university, an at least two-year vocational qualification (both of which need to be officially recognised by the country in which they were completed) or a vocational qualification issued by one of the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad. In addition, applicants need to have either basic German (level A1) or intermediate English skills (level B2). If these requirements are met, varying numbers of points can be collected for criteria such as recognition of the qualification in Germany, language skills, professional experience, age and connection to Germany, as well as an eligible civil partner or spouse who is accompanying you. You need at least 6 points to be granted the opportunity card.

The opportunity card is issued for a maximum of one year provided you can support yourself for this period. During your time looking for a job in Germany, you can complete work trials or engage in secondary employment for a maximum of 20 hours per week.

You can find out more about the opportunity card (including a self-check) as well as general information on living and working in Germany here: ['Make it in Germany'](#).

Tick the relevant boxes in the following checklist to make sure your application is complete. Please submit the documents listed below in the requested **form and order**.

### Visa application checklist

The following documents are to be submitted in full with every application.



July 2024

- Completed and signed application form including declarations pursuant to Section 54 Residence Act
- Recent biometric passport photo (see specimen photos)
- Valid and personally signed passport with at least two completely empty pages
- Copy of the data page of your valid passport
- Cover letter: This should outline what fields and jobs you are interested in in Germany, where you want to apply and where you want to live in Germany (including details of accommodation and how you will support yourself). And, if applicable, what additional training you plan to complete to have your foreign professional qualification recognised.
- Curriculum vitae in tabular form indicating professional experience to date

**Covering your costs:** You can cover your living costs in Germany through your own means or a formal declaration of commitment. In addition, if you have concrete plans, income from secondary employment that is permitted with an opportunity card can be taken into account. Please provide the following proof depending on your individual case:

- Private resources in a bank account: To stay in Germany, each individual applicant must have at their disposal at least 1027 euro per month, which for the standard 12-month stay with an opportunity card totals 12,324 euro. You can prove you have sufficient resources by presenting a blocked account.  
Blocked account: Please open the blocked account in good time before you apply for a visa. When applying for a visa, only the official confirmation of the opening of the account issued by the bank, including information on the amount paid in and the amount available per month, will be accepted. Confirmation which does not cite these amounts is not sufficient, nor is proof of lodgement or transfer of funds without confirmation from the bank.
- Secondary employment: If you have a concrete opportunity for secondary employment in Germany, you can present an employment contract or a binding job offer detailing the weekly working hours and your monthly wage.
- Declaration of commitment: Proof in the form of a formal declaration of commitment pursuant to Sections 66 and 68 Residence Act to the German foreigners authority in which a third person undertakes to cover all costs (original document + copy)

- Private **health insurance** (so-called incoming travel insurance) valid in the entire Schengen area for the entire period of validity of the opportunity card, minimum coverage of 30,000 euro (proof to be provided at the latest when collecting the visa!)

Have you completed German vocational training or a degree from a German university? Or foreign vocational training or a degree from a foreign university which are recognised in Germany? Then you are considered a **skilled worker** pursuant to Section 18 III Residence Act and you do not need to collect points to get the opportunity card. Please provide proof of your qualification as a skilled worker in the form of:

- Certificate of vocational training in Germany (original document + copy)

OR

- Certificate of degree from a university in Germany (original document + copy)

OR



July 2024

- Recognition of the equivalence of the foreign vocational qualification from the respective agency responsible for recognition (original document + copy)

OR

- Recognition of equivalence of the foreign university degree (printout from the anabin database for your university degree)

OR (if the qualification is not assessed as “entspricht” (comparable) or “gleichwertig” (equivalent) and/or the institution is not classified as “H+”)

- Statement of comparability by the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB) (original document + copy)

OR (in the case of regulated professions in which permission is required to exercise the profession, for example, doctors, engineers; complete list is available from the [Federal Employment Agency](#) or the [European Commission](#))

- Permission to exercise a profession issued by the authority responsible for recognising qualifications, or assurance of permission to exercise a profession (for example, for medical professions: decision of the licensing authority in the federal territory, i.e. assurance of permission to exercise a profession or issuing of medical licence (original document + copy)

You can find out more about recognition here [www.anererkennung-in-deutschland.de](http://www.anererkennung-in-deutschland.de)

If you are **not a skilled worker** (see above for definition), you have to meet and prove the following requirements:

- Foreign vocational training qualification (original document + copy) AS WELL AS

- Certificate (original document + copy) issued by the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB) regarding your foreign vocational training qualification (state-recognised qualification, duration at least two years) OR

- Notice of partial recognition / Deficit notice for your vocational qualification (original document + copy)

OR

- Foreign university degree certificate (original document + copy) AS WELL AS

Proof of state recognition of university qualification – either in the form of

- Recognition of (conditional) comparability of the foreign university degree (printout from the [anabin database](#) for your university degree and your university)

OR (if the degree is not assessed as “entspricht” (comparable) or “gleichwertig” (equivalent) in the anabin database and/or the institution is not classified as “H+”)

- Statement of comparability by the [Central Office for Foreign Education \(ZAB\)](#) (original document + copy)

OR

- Vocational qualification issued by one of the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad with the relevant confirmation from the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) (original document + copy)



July 2024

**Language skills:**

- Certificate (original document + copy) of your knowledge of the German language – at least A1!

AND/OR

- Certificate (original document + copy) of your knowledge of the English language – at least B2!  
The issuer of the certificate must be certified by the [Association of Language Testers in Europe](#) (ALTE); alternatively, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is also accepted.

**Note: The documents listed above are also relevant for calculating your points for the opportunity card! You can be awarded points for knowledge of German and English at certain levels, as well as for partial recognition of your foreign vocational qualification.**

You can also collect **points for the opportunity card** (details on the number of points awarded are available on our website and at [Make it in Germany](#)) by proving the following:

- Proof of your professional experience in the last 5 or 7 years insofar as this is connected to your vocational qualification: employment references, confirmation of employment from your employer, etc. (original documents + copy)
- If you have been legally resident in Germany for an uninterrupted period of at least 6 months in the last 5 years (short stays under the Schengen Agreement do not count!), please prove this by providing suitable documents, for example,
- valid rental contracts
  - terms of employment, service contracts, etc.
  - passports with visas and entry stamps
- Does your spouse/registered partner also want to apply for an opportunity card – or have they already done so – to then enter Germany together with you? If yes, one of you can collect 1 additional point for the opportunity card. Please enclose proof of the opportunity card application submitted by your spouse/partner.

**Fee**

- Processing fee of 75 Euro, payable only in USD.