



# YOUR POCKET GUIDE TO GERMANY








For  
international  
researchers



# A warm welcome!

Here are a few important things you should know if you are thinking about moving to Germany. You will soon see that starting a new life here as a researcher or academic is not all that hard. We are sure you will soon feel at home in Germany.

But why not take a look for yourself! We look forward to welcoming you.

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# ENTRY AND RESIDENCE

Come to Germany.  
We will make it  
easy for you.





## Visa and work permit

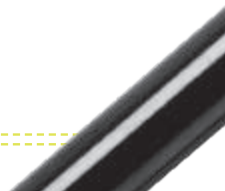
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As an EU citizen, you can travel to Germany and work here as a researcher. If you are an international researcher who is already working or doing a doctorate **in the EU**, you can also conduct research for a certain period of time in Germany without the need to apply for an additional residence permit.

If you are not from the EU and do require a visa, there are **various types of residence permits** – depending on what you wish to do in Germany – that you apply for together with your visa.

They allow you to come for research purposes or to complete a (doctoral) degree course or give you a settlement permit for highly-qualified workers or an EU Blue Card.

You will have to **meet certain conditions**: you will either need a hosting agreement from a recognised research institution, confirmation of admission from your university or a specific job offer. In addition, you will have to prove that you can cover your own living expenses.





You are an international researcher?  
Then special visas are available that will make it simple for you to come to Germany and work here.



Are you working as a researcher in an EU country?

Then it will be easy for you to move to Germany.

**TIP**

Information and application forms can be obtained from Germany's diplomatic missions in your home country or from the website of the Federal Foreign Office:

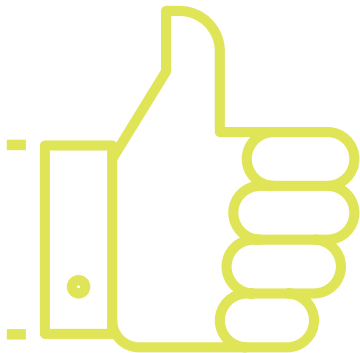
[www.diplo.de](http://www.diplo.de)



# SOCIAL SECURITY



Rest assured: you will  
be properly covered  
in case of need.





## Social insurance and health

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A **comprehensive system of social security** is in place to protect you in Germany: on your way to work, if you fall ill, or if you lose your job. Pension insurance will provide for you in old age, or will help you if you are no longer able to work.

Social security contributions are laid down by law and deducted directly from your salary. You will normally not have to pay them if you are on a scholarship. The exception is health

insurance: everyone who lives in Germany must have **health insurance**.

Having health insurance in Germany means that you need not worry if you get sick. A stay in hospital and any necessary treatment will be paid for. And if you are an employee, you will continue to receive sick pay – no matter whether you have **statutory** or **private** health insurance.



# Social security benefits at a glance

**Pension insurance:** rehabilitation services, a pension in the event of reduced earning capacity, in old age and for your surviving dependents

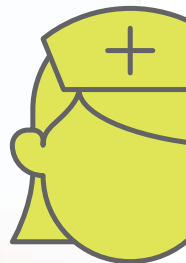
**Unemployment insurance:** employment search services and supportive measures, unemployment benefit

**Health insurance:** medical treatment, medicines, sick pay

**Accident insurance:** costs of treatment and a pension in the event of an accident at work or work-related illness

**Long-term care insurance:** outpatient care, residential care, care aids

Source: [www.deutsche-rentenversicherung.de](http://www.deutsche-rentenversicherung.de)





You have to apply for your pension. You can also submit your application to the German Pension Insurance from abroad.

Germany has social security agreements in place with around

**20**  
countries.



People who have worked in different European countries are subject to European law.

It determines for example how insurance contribution periods are added together to calculate a person's pension entitlement.



## Pension

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If you are employed as a researcher, you will **automatically have pension insurance** in Germany. Depending on the length of time you were insured in Germany, you will normally receive the German pension – even after you return to your home country. If not, you can generally get your pension contributions refunded.

If you are an EU citizen, you can have the **periods in which you made pension contributions** in Germany **counted** towards your pension entitlement in your home country when you return. This is also the case if you are

from a country with which Germany has signed a (social security) agreement. Periods in which you were insured there, or in another EU country, can also be added to your pension entitlement in Germany.

If your home country is neither an EU member state nor one of the countries with which Germany has a social security agreement, the periods in which you paid German insurance contributions will not normally be taken into consideration there. If this is the case, you should seek advice from your insurance provider in your home country.





FINANCES

You deserve  
to make a  
good living.





## Salary

What you will earn as a researcher in Germany will naturally depend on your specific situation – for example on your research profile and your experience. However, your expertise as a researcher or academic will be **highly valued** in Germany, and will therefore bring you a **good salary**.

**State universities and publicly-financed research institutions** will pay you in line with – or on the basis of – predefined salary scales. Professors may receive various additional payments on top of their basic salary, for example for

particular responsibilities that are negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

Germany has a federal system. The individual federal states are responsible for paying their university lecturers and academic staff. Consequently, **salaries vary from one state to another**.

Salaries in **industry** can differ considerably from those in academia. If you are employed at management level, no set pay scale will normally apply to you, so you will negotiate your own salary.







## How much does a professor earn?

**Junior professor:** 4,200–4,900 euros

**Professor:** 4,900–6,200 euros

**Senior professor:** 5,900–7,000 euros

Monthly basic salary, gross, rounded Source: Deutscher Hochschulverband, 2018



## How much does a postdoc earn?

**Postdoctoral researcher:** 4,300–4,400 euros

**Head of independent junior research group:** 5,000–5,700 euros

The example shows the gross basic salary for academic staff according to the collective agreement applicable in most of Germany's federal states.

Monthly basic salary, gross, rounded  
Source: Tarifgemeinschaft deutscher Länder, 2018



Normally, a person on a scholarship will not have to pay any tax in Germany.

Germany has a dual taxation agreement in place or is negotiating such an agreement with more than

**130**

countries.

Filing a tax return allows you to declare any expenses and thus get some of the tax you have paid returned to you.





# Tax

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As a general rule, you will be required to pay German tax if you live and work here for more than six months. If you are employed by a university, research institution or company, **income tax will be deducted directly from your salary.** The rate of income tax will depend on how much you earn, whether you have any dependents and which tax class you choose.

Germany has **dual taxation agreements** in place with many countries to ensure that you are not

required also to pay tax in your home country, or to determine how academics are taxed. Your HR department or local tax authority will know which regulation applies to you.

If you come to Germany on a **research scholarship** you will normally be exempt from tax. However, you should discuss this with your scholarship provider and also check whether your scholarship will be liable to any tax in your home country.





## Cost of living

Life in Germany is **relatively inexpensive**: if you compare the cost of living in big cities in Germany with that in other cities around the world, you will find that it is fairly low.

There are also considerable variations within Germany, however: life in a major city in the west of Germany is far more expensive than in a small town in the east of the country. This is mainly due to the costs of renting and buying a home.

Naturally, this will depend to a large extent on the location of the house or flat, and how it is equipped. As a rule of thumb, you can assume that you will have to spend **roughly a third of your income on a place to live**.

When planning your stay, you may also find it useful to know that German households spend on average around 450 euros per month on food and clothing. In total, you can expect to spend **around 2,480 euros on living expenses**.



## How much does life in Germany cost?



Place to live	877 euros
Transport	335 euros
Food	342 euros
Leisure, culture	258 euros
Furniture, household goods	150 euros
Restaurants, hotels	142 euros
Clothes	108 euros
Health	99 euros
Communication	62 euros
Education	18 euros
Miscellaneous	90 euros



# 2,481 EUROS

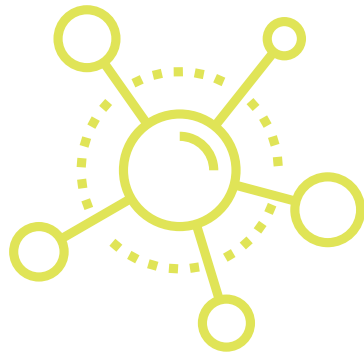
Private consumer spending per month per household

Source: Destatis, 2016



FAMILY

We will do  
everything we  
can to make  
your loved ones  
feel at home.





## Bringing your family

Germany's regulations are very family-oriented: your spouse or partner and your children **can join you** and will receive a residence permit. This also means that your spouse or partner will be able to **work** in Germany.

This is true regardless of whether you come to Germany as a researcher or scientist, on an EU Blue Card or as a highly-qualified worker. And of course this also applies if you are

already an EU citizen. In this case you and your dependents benefit from the EU's freedom of movement policy.

Your family can also join you even if you are still studying for a **doctoral degree**. In this case, however, certain requirements have to be met – your spouse or partner will for example need to have a basic command of German.





You can bring your spouse or partner and children to join you.

Your partner is allowed to work.

All this requires is a residence permit.



The Federal Employment Agency is the first place your partner should go if he or she is seeking work in Germany:

[www.arbeitsagentur.de](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de)

40

Dual career centres also provide support for your spouse or partner – they are available at more than 40 universities in Germany. To find out which these are, visit the website of the Dual Career Network Germany:

[www.dcmd.org](http://www.dcmd.org)





Each child over  
the age of one is  
entitled to childcare.



There are international schools  
in many cities. For more information,  
visit the website of the Association of  
German International Schools:

[agis-schools.org](http://agis-schools.org)



2 OUT OF 3

schools are all-day schools.



## Child care and schools

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Your children will also be taken care of: from the age of one, they are entitled to a place in a nursery (**kindergarten**) or with a childminder. Your older children will be able to attend good schools, most of which operate on a full-day basis. Many cities also have **international private schools**.

In Germany, **school is compulsory** for children aged six and over. Depending on the federal

state you live in, they will be required to attend for nine or ten school years. Pupils who then choose not to stay on at school to take exams like the *Mittlere Reife* (intermediate school-leaving certificate) or *Abitur* (higher education entrance qualification) will have to attend a vocational school – usually for a period of three years.

State schools are **free of charge**.

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## Support for families

Families need support, which is why all kinds of legal and financial help are available to make life somewhat easier for parents. **Child benefit**, for example. You will receive this monthly payment – if you live and work in Germany – for each of your children.

After the birth of their child, parents can spend up to three years on **parental leave**. During this time, their job will be safe until they return.

If you or your partner wish to look after your child yourself and want to reduce your

working hours or stay at home full-time for this purpose, you are entitled to **parental allowance** for a period of up to 14 months. This amounts to roughly two-thirds of your net income; at least 300 euros and 1,800 euros at the most.

The situation is somewhat different **if you are still studying for a doctoral degree**. You should contact your local family benefits office to find out if you are entitled to child benefit:

[www.familienkasse.de](http://www.familienkasse.de)

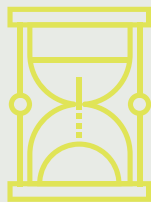


You can opt to take  
parental leave until your  
child's third birthday.

Each of your  
children will receive  
child benefit -  
roughly

**€200**

per month.



The parental  
allowance is  
available for up  
to 14 months.





# LIVING IN GERMANY

Life is good in  
Germany. Come  
and see for  
yourself!





## Feeling at home

Beginning a new life in a new country is never easy. And of course there are all kinds of things to get used to. But as you will discover, there are plenty of good reasons why you will soon feel at home in Germany.

Germany is one of the **world's safest and freest countries**. It is a stable democracy and its administrative and governmental bodies function well. Life is good here, yet the cost of living is comparatively low.

Naturally, you will want to know how and where you will live. You do not necessarily have to

buy your new home. It is perfectly **normal to rent a flat or house** in Germany, and there is a wide range of high-quality rental housing. That said, it is important to know that it is not always easy to find a good and affordable place to live, especially in big cities.

To enjoy life to the full in Germany, it is important to be able to communicate with the locals. **At work you should be able to get by perfectly well in English**, but speaking at least a little German will help you deal with everyday situations.







Germany  
is one of the  
world's safest  
and freest  
countries.

Many cities compile overviews of typical local rents. Known as *Mietspiegel*, they can be found online.



Half of the  
Germans rent  
their homes.  
Tenants' rights  
are well  
protected here.

We speak

# ENGLISH

Germany is among the world's top ten countries when it comes to English proficiency levels.

## Interested in finding out more? Then click here:

### [www.research-in-germany.org](http://www.research-in-germany.org)

We specialise in answering any questions you may have as an international academic or researcher. Our portal provides you with information about career planning, funding opportunities and potential employers.

### [www.euraxess.de](http://www.euraxess.de)

Euraxess provides information and assistance to mobile researchers. The portal contains practical information concerning professional and daily life in Germany, as well as information on job and funding opportunities.

### [www.make-it-in-germany.com](http://www.make-it-in-germany.com)

This is the official multilingual online portal for skilled professionals from abroad. It explains how you can make your move to Germany smoothly and successfully – from preparatory measures in your home country to your arrival and initial steps in Germany.



## IMPRINT

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Federal Ministry  
of Education  
and Research



**Disclaimer** This booklet is aimed primarily at international academics wishing to live and work in Germany, either as researchers (pursuant to § 20 AufenthG), on an EU Blue Card (pursuant to § 19a AufenthG) or as highly-qualified professionals (pursuant to § 19 AufenthG). (EU citizens enjoy freedom of movement in the EU in any case.) As a rule, special conditions apply to doctoral students from abroad. The information provided here is very general in nature and makes no claim to be complete. It is also possible that different conditions will apply to you. The information is not legally binding and Research in Germany accepts no liability for the content presented in this document.



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AN INITIATIVE OF THE



Federal Ministry  
of Education  
and Research



Research in  
Germany



Land of Ideas