

Academics and Researchers in Germany

Students can apply for § 21 of the AufenthG (German Residence Act) after completing their studies and researchers after completing their work. On our page, **“The correct residence permit for your self-employment”**, you can find out which residence permit you can apply for. You will always need the following documents:

Form **“Application for a residence permit”**. Below are important **notes** for your application:

- For **“Purpose of stay in the Federal Republic of Germany** (GER: Zweck des Aufenthaltes in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland)”, write → **“Self-employment** (GER: Selbständigkeit)” and **“Application for § 21 para. 1** (if you want to work independently in a trade) or **§ 21 para. 2a** (if your self-employment has a close connection to your studies) or **§ 21 para. 5** (if you want to become independent as a freelancer) (GER: Antrag auf § 21 Abs. 1 oder § 21 Abs. 2a oder § 21 Abs. 5)”.
- For **“Intended employment** (GER: Beabsichtigte Erwerbstätigkeit)” → **“Self-employed as [please provide the profession in which you want to become self-employed]** (GER: Selbständig als [bitte den Beruf eintragen, in dem Sie sich selbständig machen wollen)”.
- To make it easier for you to understand, we have visualised the respective text parts in the form for you.

A valid passport from your country of origin.

A current biometric photograph.

Proof that there are no grounds for expulsion, preferably by means of a police clearance certificate.

Proof of medical insurance.

Your business plan in German.

Your financial plan in German. **Please note (Hinweis):** You must demonstrate in your financial plan that you can provide for yourself (and your family). If you only need to provide for yourself, you should have profits of at least 18,000 euros per year.

Your complete CV in German. You can download a [template](#) from the page of the European Union.

Only applicable for freelancers: If you already have clients, submit the orders with agreed-upon fees.

For certain professions: proof that you meet the formal requirements. Proof is especially important if your self-employment requires you to have certain qualifications.

The immigration office may ask for additional documents, such as:

- Proof of other income (e.g. with artists and language teachers)
- A letter of intent (e.g. for work on a fee basis)
- Other additional references for freelancers

Tip: Would you like to stay in Germany and definitely become self-employed? Or are you not yet sure whether you would like to become self-employed or take on a job? Then you can apply for **§ 20 para. 3 AufenthG**. But you have to provide evidence that you will have enough money to live in Germany during your stay. Once you have obtained the residence permit, you can then take your time to think and plan. While academics receive a stay authorisation of 18 months, researchers only receive 9 months. But you can already choose self-employment during this time without the authorisation of the immigration authorities. What matters is that you lodge an application under **§ 21 AufenthG** at the latest two months before the expiry of your residence permit, even if you already are self-employed.

We have compiled this list carefully and conscientiously. Due to possible changes or requirements, however, we do not guarantee the completeness and correctness of the information. Please check with your immigration office whether any additional documents are required.

Application for a residence permit

Zweck des Aufenthalts in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Purpose of stay in the Federal Republic of Germany / Objet du séjour en République fédérale d'Allemagne / Scopo del soggiorno nella Repubblica Federale di Germania	Self-employment and application for [§ 21 para. 1. or § 21 para. 2a. or § 21 para. 5]
(z.B. Besuch, Touristenreise, Studium, Arbeitsaufnahme usw.) (e. g., visit, holiday, study, employment, etc.) / (p. ex. visite, voyage de tourisme, études, travail, etc.) / (ad es. visita, viaggio turistico, studio, lavoro ecc.)	
Arbeitgeber Employer / employeur / datore di lavoro	
Name der Verwandten, der Studienanstalt, Referenzen usw. Names of relatives, educational establishment, references, etc. Nom des parents, de l'établissement d'enseignement, références, etc. Nome dei parenti, dell'istituto scolastico, referenze ecc.	
Deren Anschrift Their addresses / leur adresse / indirizzo relativo	
Beabsichtigte Erwerbstätigkeit (Angabe des auszuübenden Berufs) Intended employment (occupation to be exercised) Activité envisagée (Désignation de la profession exercée) Impiego previsto (indicare il mestiere da svolgere)	Self-employed as [profession in which you want to become self-employed]
Erlerner Beruf Trade or profession for which trained / Profession apprise / Mestiere imparato	