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Opportunity Card — Come to Germany Without a Job Offer

New residence permit since 2024: Come to Germany without a job offer. Points system with min. 6 points.

Deutsche Begriffe: Chancenkarte | Aufenthaltstitel | Engpassberuf | Sperrkonto | Verpflichtungserklärung

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Opportunity Card (Chancenkarte) — Come to Germany Without a Job Offer

> The Opportunity Card (Chancenkarte) is a new residence permit available since June 2024. It allows skilled workers from non-EU countries to enter Germany **without a job offer** and search for work on the ground.

Two Paths to the Opportunity Card

Path 1: Fully Recognized Qualification

If your vocational or university qualification is **fully recognized** in Germany:

- **No points needed** — the card is issued directly
- **No language proof** required
- Also applies to qualifications obtained in Germany

Path 2: Points System (minimum 6 points)

If your qualification is **not or only partially recognized**, you must achieve at least **6 points**:

Criterion	Points
Partial recognition of qualification	4
Shortage occupation	1
Work experience 2+ years (last 5 yrs)	2
Work experience 5+ years (last 7 yrs)	3
German A2	1
German B1	2
German B2+	3
English C1+	1
Age under 35	2
Age 35–40	1
Previous stay in Germany (6+ months, last 5 yrs)	1
Partner meets Chancenkarte requirements	1

Basic requirement for Path 2: Completed vocational or university training (min. 2 years) + German A1 OR English B2.

What Does the Opportunity Card Allow?

• **Validity:** 1 year (extendable to 2 years if qualified employment found)

• **Part-time work:** Up to **20 hours/week** allowed

• **Trial work:** Up to **2 weeks per employer**

• **Job changes:** Unlimited — you can test different employers

Financial Requirements

• **Living expenses:** Proof of at least **€1,091/month** net (2026)

• **Proof via:** Blocked bank account (Sperrkonto) OR declaration of commitment from a sponsor in Germany

• **Visa fee:** €75

How to Apply

1. Check qualification: Is your degree recognized in Germany? Check at anabin.kmk.org

2. Calculate points: Use our Chancenkarte Calculator

3. Gather documents: Qualification certificates, language certificates, financial proof

4. Apply online: Via digital.diplo.de/chancenkarte

5. Embassy appointment: Apply for visa (processing time: 4–12 weeks)

6. Enter Germany: After receiving the visa

Shortage Occupations — 1 Extra Point

Germany currently has **183 officially classified shortage occupations** (2026). Most sought-after:

• **IT & Technology:** Software developers, system administrators, data scientists

• **Engineering:** Electrical, mechanical, civil engineering

• **Healthcare:** Doctors, nurses, physiotherapists

• **Trades:** Electricians, plumbers, welders, mechatronics

• **Transport:** Truck drivers, train operators

Official list: Federal Employment Agency

Opportunity Card vs. EU Blue Card

	Opportunity Card	EU Blue Card
Job offer needed?	No	Yes
Minimum salary	None	€50,700 / €45,934 (shortage)
Work permit	20h/week + trial work	Full-time
Validity	1 year	4 years
For whom?	Job-seeking professionals	Professionals with job offer

Important Notes

• The Opportunity Card is **NOT a work visa** — you may only work part-time while searching

• Once you find qualified employment, you switch to a regular residence permit

- **Family reunification** is generally **not possible** with the Opportunity Card
- The card **cannot be extended** if no qualified employment is found