

Entitlement to Unemployment Benefit: Third-Country Nationals with an Employment Contract

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 1), provided you meet the criteria listed below.

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 are unemployed and are able to pursue employment subject to social security contributions that involves at least 15 hours per week.
- 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.

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 fictional certificate ('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.

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 (estimated) amount they will receive.

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 of entitlement are as follows:

- Section 18g Residence Act: **12 months** after your Blue Card expires
- Section 18d Residence Act: **18 months** after your research has ended
- Permanent settlement permit: No restrictions, the period of entitlement depends on the general requirements (in particular, the duration of previous employment subject to social security contributions; see also "Entitlement to unemployment benefit")

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.

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 at a personal visit to the Federal Employment Agency.

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 the available appointments, go to the [Welcome Centre of the City of Leipzig website](#) or contact the Welcome Centre staff 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 ([Welcome Centre, Leipzig University International Centre](#));

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