Germany

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The “EU Blue Card” is a single residence- and work permit. The permit is linked to the holder, not the job.

Eligibility for the EU Blue Card Germany

Are you a non-EU citizen?

Yes

Do you have a university degree? Either obtained in Germany, or if not comparable to a German higher education qualification, it has to be recognised

Yes

Gross annual salary* EUR 55200 or more?

Yes

Is your gross annual salary* EUR 43056 or more?

Yes

Is your job a MINT profession (Mathematics/Information technology/Natural sciences/Technology) or employment as a physician.

Yes

Did you obtain your university degree in Germany?

Yes

Bundesagentur für Arbeit has to approve the employment.

No

Blue Card

*) 2020 Salary requirement. Pre-2020 blue card holders with running employment contract do not have to comply with new salary requirement.

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Obtaining the Blue Card

Do you have a blue card from another state for at least 18 months, OR are currently a resident in Germany and hold a different residence title for the purpose of studying or employment?

Yes

No

Apply at the German diplomatic mission abroad for a national (employment) visa. Even when you can travel visa-free, an employment visa will expedite the process.* Tourist visa not allowed.

Apply for the Blue Card with your employment contract (or binding job offer) to the Ausländerbehörde in your place of residence in Germany, also known as the regional foreigners office. (München, berlin, Cologne, hamburg)

*) Citizen of the USA, Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland and South Korea do not need a visa to travel to Germany. It is however recommended to apply for an employment visa as it allows you to work upon arrival.

Processing time

Immigration service approves and issues the blue card within days to weeks, depending on the backlog of applications. Maximum processing time is three months.

Duration of validity

The blue card is issued for a term of at least one year and a maximum term of four years. The job contract has to correspond to a minimum of such a term. To facilitate renewal, Blue card will indicate an additional three months in the end date. The blue card card’s term may be extended multiple times.

NOTE: The required term of minimum one year is no longer communicated by German authorities, new proposed blue card rules indicate a minimum employment contract term of six months.
Changing jobs

In the first two years employment, authorization needs to be acquired from the immigration services to change jobs within Germany. After 18 Months one is allowed to take up employment in another blue card issuing country.

In case of unemployment, the blue card remains valid for three months enabling the holder to find a new job. The EU Blue Card holder shall communicate the beginning of the period of unemployment to the competent authorities of the Member State of residence, in accordance with the relevant national procedures.

Family reunification

Spouse and siblings (under 18) may join the blue card holder. They do not have to meet the requirements for the blue card. Visa for spouse and children may be issued upon issuance of a national visa to the (prospective) blue card holder, so they can travel together. Consult German diplomatic mission for details on issue dates.

Key advantages of blue card Germany to holder:

- Permanent residency after 33 months. If you can prove that your acquired language skills comply with level B1 of the Common European Reference Framework for Languages (CEFR), you can obtain your permanent residence permit after just 21 months.
- The EU Blue Card entitles the holder to spend visa-free periods of up to 90 days within a 180-day period in the other Schengen States for the purpose of tourism. Holders of an EU Blue Card can enter another Member State without a visa after 18 months and apply for the EU Blue Card of that Member State within a period of one month.
- Stay in non-EU countries for up to 12 consecutive months without your blue card expiring. This provision also includes family members.
- Spouse of blue card holder has access to labour market.

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Key source:
https://www.bamf.de/DE/Themen/MigrationAufenthalt/ZuwandererDrittstaaten/Migrathek/BlaueKarteEU/blauekarteue-node.html