

Country Profile - Germany

Job market

What are my chances of getting a job?

New graduates from the UK rarely secure work at a professional level in Germany, except teaching English as a foreign language, although there are opportunities in casual work in the hospitality and other service sectors if you have German language skills.

- **Typical problems encountered:** unlike the UK, there are no graduate-level positions that are open to graduates in any discipline. In addition, German students almost always complete one or more internships (Praktika) before graduation and go on to apply for work in the same field.
- **How to improve your chances:** you are more likely to secure graduate-level work in Germany if you first gain qualifications and experience in the UK. A further qualification gained in Germany could also boost your chances. If you're determined to get work there as soon as possible, securing at least one Praktikum should improve your chances.
- **Language requirements:** while most well-educated Germans can speak some English, many fluently, and English is widely used in international business settings, you will need a strong command of German to stand a realistic chance of getting work in Germany. Your university may run modules in some foreign languages, including German. Self-study and distance learning courses are available through organisations such as the [Goethe Institut](#), [Eurotalk Interactive](#), [Key Languages](#) and the [Open University \(OU\)](#).

Where can I work?

- **Major industries:** chemicals, engineering, electronics, IT, machinery, coal, vehicles, machine tools, food and beverages, shipbuilding, textiles.
- **Recent growth areas:** telecommunications, high-tech manufactured products, automotive industry, banking, tourism.
- **Industries in decline:** mining, forestry, steel, agriculture, the remnants of former state-run industries in the former East Germany.
- **Shortage occupations:** skilled trades, engineering, IT, hospitality, healthcare, teaching, high-tech, telecommunications, manufacturing and service industries.
- **Major companies:** Adidas, Aldi, Allianz, BASF, Bayer, BMW, Bosch, Daimler, Deutsche Bank, E.ON, Lidl, Merck KGaA, SAP, Siemens, Volkswagen Group.
- **Search for more companies:** the [British Chamber of Commerce in Germany](#), [Gelbe Seiten \(German Yellow Pages\)](#), the [German-British Chamber of Industry and Commerce](#), the [Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany](#), [Kompass Germany](#) and [Wikipedia - List of Companies in Germany](#) also provide information about companies operating in Germany as well as German companies operating in the UK.
- **Major cities:** Berlin (capital and largest), Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, München (Munich), Stuttgart.

What's it like working in Germany?

- **Average working hours:** around 38.5 hours a week.
 - **Holidays:** legal minimum of 18 days a year, but many companies offer up to 30, plus nine public holidays. 3 October is the Day of German Unity, a national holiday. The major Christian festivals are holidays as in the UK. See [How to Germany](#) for a full list.
 - **Tax rates:** income tax is on a progressive scale ranging from 0% to 45%. Compulsory contributions are made by workers into a social insurance fund to cover medical treatment, pension contributions, etc.
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Applying for jobs

Jobs are often advertised on recruitment websites (Jobbörser) as well as on company websites. Some international companies will have vacancies in both English and German. It may be possible to find and apply for jobs from the UK, but there will usually be two interviews before a job offer is made. As this process could take some time, it would be unwise to wait until arriving in Germany before starting your job search, but it's also a good idea to wait for a firm offer before making arrangements to move there.

A CV (Lebenslauf) is required more often than an application form in Germany. It is important to supply exactly what the employer asks for. Typically, applications should include:

- a CV, with a passport-sized photograph attached to the top right-hand corner. It is common in Germany to sign your CV at the bottom;
- a covering letter on a single side of A4;
- copies of all qualifications from secondary school onwards;
- evidence of professional experience, including professional certificates and work samples where appropriate;
- references from universities and previous employers.

The working abroad section of the [Eurograduate - The European Graduate Career Guide](#) has an example of a German CV.

See the following websites for more information on working in Germany:

- [EURES - European Job Mobility Portal](#) - Living and Working in Germany
- [Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany](#)
- [German Federal Foreign Office](#)
- [Hobsons Careers in Europe](#)

There are often two interviews for professional positions: one with personnel (HR), which will focus on personality and motivation, and a second with a manager from your intended department, which will address technical knowledge and skills. Psychological and aptitude tests are usual and assessment centres are often used for managerial positions.

Will my UK qualifications be recognised?

Visit the [ENIC-NARIC](#) website for information on how to compare your academic qualifications.

The [UK National Europass Centre \(UK NEC\)](#) gives information on how to make your skills and qualifications easily understood in other European countries, including Germany.

Do I still need to pay UK tax and National Insurance?

If you are planning to live and work in Germany, check your UK tax and National Insurance position with [HM Revenue & Customs \(HMRC\)](#) to ensure that you are not losing any UK pension rights.

Vacancy sources

Job websites

- [Academics.com](#) - academic jobs in research and higher education in Germany.
- [Alma Mater](#) - jobs and careers advice for students and graduates.
- [Bewerbung](#) - job vacancies, CV, interview and assessment centre advice.
- [Bundesagentur für Arbeit](#) - German federal employment agency. Has a wide range of job vacancies, including internships (Praktika).
- [CareerJet](#) - job vacancies searchable by sector or region.
- [EURAXESS Germany](#) - jobs, information and advice for researchers.
- [EURES - European Job Mobility Portal](#) - provides job vacancies and a CV-posting service for jobseekers, as well as information on living and working conditions and labour markets in Germany.
- [Jobonline](#) - vacancies, advice on applications and interviews, as well as briefings on job sectors and listings of careers fairs.
- [JobScout24](#) - jobs by sector and also student jobs and internships (Praktika).
- [Jobware](#) - management and specialist jobs.
- [Monster \(Germany\)](#) and [Jobpilot - Germany](#) - job vacancies and CV-posting service.
- [Staufenbiel](#) - career portal for graduates and current students looking for internships, apprenticeships and other training opportunities.
- [Stellen-online](#) - internships/work experience (Praktika), as well as graduate jobs.
- [Stepstone \(Germany\)](#) - includes internships/work experience as well as a range of graduate jobs.

Recruitment agencies

Recruitment agencies are listed in the [Gelbe Seiten \(German Yellow Pages\)](#) (use the search term: Arbeitsvermittlung). Reputable agencies should also be members of the [Federal Employers' Association of Personnel Service Providers \(Bundesarbeitgeberverband der Personaldienstleister \(BAP\)\)](#).

Newspapers

- [Financial Times Deutschland](#) - direct equivalent of the UK Financial Times. Some entry-level vacancies for graduates.
- [Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung](#) - daily with national reach.
- [Frankfurter Rundschau](#) - Frankfurt-based daily with vacancies.
- [Handelsblatt](#) - Düsseldorf-based financial daily.
- [Sueddeutsche Zeitung](#) - Munich-based daily, mainly vacancies in Southern Germany.

Find other German newspapers via the [Kidon Media-Link](#).

Other sources

The [German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology](#) has information in English for those interested in setting up a business in Germany.

Hidden vacancies

Speculative applications are accepted in Germany. You will need to do your research thoroughly and demonstrate that your qualifications are a match for German applicants. Applications should be typed in German and include a photo and a covering letter. If you are interested in working for one of Germany's major employers, it is often worth applying directly to them. Target German firms with an office in the UK, and UK firms with a presence in Germany.

Work experience

Work placements and internships

It is possible to apply for one of the internships (Praktika) which are completed by German students as part of their courses. As these are usually closely linked to the subject of study, UK applicants should do their research carefully in order to show that they have appropriate skills and knowledge, as well as sufficiently strong language skills, for each vacancy.

Useful resources include:

- [Deutsche Bildungsserver](#) - for links to the main internship vacancy websites;
- [German Academic Exchange Service \(DAAD\)](#) - supports the international exchange of students. Includes information on internships;
- [Bundesagentur für Arbeit](#) - search for internships on the German Federal Employment Agency website;
- [IAESTE \(International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience\)](#) - arranges summer placements for science and engineering students;
- [iAgora](#) - internships in a variety of European countries, including Germany.

Exchange programmes

[AIESEC \(Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences Economiques et Commerciales\)](#) provides an international exchange programme for students and recent graduates. They offer voluntary and paid work placements in professional organisations, schools and charities in a range of countries.

Your institution may be involved in the [Leonardo da Vinci Programme](#), through which vocational training exchanges and work placements are arranged with partner organisations in other countries, including Germany. Contact your institution's international office or your careers service for more information.

Teaching schemes

The [British Council - Language Assistants](#) programme provides the opportunity for undergraduates and graduates of any discipline (as long as they have AS level German or equivalent) to work in Germany as a language assistant.

If your university has a foreign languages department you may be able to pick up useful advice, guides and contacts on teaching opportunities in Germany.

The [Teaching English Abroad](#) publication includes a directory of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) training courses, contacts for jobs and a list of recruitment organisations, as well as a country guide, for those interested in teaching English in Germany.

Opportunities for teaching business English exist if you have good business knowledge and experience and good German. A formal teaching qualification is not always necessary. All major language school chains have branches in Germany. Further possibilities exist in adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) - see [Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband \(German Adult Education Association\)](#) for contact details.

Volunteering

The [Youth in Action](#) programme is funded by the European Commission and provides young people with a variety of opportunities to experience Europe. [The European Voluntary Service \(EVS\)](#) is part of this programme and offers people aged 18-30 the opportunity to volunteer in a range of countries, including Germany, for a period of 2-12 months.

There is also a range of other volunteering websites, for example [Volunteer Abroad](#) and [WorldWide Volunteering \(WWV\)](#).

Casual work

Temporary work is available in tourism, especially in the Alps, the Black Forest and on the North Sea coast. Opportunities for students also exist for seasonal work on farms, in hotels and in vineyards. See [Summer Jobs](#) for opportunities.

Within Germany, the [Bundesagentur für Arbeit](#) (German Federal Employment Agency) can help you find casual work.

Gap year opportunities

There are many organisations offering gap years in Germany. To choose a reputable organisation, you should seek advice from your university careers service or check whether the company is registered with [Air Travel Organisers' Licensing \(ATOL\)](#) or other similar organisations. Some companies will also offer services such as a 24-hour emergency helpline. Consult [Your Gap Year](#) for more information on planning a gap year.

Postgraduate study

How does the higher education system work?

There are three main types of higher education institutions in Germany:

- research-led universities - offering a broad range of courses and subjects and of particular interest to those interested in research and following a Doctoral programme;
- universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen) - generally more vocational and often including internships and practical modules;
- colleges of art, film and music - covering subjects such as painting, design, architecture, music and drama.

There are generally three levels of qualification:

- Bachelors degrees are available in a wide range of subject areas;
- Masters degrees are the next level of qualification and are intended to expand your subject knowledge;
- Doctoral degrees involve the completion of a research paper and generally take three to five years to complete.

Most universities and colleges in Germany are public and receive funding from the federal government. Some are financed by the Church and there are also more than 100 private universities and colleges, largely universities of applied sciences, with officially recognised degrees. See the [German Academic Exchange Service \(DAAD\)](#) for more information on the types of higher education institutions and what they offer.

What courses are available?

- The DAAD website has a searchable database of first degree, graduate and Doctoral-level courses. You can include language of study in your search criteria.
- International Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral programmes are also available, offering internationally recognised degrees that are taught primarily in English. They have been designed specifically to meet the needs of international students and include German tuition.
- Summer schools are also available in a wide range of subject areas.

Where can I study?

- The DAAD website includes a searchable database of over 300 higher education institutions in Germany. It has also compiled rankings of universities in collaboration with the German weekly newspaper Die Zeit and the Centre for Higher Education Development.
- [Universities Worldwide](#) also has details of universities in Germany.

Applying for postgraduate study

If you have already graduated from a study programme in the UK, you will generally be able to study in Germany. However, not all foreign academic degrees automatically qualify you to take up a postgraduate course. For example, Bachelors degrees are sometimes only recognised as an intermediate qualification (Zwischenprüfung or Vorprüfung) in Germany.

If you have questions about this, it is best to contact the international office (Akademisches Auslandsamt) of any university in which you are interested. The [German Academic Exchange Service \(DAAD\)](#) has a list of these offices on its website.

Application deadlines vary and you should contact the international office at the institutions you are interested in attending for information.

Applications are usually made directly to individual institutions. Online applications are usually accepted, although paper copies of academic certificates and transcripts along with other supporting documentation will have to be posted. A CV and a personal statement are usually requested.

Fees and scholarships

- Although you don't have to pay tuition fees at all German universities, some will charge a fee of around €500 per semester. See the [Deutsches Studentenwerk - Information for International Students](#) for a list of federal states that have introduced general tuition fees. It is more usual to pay fees for postgraduate courses (Masters and PhDs) than for undergraduate courses.
- You must be able to prove that you have enough money to finance your studies in Germany (currently €8,040 for one year of study).
- Semester contributions (a registration fee) of between €50 and €150 are payable every semester.
- Health insurance, which costs around €60 a month, is compulsory. Students from countries that are members of the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA) and who have public health insurance (the [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#)) can get this insurance coverage approved by a public health company in Germany. This insurance may not, however, cover all costs in Germany so check what services you are entitled to. See the Deutsches Studentenwerk - Information for International Students website for more information.
- Check with individual institutions for more specific tuition and fee information.
- On top of any course fees, an estimated minimum monthly budget is €762, with books and other study materials in addition. One-third of this is generally spent on rent. While it is possible to live frugally on this amount, it is a bare minimum and more should be set aside if at all possible.
- See the Deutsches Studentenwerk - Information for International Students website for a breakdown of monthly expenses and prices of general commodities.
- DAAD offers one-year scholarships for Doctoral research, which can also be used to support Masters courses.
- DAAD also provides information on scholarships from other foundations. Search their scholarships database for funding opportunities.
- Individual institutions also often have some scholarships available.

Are there any exchange programmes?

UK students on undergraduate degree courses, Masters programmes or some PhD programmes may be interested in spending time studying in Germany through the [Erasmus](#) scheme. This programme covers all subject areas, but check what links your university has with your university's Erasmus coordinator (usually based in the international office).

Will my qualification be recognised in the UK?

As part of the Bologna Process, a German postgraduate course should be directly comparable to the UK equivalent. Full details on comparing international qualifications are

also available from [UK NARIC \(National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom\)](#), which gives information and advice on vocational, academic and professional qualifications from over 180 countries.

Visa and travel information

Visa requirements and applications

Most EU nationals do not need a visa or work permit but citizens of non-EU countries may be required to have these documents. However, once you have taken up work in Germany, you must obtain a certificate of residence from the local Ausländeramt (foreign nationals' authority) or Einwohnermeldeamt (residents' registration office). This must be done within the first three months of your arrival and you will usually need proof of employment (contract, letter of employment, etc.) and proof of accommodation. See the [Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany](#) website for full details.

For nationals of Bulgaria and Romania, your right to work in Germany may be restricted until 31 December 2013 at the latest. To work in Germany you will need a work permit. If you are not a citizen of an EU member state, contact the German embassy in the country where you are residing to find out about visa regulations. If you are living in the UK, see the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany website. A list of German embassies is available at [Embassies Worldwide](#).

Help in an emergency

The consular section of the [British Embassy Germany](#) in Berlin and the Consulates in Munich and Düsseldorf (contact details on the Embassy website) can offer some assistance to UK citizens who have been the victims of crime or bereavement or in the event of a natural disaster or terrorist incident.

Emergency contact numbers in Germany are:

- 112 - ambulance and fire department;
- 110 - police.

Travel advice

Find the latest travel advice and a traveller's checklist on the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\)](#) website.

Country overview

Geography

- **Full country name:** Federal Republic of Germany
- **Population:** 81.3 million (The World Factbook, 2012)
- **Border countries:** Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland.

- **Climate:** temperate, with frequent changes of weather. See [BBC Weather Country Guides: Germany](#) for further details.
- **Terrain:** lowlands in the north, uplands in centre, Bavarian Alps in the south.
- **Natural hazards:** flooding.

Living in Germany

- **Cost of living:** relatively high. Rents vary from region to region and some cities, such as Hamburg and Munich, are markedly more expensive than average. Food and other basic purchases may be cheaper than in the UK, whereas entertainment including eating and drinking out are generally more expensive.
- **Internet domain:** .de
- **Health:** Germany has one of the highest standards of healthcare in the world. If you work in Germany, compulsory health insurance is automatically arranged by employers and, similarly to UK National Insurance, contributions are made both by the employer and the employee. Practitioners and hospitals deal directly with insurers for billing, so you can access any insurer-approved healthcare provider when you need to without worrying about payment. See [About Germany](#) for more information.
- **Laws and customs:** while business customs are relatively formal, Germany is a tolerant and liberal society by global standards, with sexual orientation, for example, regarded as a matter of private choice. Laws are broadly similar to those in the UK for personal conduct, e.g. in matters such as drug possession.

Economy and finance

- **Currency:** euro (€)
- **Type of economy:** liberal free market economy. It is part of the eurozone of European economies with a shared Central Bank, interest rate and currency.
- **Health of economy:** Germany has the largest economy in the EU. The country went into recession in 2008 when the world economic crisis led to a reduction in the demand for its exports. It has since emerged from the recession and its economy is stronger than many other EU countries, due to the recovery of its exports and increased domestic demand. However, an ageing population may mean that Germany will have to reform its welfare and health spending.
- **Unemployment rate:** 5.7% (Eurostat, 2011)
- **Main exports:** electrical machinery, motor vehicles, chemicals, foodstuffs, textiles, metals, household equipment.

Culture

- **People:** Germans 91.5%. Turks make up the single largest ethnic minority group with significant numbers of Greeks, Italians, Poles, Russians, Serbo-Croats and Spaniards.
- **Major religion:** Christianity
- **History:** see [BBC Timeline: Germany](#).

Politics

- **Type of government:** federal democratic republic with two houses of parliament, the Bundestag, elected by the population on the basis of proportional representation, and the Bundesrat, made up of representatives of the cabinets of the 16 federal states. The Chancellor heads the government and is elected by the

Bundestag. The President has mainly representative powers and is elected by a body called the Bundesversammlung, which meets every five years for this purpose only.

- **Major political parties:** Alliance '90/The Greens, Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Christian Social Union (CSU), Free Democratic Party (FDP), Left Party (Die Linke), Social Democratic Party (SPD).

More information

- [Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany](#)
- [BBC Country Profile - Germany](#)
- [The World Factbook](#)
- [XE Universal Currency Converter](#)

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