

## Entry Formalities and Visa regulations

It can often take several months before a visa is issued. So you should apply for the visa in good time. If you enter Germany late, you may possibly miss a number of important dates or deadlines and so jeopardize your university registration or matriculation. However, if you have not registered at your university, you cannot get a "residence permit for the purpose of studying" (Aufenthaltserlaubnis für Studienzwecke). When applying for your visa you should also make absolutely sure that you are applying for the right visa. A "tourist visa" or "language course visa" cannot be subsequently changed into a "student visa". If you have the wrong visa, you will unfortunately have to leave the country again. Please also take care to ensure that your passport is still valid. If your identity documents have expired, you will have to travel back to your home country to have them extended there.

**After entry immediately report to the registration authority and foreigners authority:** After arriving in Germany, you have to go straight to the registration authority (Einwohnermeldeamt) to give them your address in Germany and then to the immigration authority (Ausländerbehörde) in order to apply for "residence permit for the purpose of studying". The residence permit is initially valid for a maximum of two years and costs 110,- Euros. If your international degree programme is scheduled to last three years, you will have to have your residence permit extended before the two years are over. To get the extension you have to prove that you are progressing in your studies as expected – i.e. that you have gained all the required credits and passed all the required exams. The immigration authority in Burg, where Friedensau students have to apply for a visa or a residence permit, requires applying for an extension 6 weeks before your visa expires.

Please take the following documents with you to the immigration authority:

- Your confirmation of residence registration issued by the registration authority
- Proof that you have private or statutory health insurance
- Student ID-card from your university
- Proof of sufficient financial resources – if not already verified when the visa was issued
- Valid passport (at least 6 months after your arrival in Germany)
- Money to pay the residence permit fee (110 Euros for each family member depending on the duration of the residence permit).

### **Electronic residence permit (eAT)**

From September 1, 2011 German residence permits are no longer put in passports in the form of a "sticker". According to the *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge* these adhesive labels "will be replaced by an eAT in credit card format. Each family member needs to have his or her own eAT. The eAT contains a contactless chip carrying personal data, biometric characteristic (photo and finger prints) and additional special conditions. The chip contains electronic proof of identity and offers an electronic signature function. Important: The eAT is valid only as long as the holder is in possession of a valid passport. Therefore please ensure that your passport is valid for at least for 2 years if you come to Germany for studies or for 1 year if you come to take a German course only. Detailed information about the eAT you can find under the following internet address:

[http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Broschueren/Broschuere-eAT-en.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Broschueren/Broschuere-eAT-en.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

### **All about residence legislation**

Whether or not you need a visa and a residence permit for entry to Germany depends on your nationality and on the purpose of your stay. Please contact the relevant German mission abroad (the

addresses of the embassies and consulates can be found on the website of the German Federal Foreign Office ([www.auswaertiges-amt.de](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de)) to find out whether you need a visa. The staff will also tell you which papers and documents you need for the visa application and whether you possibly need a residence permit. The following provides an overview of some key facts to give you an initial idea of how it all works

Visas not required for nationals of these countries

### **Nationals of EU and EEA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway):**

**Residence permit:** Not required

**Identity documents:** Valid passport or ID-card

**Obligations on arrival:** You must report to the registration authority (Einwohnermeldeamt or Bürgeramt) within the first two weeks. The registration office will automatically issue a certificate confirming that you hold a residence permit for the purpose of studying. For this, you must prove that you have health insurance and are able to finance your studies from your own resources.

### **Nationals of Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, Republic of Korea (South Korea), New Zealand, Switzerland and the United States:**

**Residence permit:** you do not need an entry visa for Germany. After your arrival in Germany you need to apply for a residence permit at the immigration office.

**Identity documents:** Valid passport

**Obligations on arrival:** You must report to the registration office (Einwohnermeldeamt or Bürgeramt) within the first two weeks. You must apply for a "residence permit for the purpose of studying" from the relevant immigration authority within three months of arrival.

### **Nationals of Andorra, Honduras, Monaco, San Marino:**

**Entry visa:** Only required if you want to work in Germany before or after your studies.

**Residence permit:** If you do need a residence permit, you can apply for this after arriving in Germany.

**Identity documents:** Valid passport

**Obligations on arrival:** You must report to the registration authority (Einwohnermeldeamt or Bürgeramt) within the first two weeks. You must apply for a "residence permit for the purpose of studying" from the relevant immigration authority within three months of

### **Visa obligation**

International students from a third country must – with a few exceptions – obtain a visa for entry into Germany. They can get this visa from the relevant German mission abroad. Basically, the process differentiates between two types of visas.

The **Schengen Visa** is issued for a short stay (for example, tourism, participation in a summer language course) of up to three months per half-yearly period. Beware: Holders of a Schengen Visa must leave the country again after three months at the latest. This means the Schengen Visa is not a suitable instrument if you wish to study, do a doctorate or complete a research stay in Germany.

A **national Visa** is issued for stays lasting longer than three months (for example, to attend a preparatory course at a Studienkolleg or to study a full programme).

Student applicants who have not yet been admitted to a German university or Studienkolleg can apply for a **Student Applicant Visa**. It is valid for three months and can be converted into a **residence permit for the purpose of studying** once you have been admitted to a higher education institution. Another type of visa is the **Language Course Visa**. But **beware:** This is only valid for the length of the language course. It cannot be converted into a student visa. If you plan to take a language course in

connection with your academic studies, this must be stated when you apply for your visa. You have to apply for a student visa or a student applicant visa if the purpose of your stay is to study in Germany.

Visas are required of nationals from these countries who plan to stay for more than three months.

**Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Malaysia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Romania, Singapore, Uruguay, Vatican City and Venezuela:**

**Entry visa:** A visa is not required for stays lasting no longer than three months. However, you must leave the country again after the three months have expired. If you are planning a longer study stay or intend to take up a job that requires approval by the Federal Employment Agency, then you need a national visa for entry into Germany and a "residence permit for the purpose of studying" for the stay.

**Identity documents:** Valid passport (and for longer stays a visa entered into your passport)

### **Can you stay in Germany after graduating?**

A new Immigration Act, which has been in force in Germany since 1 January 2005, aims to enable highly-qualified people from abroad to enter the German employment market more easily and to offer them long-term prospects. For international students who have completed their studies in Germany, i.e. graduated, the act states: after completing your studies, you can extend your stay and spend up to one year looking for a job in Germany that is appropriate to your qualifications. Highly qualified foreigners, who have a job offer in Germany, can receive a (permanent) settlement permit without the need for any labour market checks or the approval of the Federal Employment Agency.