After graduation in Germany

From degree completion to the 18-month job-seeker permit and the switch to a Blue Card.

Before you graduate

- [ ] **Confirm when your degree counts as completed**
  Ask the exam office (Prüfungsamt) for the date your final grade is officially notified. Many offices start the 18 months from that date.
- [ ] **Request a completion certificate early**
  You need a degree certificate or a "Bescheinigung über den Studienabschluss" for your application. The final certificate can take months.
- [ ] **Check your residence permit expiry date**
  Your student permit often ends a few months after your expected graduation. Apply for the job-seeker permit before it expires.
- [ ] **Plan proof of funds for the job search**
  Offices ask how you will live while searching. A blocked account, savings or a job (any job is allowed) can all work. Many offices use roughly the student rate (€992 a month) as a guide.
- [ ] **Arrange health insurance after student cover ends**
  Student public insurance changes after graduation. Ask your Krankenkasse about continuing as a graduate or voluntary member.

Right after graduation

- [ ] **Book the Ausländerbehörde appointment**
  Book as soon as you have the completion letter. Offices in big cities are booked out for weeks.
- [ ] **Apply for the 18-month job-seeker permit (§20(3))**
  Before the student permit expires. If the appointment is later, apply in writing or online before expiry and keep the confirmation.
- [ ] **Get a Fiktionsbescheinigung if your permit expires before the appointment**
  This certificate keeps your current status while your application is processed. Without it you can lose the right to stay and to work.
- [ ] **Bring your Meldebescheinigung and passport**
  Address registration, passport, biometric photo, degree proof, health insurance and proof of funds. The fee is usually around €100.
- [ ] **Don't de-register from the university too early**
  Check with your office: some prefer you to stay enrolled until the job-seeker permit is issued.

During the job search

- [ ] **Use your unrestricted work rights**
  The job-seeker permit lets you work in any job, including part-time and non-graduate work, while you look.
- [ ] **Improve your German to B1**
  B1 opens more jobs and shortens the Blue Card path to permanent residence from 27 to 21 months.

- [ ] **Know the Blue Card thresholds**
  2026: €50,700 gross a year, or €45,934.20 for shortage occupations and graduates within 3 years of their degree.
- [ ] **Track your 18-month deadline**
  The permit cannot be extended. Set reminders at 12 and 15 months.

When you get an offer

- [ ] **Check your offer against the Blue Card threshold**
  At or above the threshold and related to your degree: apply for the EU Blue Card.
- [ ] **Switch to a Blue Card or skilled-worker permit**
  You can switch inside Germany. Start before your job-seeker permit runs out. You may usually start work once the office confirms.
- [ ] **Read your contract before signing**
  Check probation, notice period and salary. See the employment-contract guide.

Hybrid / online programmes

- [ ] **Prepare proof that you studied on campus**
  If your programme was hybrid or online-heavy, keep timetables, attendance records and a university letter. Berlin has questioned these programmes.

> Apply for the job-seeker permit before your student permit expires; ask for a Fiktionsbescheinigung if the appointment is later.

Interactive version: desieuropeantales.com/after-graduation-checklist-germany · Orientation only, not legal advice. Check the official checklist of your German mission or foreigners' office before your appointment.