

Entitlement to unemployment benefit for third-country nationals whose employment contract ends

When is it advisable to apply for unemployment benefit (ALG 1)?

If your employment contract ends, it is possible under certain conditions to replace part of the missing income with unemployment benefit (ALG 1) and thus secure your livelihood.

However, there are conditions attached to receiving ALG 1. One condition is that you are looking for a new job and are prepared to accept a new job.

ALG 1 is therefore only suitable to a limited extent if, for example, you would like to continue working on your research project without an employment contract.

What is unemployment benefit (ALG 1)?

Unemployment benefit (ALG 1) is an insurance benefit. Employees are entitled to this benefit because they have paid into the unemployment insurance scheme during their employment.

Entitlement to unemployment benefit

You are entitled to receive unemployment benefit if you meet these criteria:

- You have been employed for at least 12 months in the past 30 months and were subject to social security contributions (For temporary employment, shorter qualifying periods may apply).
- You have registered as unemployed with your employment agency. You must register as **seeking employment** at least three months before the end of your current employment contract.
- You are looking for employment subject to compulsory insurance for at least 15 hours a week and **are available for placement efforts**.
- You are unemployed and are able to pursue employment subject to social security contributions that for at least 15 hours per week.

Amount of unemployment benefit

Unemployment benefit is generally 60 per cent of your previous net income. Applicants can use the **Federal Employment Agency's benefit calculator** to calculate the amount they will receive (this is estimated and non-binding!).

How long can you receive unemployment benefit?

The period of entitlement depends on several factors. As a general rule, unemployment benefit can only be paid as long as you are in possession of a residence permit entitling you to seek employment or a permanent settlement permit for Germany. The **periods vary** between three and 24 months depending on the duration of previous employment and age.

Which residence permit do you need to have to be entitled to unemployment benefit?

If you were previously a university employee or a doctoral researcher with an employment contract and held a residence permit that entitles you to work in Germany (Section 18d Residence Act – Research or section 18g – EU Blue Card) or have a permanent settlement permit for Germany, then you are entitled to receive unemployment benefit (Arbeitslosengeld, ALG I), provided you meet the criteria listed below.

How do I apply for unemployment benefit?

In order to be able to apply for unemployment benefit, you must register as **seeking employment** well in advance – at the latest, however, three months before your employment contract expires. This can be taken care of **online** or by phone.

Please also inform your responsible HR administrator - as early as possible - that you intend to receive ALG I after the end of your employment contract. If you apply for unemployment benefit, the employment agency will require **proof of your previous employment**. This proof is called an **employment certificate** - "Arbeitsbescheinigung" (also known colloquially as an employer's certificate - "Arbeitgeberbescheinigung"). As an employee, you are obliged to ask your former employer to send the certificate of employment electronically.

You can use the following wording when contacting your HR administrator:

Sehr geehrte/r Frau/Herr [xxx], hiermit möchte ich Sie informieren, dass ich nach Beendigung meines Arbeitsvertrags beabsichtige, ALG I zu beantragen. Ich möchte Sie daher bitten, die dafür benötigte Arbeitsbescheinigung an die Bundesagentur für Arbeit zu übermitteln. Ich bitte außerdem um eine kurze Bestätigung nach erfolgter Meldung. Mit freundlichen Grüßen [xxx]

The next step is to register as **unemployed**. This is possible at the earliest three months before the expected unemployment. For this step, you will need to identify yourself, which can be done **online** (e.g. using your electronic residence permit) or visit the Federal Employment Agency in person.

Once you have registered as seeking employment and unemployed, you can **apply for unemployment benefit online**. The date you register as unemployed is considered the date of application.

Detailed instructions for all three steps (in German only) can be found on the Federal Employment Agency's website.

In addition, the **Welcome Centre of the City of Leipzig** regularly has Job Centre staff on-site who offer free consultations on applying for unemployment benefit. To see upcoming events, go to the **Welcome Centre of the City of Leipzig website** or contact the Welcome Centre staff directly.

Please note: When your employment contract expires, you must apply for your residence permit to be changed to a **residence permit to seek employment or an opportunity card (Section 20 Residence Act)** at your local Foreigners' Authority. This step must be completed before the Federal Employment Agency can approve your application for unemployment benefit. It is only then that it can be assumed that you are available to enter the labour market without restriction. When you submit this application, please inform your personal administrator at the Foreigners' Authority that you intend to apply for unemployment benefit. You will then receive a **confirmation letter** that you will need to present to the Federal Employment Agency. If your residence permit is about to expire, also ask the Foreigners' Authority to issue you a provisional residence document ('Fiktionsbescheinigung') before submitting it to the Federal Employment Agency. Please note: If you already have a permanent settlement permit for Germany, no change is necessary. You can apply for unemployment benefit directly.

Legal notice and disclaimer

This flyer containing information about bank accounts has been compiled as part of the joint project „**Willkommen in Leipzig/Welcome to Leipzig**“ Dr Annemone Fabricius, Linda Kaule, Ulrike Renker (Welcome Centre, Leipzig University International Centre);

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