Applying for the correct visa

As an international student you may need an entry visa for Germany depending on where you come from and how long you plan to stay here. For more information about visa requirements, contact the German embassy or German consulate in your home country. You can find the address on the website of the German Federal Foreign Office.

When applying for a visa, be sure to keep the following in mind:

- Submit your application early enough! Visa processing can take several months and you won’t be able to enter the country without a valid visa.
- Apply for the correct visa! Tourist and language course visas cannot be converted into a student visa. With the wrong visa, you will be forced to leave the country at some point and apply for the correct visa at home.
- Schedule your trip to Germany so that you have sufficient time to enroll at your university and take care of the administrative obligations. Enrolment is a prerequisite for a residence permit.
- Make sure your passport is valid for your entire stay! If your passport expires while you are in Germany, you will have to return to your home country and extend the validity of your passport there.

Visa requirements for your country

To enter the country, you will most likely need a visa, which you can apply for before your trip at a German diplomatic mission in your home country. There are exceptions for specific countries, depending on the duration and purpose of your trip.

Visit the website of the German Federal Foreign Office for the latest visa requirements for all countries.

The German embassy or consulate in your home country will provide more information about all visa application matters. You can find the addresses of all
German diplomatic missions on the website of the German Federal Foreign Office.

The correct visa

The type of visa you need depends on whether you have already received your notification of admission from a German university. (Do not enter the country as a tourist! A tourist visa cannot be converted to a student visa or student applicant visa!)

There are two types of visas:

1. Student applicant visa („Visum zur Studienbewerbung“)

If you have not yet received notification of admission to a university or foundation course, you should apply for a student applicant visa.

This three-month visa allows you to meet the requirements for admission to a German university. If you find that three months is not long enough, you may extend your visa to a maximum of six months. If you are admitted to the university or foundation course within this period, you may apply for a student visa.

2. Student visa („Visum zu Studienzwecken“)

If you have received your notification of admission to university or a foundation course, you should apply for a student visa. Student visas are usually valid for three months. Within these three months, you will have to apply for an extended residence permit at the Alien Registration Office in your university town.

Required documents for a visa application

You can obtain a complete list of documents required for a visa application from your German diplomatic mission in your home country. Normally, you are asked to present:

- Certificate confirming health insurance coverage
- Proof of financial resources
• Certificates of past academic work and achievements
• Certificate of German language proficiency or proof that you intend on attending a language course in Germany
• For a student applicant visa: university entrance qualification recognised in Germany
• For a student visa: notification of admission from your German university (or a statement from the university confirming that your prospects of gaining admission are good).

More information

• auswaertiges-amt.de | German diplomatic missions abroad
• auswaertiges-amt.de | Visa regulations, visa procedures and application forms
• auswaertiges-amt.de | FAQ about visas, updated visa regulations for every country
• daad.de | “Information on Legal Requirements for the Entry and Residence of Foreign Students, Academics and Scientists”
• daad.de | Overview of visa and entry procedures
• https://www.study-in.de/en/