

Visa, residence and work permits for internships during and after your studies



INFORMATION FOR

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Visas, residence and work permits
before, during and after your studies



Internships during studies

4.1 Students from EU states

Students from the EU states enjoy freedom of movement for workers and may engage in internships unrestrictedly.

4.2 Students from non-EU states

Students from non-EU states must take the following into account:

4.2.1 Internship abroad

An internship abroad is possible. Please check whether you need a visa for this (see above no. 2.2.8). If you intend to leave the country for longer than six months for your internship, you must be interviewed priorly – presenting the internship contract – at your local Foreigners Registration Department office and agree a correspondingly longer period for a temporary exit. If you do not do this, your residence permit will expire after six months.

4.2.2 Obligatory internships

In the case of obligatory internships stipulated in the study and examination regulations as a mandatory component of a course of studies, there are no particularities of residence law to be taken into account, i.e. an obligatory internship will always be permitted to you. The occupation involved in an obligatory internship will also not be credited to the 120 days of permitted occupation.

4.2.3 Voluntary internships

In terms of residence law, internships not stipulated in the examination regulations as a mandatory component of a course of studies are assessed as normal employment circumstances and are usually possible only in the context of the 120-day rule-exceptions are practical examination projects and study-related activities at universities / research institutions. An internship counts as a job regardless of whether it is paid or unpaid.

If for example you intend to do a six-month internship or have already used up the 120 days for temporary work, the following applies:

Students from non-EU states need a permit from the Foreigners Registration Department, which must obtain the consent of the ZAV for this. The Foreigners Registration Department will first check whether the internship will mean that the maximum duration of ten years for a course of studies is exceeded, and the ZAV will ascertain whether it is an education-oriented internship (in which you will be learning something that contributes to your field of study) and not just a badly paid job.

Right of residence after studies for international graduates of German universities

7.1 Graduates from EU states

EU citizens, nationals of EEA states and Swiss citizens enjoy freedom of movement for workers and may exercise any occupation without the need for an interview at the Foreigners Registration Department.

7.2 Graduates from non-EU states

7.2.1 Residence permit for the purpose of seeking work

Following successful conclusion of your studies in Germany your residence permit may be extended by up to 18 months for the purpose of looking for a job commensurate with the degree. To this end you must apply at the local Foreigners Registration Department office for an extension to your residence permit according to § 16 Para. 5 AufenthG. Your studies are regarded as finished as soon as the university has certified the passing of the last examination in writing. It is not a question of when you were exmatriculated or when you receive your credentials. At all costs therefore keep the letter and/or envelope with its postmark with which you received the confirmation from the university that you passed the examination.

During the 18 months available to you according to § 16 Para. 5 AufenthG to look for a job commensurate with your degree, you may carry out unrestrictedly any gainful employment, including any internship or trainee post. You may also work self-employed or as a freelancer during your search for a job.

To receive the work permit according to § 16 Para. 5 AufenthG, you must continue to prove that you can provide your means of subsistence yourself. The same conditions apply to the type of proofs as described above under no.2.2.6.

7.2.2 Internship abroad

During these 18 months you may also complete an internship abroad. However, any stay outside Germany that lasts longer than six months will automatically lead to forfeiture of the residence permit unless a longer period has previously been agreed expressly and in writing with the Foreigners Registration Department. It is therefore recommended that you present yourself with the internship contract at your local Foreigners Registration Department office and reach the necessary agreements.

7.2.3 Change in doctorate or master study course

Both during and directly following the 18 months of the job search you may begin a doctorate or master study course. To this end you must again apply for a residence permit for the purpose of study. The same rules as described under nos. 2, 3 and 4 apply. If you do not finish the masters or doctorate you are not entitled to any remaining months of the “old” 18 19 months for the job search. If you gain a new degree, you may again apply for a residence permit according to § 16 Para. 5 AufenthG for 18 months to look for a job.

7.2.4 Job search after first job abroad

If you go abroad for a job directly after your studies you cannot subsequently apply for a residence permit according to § 16 Para. 5 AufenthG. This option is only available directly following the end of your studies.

If you subsequently wish to look for a job in Germany, you can however apply at the competent German diplomatic mission for a visa according to § 18c AufenthG for the purpose of seeking employment which can be issued to you for six months. In contrast to the residence permit according to § 16 Para. 5 AufenthG, however, you may not take temporary work with a visa according to § 18c AufenthG, but must prove that you have sufficient funds to ensure your means of subsistence in Germany for the period of your job search.

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This information brochure is intended to provide international students who choose to study in Hamburg with the most important information about aspects of their life in Hamburg and the various rights of residence. It does not replace personal consultation on important matters as offered by many bodies in Hamburg mentioned in this brochure.

The information brochure describes the legal position in August 2017. It is intended that legal changes will be updated promptly. Nevertheless legal changes, as well as changes to addresses or telephone numbers, may impair the accuracy of this brochure or make parts of it invalid. The editors will be happy to receive any information in this respect.

The text is based on the information brochure "Information for International Students - Visas, Residence Permits and Work Permits before, during and after your Studies" from Department 52 of the University of Hamburg. The Department of the Interior and Sport would like to thank the University for generously making the texts available.

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