

Information for international students

Münster is international...and with over 60,000 students one of the most popular cities for international students in Germany. With its 9 universities, Münster offers a wide range of study and research opportunities.

On behalf of the city of Münster, we would like to welcome you to our city!

If you are not a German citizen or a citizen of a member state of the European Union, your stay in Germany is subject to the Residence Act (Aufenthaltsgesetz).

In this flyer we have summarised for you the requirements of the Residence Act for the issue and extension of a residence permit before and during your studies and the possibilities it provides for your postgraduate stay.

Residence permit for the purpose of studying

A residence permit for the purpose of studying is required in order to study at a state or state-recognised university or at a comparable educational institution. The study can be a basic course of studies, a postgraduate / additional / guest or supplementary course of studies as well as a doctorate. Of course, this also includes bachelor's and master's degree programmes.

You are entitled to a residence permit if you have been admitted to a full-time study programme. You must also be able to prove that you have sufficient knowledge of the language in which you are studying, that you have adequate health insurance coverage and that you have sufficient means of subsistence.

Your means of subsistence are regarded as sufficient if you open a blocked account with a credit of €853.00 per month or €10,236.00 per year, present a parental guarantee, are in possession of a suitable scholarship or if a third party submits a declaration of commitment on your behalf.

Even if you are only admitted to part-time studies, you can still be granted a residence permit. You can find out which degree programmes you can complete part-time from the university in question.

If you wish to apply for a residence permit for the purpose of studying, the following documents in particular are required for the examination of your application:

- current certificate of enrolment / admission
- valid passport
- biometric passport photograph
- Proof that you have sufficient means of subsistence
- Proof of your health insurance
- Proof of your language skills (if necessary)
- Academic performance records (in case of an extension)

We will clarify whether further documents are required during your visit. This may often depend on your nationality or level of education.

We would like to point out that each course of studies is an individual case. Therefore, we are happy to offer you individual advice!

Study preparation & compulsory internships

If you wish to attend a language course, a foundation course at a Studienkolleg or an internship before starting your studies, you can also be granted a residence permit for this purpose.

If you wish to apply for such a residence permit, please provide us with a current certificate of your preparatory internship, your preparatory language course or proof of admission to a foundation course at a Studienkolleg.

Preparatory courses (language courses & courses at a Studienkolleg) should not last longer than 2 years in total. As a rule, the duration of the study preparation is no longer considered appropriate after this period.

Please note that you must take a language course with at least 18 hours per week.

Application for studies

You can also obtain a residence permit for the purpose of applying for studies. This assumes that you do not yet have a place to study and that you are not taking part in a preparatory course, but would rather first like to complete an admission or selection procedure.

Validity period

A residence permit is always issued for a limited period only.

As a rule, a residence permit is valid for 1 to 2 years. If your studies last less than 2 years, you will only be granted a residence permit for the duration of your studies. If you participate in a Union or multilateral programme with European Union mobility measures, your residence permit will be issued for at least 2 years.

The residence permit for the purpose of applying for studies is issued for a maximum period of 9 months and cannot be extended thereafter.

Please note that a residence permit cannot be valid for a longer period than the validity of your national passport or health insurance.

Extension

Your residence permit can be extended during your studies as long as you can complete your studies within a reasonable period of time.

In order to be able to predict when you are likely to complete your studies, we need proof of your previous academic performance and, possibly, an assessment of your university. Please bring your academic performance records with you to your extension appointment.

As a rule, an appropriate period for the completion of a course of study is still given if the average duration of a course of study is not exceeded by more than 3 semesters. In addition, a total stay of 10 years for study purposes should not be exceeded (this also includes periods during which you have been in Germany in order to apply or prepare for studies).

If you wish to extend your residence permit, we advise you to arrange an appointment several months before your existing residence permit expires and to clarify all open questions in advance. The extension is usually granted for 1 to 2 years.

Fiktionsbescheinigung (Fictional Certificate)

If at the time of your appointment not all requirements for the issue or extension of your residence permit have been met or if we still need time to examine the case sufficiently, you do not have to leave us empty-handed. In these cases, we will issue you with a so-called "Fiktionsbescheinigung", which will keep your previous residence permit valid for another 3 months.

The Fiktionsbescheinigung is only valid in combination with your residence permit. During its validity it entitles you to leave the country and re-enter. In addition, all auxiliary provisions (Nebenbestimmungen) of your residence permit remain valid.

Employment

During your studies, you are allowed to work on a non-self-employed basis for a maximum of 120 days or 240 half days per year. You may engage in student part-time work at your university or at organisations close to the university (Studentenwerk, administration of student housing, etc.) on a regular basis without time restrictions. Internships that are mandatory during your studies can also be carried out without restrictions.

If you would like to work self-employed or as a freelancer, this must be determined individually. Please do not hesitate to contact us!

However, taking up employment must not endanger your studies!

If you are in Münster in order to apply for a course of study, you are not allowed to take up an employment or a student part-time job. If you are staying in Münster to prepare for your studies, in the first year you may only work during the holiday period.

You can also find out which employment you are allowed to pursue from the auxiliary provisions (Nebenbestimmungen) on your residence permit or from the extension page to your residence permit.

Changing the purpose of your stay

If you successfully complete your studies, you have the option to apply for a residence permit for another purpose. However, if you quit your studies without graduating, a change of purpose is only possible if you are pursuing an in-company initial or continuing vocational training or (in exceptional cases) a school attendance for the purpose of vocational training. The vocational training has to be in a shortage occupation which the Federal Employment Agency has listed on the so-called "Positivliste".

A change of university, degree programme or study subject is generally possible in the first 3 semesters. Whether a later change is still permissible must be examined individually.

If you wish to change your purpose of residence during your studies, this is only possible if you are legally entitled to be granted another residence permit.

Please contact us before an intended change so that we can show you your options!

After graduation

If you have successfully completed your studies in Münster, you are entitled to an extension of your residence permit for up to 18 months. During this period, you will be able to look for a job in Germany that is adequate to your degree. It will be ensured that the requirements of the job correspond to the competences acquired during your studies.

During this period of residence, it is possible for you to pursue employment in addition to looking for a job without any time restrictions.

Once you have found a suitable job, you can be granted a residence permit.

If you have already spent several years in Germany after completing your studies, you may be eligible for a permanent residence permit (settlement permit - Niederlassungserlaubnis). If, after completing your studies, you have taken up a job that is adequate to your degree, it is possible to issue a settlement permit as early as 2 years after you have started your job (if an EU Blue Card has been issued, this may be after 21 months).

Current state of legislation

Please note that the legal requirements may change after you have received this information flyer. This flyer is based on the state of the law as of 01.08.2019.

**Please feel free to contact us,
if you have any questions!**

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Rechts- und Ausländeramt**

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Opening hours:

Mo. - Fr. 10:00 - 12.00

Thu. also from 15.00 - 18.00