

employment must be notified to the competent immigration authority, who in turn issues their written consent.

Advantages of the residence title

- » **Your fast track to a settlement permit**
As a holder of an EU Blue Card in Germany you can apply for a permanent national residence title (settlement permit). Therefore you should have been in highly-qualified employment for 33 months and have simultaneously paid into a retirement scheme. Holders of an EU Blue Card who can prove adequate knowledge of German (level B1) can apply for a settlement permit after 21 months already.
- » **Mobility in- and outside the EU**
If you have held an EU Blue Card from a Member State of the EU for at least 18 months you can enter another Member State without a visa for the purpose of highly-qualified employment and apply for the EU Blue Card there within one month. The same applies to the entry of family members (section 39 No. 7 of the Residence Ordinance). Besides, the holder of a Blue Card can spend up to 12 successive months in a non-EU country without losing his residence title. These same regulations are valid for family members, as well.
- » **Relaxed conditions for family reunification**
The EU Blue Card includes further advantages for family members. In accordance with section 30 subs. 1 sentence 1 No. 3g and sentence 3 No. 5 of the Residence Act, spouses might be granted a residence permit even if they do not have any knowledge of German prior to entering the country. In addition, spouses are immediately entitled to take up dependent and independent employment without any restrictions (section 27 subs. 5 of the Residence Act).

Miscellaneous

The EU Blue Card can be applied for in all Member States of the EU apart from Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom. Minor differences exist with regard to the pre-conditions which must be met, for instance concerning the minimum annual gross salary or the list of occupations in which there is a shortage of applicants.

You can find more information about the EU Blue Card on the internet at <http://www.bamf.de/EN/Migration/Arbeiten/BuergerDrittstaat/BlaueKarte/blaue-karte-node.html>

The brochure entitled "Studying and Working in Germany" (www.bamf.bund.de) also contains information on alternative residence titles. For further inquiries please don't hesitate to contact us:



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EU Blue Card

Information on the residence title in accordance with section 19a of the German Residence Act (Aufenthaltsgesetz)



Objectives and target group

What is the objective of the EU Blue Card, and who can make use of it?

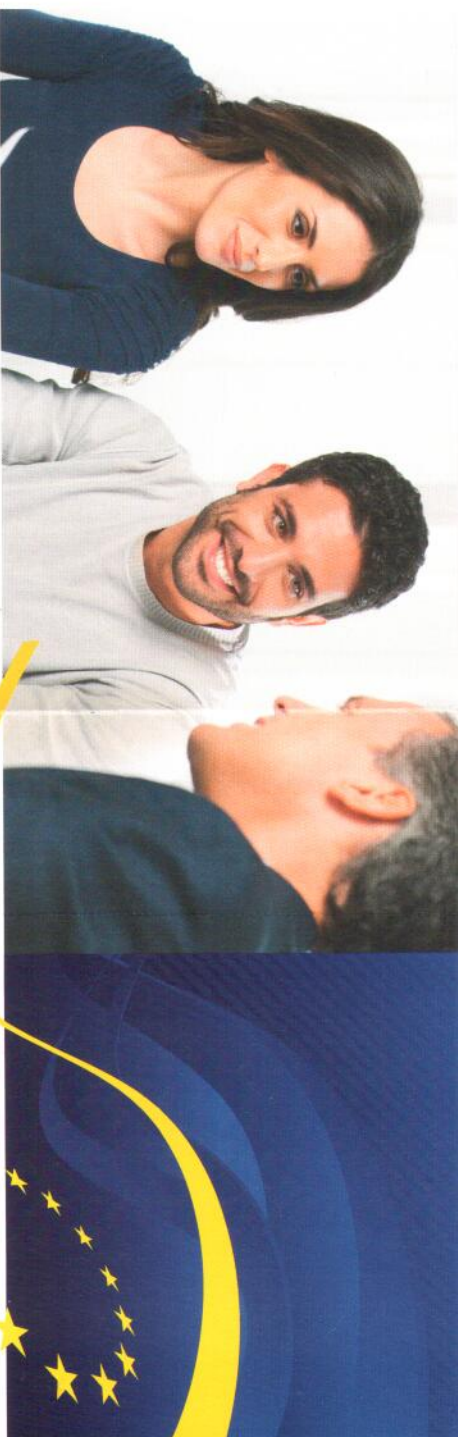
The EU Blue Card helps highly-qualified third-country nationals to immigrate to Germany permanently. It therefore also helps to make the German labour market more attractive for well-trained workers and to reduce the shortage of skilled workers. The EU Blue Card applies for persons from non-EU countries as well as for people who are staying with another residence permit in Germany or already have received an EU Blue Card in another EU Member State.

Legal basis and preconditions

What is the legal basis underlying the EU Blue Card and who meets the granting prerequisites?

Most of the legal provisions relating to the EU Blue Card can be found in section 19a of the German Residence Act. To receive an EU Blue Card the following preconditions need to be met:

- » Applicants must provide proof that they have **completed university-level studies**. If their higher education qualification was not obtained in Germany, it must either be recognised, or it must be comparable to a German higher education qualification (section 19a subs. 1 No. 1a of the Residence Act).
- » **Employment contract or a binding job offer**.
- » **Minimum gross salary**. If a certain level of income is reached, the consent of the Federal Employment Agency is not required in order to grant the EU Blue Card (section 2 subs. 1 No. 2a of the German Employment



Ordinance [Beschäftigungsverordnung]). To find the current income threshold please have a look at the online FAQs: <http://www.bamt.de/EN/Infothek/Fragen-Antworten/BlaueKarteEU/blaue-karte-eu-node.html>
→ "How high does my gross annual salary need to be in order for me to obtain an EU Blue Card?"

A **lower annual gross assessment threshold** applies to **occupations in which there is a shortage of applicants**, such as information and communication specialists, engineers, mathematicians or doctors of medicine. As a matter of principle, an EU Blue Card will only be issued to this group of individuals with the consent of the Federal Employment Agency, unless they graduated in Germany (section 2 subs. 1 No. 2b and subs. 2 of the Employment Ordinance).

Who is responsible?

To whom can I turn to obtain an EU Blue Card or information about it?

- » Individuals who are already living in Germany under a different residence title and would like to apply for an EU Blue Card should contact the immigration authority responsible for their place of residence.
- » People living in non-European countries must first apply for a visa with the purpose of employment in Germany which they can get from the competent German Embassy (in their home country). Once arrived in Germany they must apply for an EU Blue Card before their visa

expires at the immigration authority which is responsible for their place of residence. An exception is made for nationals of countries such as Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand and the United States, who may enter Germany without a visa and apply for an EU Blue Card from the competent immigration authority responsible for their future place of residence within three months. In these cases, actually taking up work is only allowed after the EU Blue Card has been granted.

- » Third-country nationals who have held an EU Blue Card issued by another EU Member State for at least 18 months can enter the country without a visa in order to take up highly-qualified employment. An application must be submitted for an EU Blue Card for Germany within one month of entering the country.

Validity of the EU Blue Card

How long does the EU Blue Card remain valid and what happens when it expires?

The EU Blue Card is issued for the duration of the employment contract plus three months, but for a maximum period of four years. An extension is possible if the preconditions are met. A change of job within the first two years of