

International staff

Practical Information for International Staff

FACHHOCHSCHULE ERFURT · UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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**FACHHOCHSCHULE
ERFURT** UNIVERSITY
OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Welcome to FH Erfurt



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1 Before you start work in Germany

As a foreign national intending to work in Germany, you will face a number of bureaucratic hurdles. The good news is that they can usually be overcome! However, time is not always on your side. You should not underestimate how long it can take for administrative matters to be dealt with. Ideally, you need to start preparing as soon as you apply for a job. Once you receive a job offer (at the very latest), you need to take action and make specific plans.

1.1 Residence permit

EU/EFTA citizens

In principle, all citizens of EU member states and so-called EFTA states (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) are allowed to come to Germany and work here without a visa.

Non-EU/EFTA citizens

People from non-EU states and non-EFTA states, known as „third countries“, generally need a visa and a residence permit to enter and work in Germany.



Exceptions are made for nationals of Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. They can enter Germany without a visa and apply for a residence permit once they are in the country.

In most cases, skilled workers from third countries can only seek work on the German labour market with the approval of the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit). Permission is usually granted if, for example, you have a firm offer of a job. Usually, your employment contract will be accepted as proof of this.

Tipp: For additional, up-to-date information, please click [here](#).

1.2 Insurance

In Germany, it is mandatory to take out health insurance. Furthermore, anyone earning more than €520 per month is subject to social security contributions. These are deducted directly from your salary as a percentage consisting of partial payments for pension, long-term care, accident and unemployment insurance. Your employer also covers a proportion of your social security contributions. This means that more money is paid into employees' social security funds than is deducted from their salaries. After returning to your home country, depending on agreements with Germany, contributions you have paid in can be refunded or credited to the pension scheme in your own country.

Other insurance policies are not mandatory but are still recommended.

1.2.1 Health insurance

Health insurance is compulsory in Germany, but if your monthly income exceeds €5362.50, you can decide whether you would prefer to take out statutory or private health insurance.

There are various health insurance companies to choose from. The percentage contribution (premium) which is deducted directly from your salary can vary, as may the benefits offered. You will join your chosen health insurance scheme on the day you start work. If you arrive in Germany before then, you need to take out guest insurance, which is a type of overseas health insurance that can be supplemented by other policies such as liability and accident insurance.

Statutory health insurance

Special rules apply to EU citizens: anyone who is legally insured in another EU country can join a statutory health insurance fund in Germany.

You can find a list of statutory health insurance companies [here](#).

Private health insurance

Private health insurance is relevant for anyone who is not subject to compulsory statutory health insurance. Even if you come from abroad and are not working, you still have to take out health insurance. Private health insurance is cheaper for expats with limited residence permits, while providing the same level of benefits.

Private health insurance schemes are run by companies with which the policyholder enters into a contract. This contract precisely specifies the benefits and regulates the premiums to be paid. All private health insurance companies offer a variety of rates. The premiums and benefits differ much more than in the case of statutory health insurance. Each individual contract defines the coverage and quality of the respective insurance policy.

For consumer protection, the legislature has stipulated strict rules. Before a private health insurance policy is taken out, a specially trained insurance professional must inquire about and analyse the client's needs, suggest suitable policies and justify their recommendations accordingly. Every part of the process has to be documented, right up to when the contract is signed.

[Here](#), you will find an overview of private health insurance providers in Germany.

The difference between private and statutory health insurance

Medical care is usually provided by the same doctors and the same hospitals. In terms of service, privately insured patients are often given preferential treatment: they receive appointments with specialists more quickly and can stay in smaller hospital rooms with only one or two beds. This is because doctors and hospitals receive much higher fees for treating privately insured patients than they do for patients with statutory health insurance.

However, one particular advantage of statutory health insurance in Germany is that it provides family coverage. Your children and spouse can be insured free of charge if they have no income of their own.

If you have private health insurance, you initially pay the costs of medical care yourself and are then reimbursed by your health insurance company. Patients with statutory health insurance do not have to do this, as the doctor settles the bill directly with the health insurance company. Private health insurance contributions are calculated according to risk: if you are young and healthy, you pay lower premiums. Statutory health insurance companies calculate your contributions according to your financial means: if you earn a lot, you pay a lot, but if you earn less, you pay less.

Tip: When consulting a doctor, patients with statutory health insurance should make sure that the doctor is allowed to bill the health insurance company. In most cases, there will be a sign at the practice saying „Alle Krankenkassen“ („All health insurance companies“). Beware: „Private doctors“ (Privatärzte) who are not registered with statutory health insurance companies will also charge patients who have statutory health insurance for their treatment.

1.2.2 Liability insurance

In Germany, everyone is held liable for damage they cause to third parties. It is therefore normal and strongly advised that you take out private liability insurance so that you are covered in the event of claims arising from damages you unintentionally cause.

Other types of insurance that may be useful for your individual needs are accident insurance and legal expenses insurance. If you intend to use a car in Germany, you also need third-party motor vehicle insurance. Without it, you will not be able to register your car.

Please note: If you hold a driving licence from a country that is not a member of the European Union or the European Economic Area, it is valid for six months from the date on which you register your place of residence in Germany. After this time, your driving licence will no longer be accepted. To continue driving on German roads, you will then need a driving licence issued in Germany.

1.3 Finding accommodation

It can be difficult and time-consuming to find suitable accommodation from your home country. By using websites such as <https://www.immowelt.de/>, <https://www.immobilienscout24.de> or <https://www.meinestadt.de/erfurt/immobilien/wohnungen>, you can find out what is currently on offer and activate notifications based on your preferences. Often, you will have to submit certain documents before or when viewing accommodation, such as a copy of your identity card or passport, proof of income, confirmation of rental history and so on. This makes it difficult to secure accommodation before you arrive in Germany.

Once you are in Erfurt, posters on campus might help you to find a place to live. Students often look for new tenants or flatmates this way.

Tip: Here are some useful abbreviations that you will find in accommodation adverts

KM (Kaltmiete): basic rent

NK (Nebenkosten): additional costs and service charges

WM (Warmmiete): total rent (basic rent plus additional costs and charges)

qm (Quadratmeter): square metres, describing the size of the accommodation

EG (Erdgeschoss): ground floor

2. OG (2. Obergeschoss): 2nd (upper) floor



1.4 Can your spouse/family join you in Germany?

If you are employed in Germany, you can also bring your family to this country. It is important to find out before you move whether your family members will also need a specific visa. This [link](#) should help.

If you have children, you need to check early on where there are free places in day-care facilities. Furthermore, it is mandatory for children to go to school in Germany. At the age of 7 at the latest, children have to attend a school that is suitable for their age and abilities. In the state of Thuringia, school attendance is compulsory for ten years. You can find information on who to contact in Erfurt and more details about childcare obligations and options [here](#). We strongly recommend that you contact the prospective childcare centres directly as this makes it easier to clarify any questions you may have.

You will find plenty of relevant information on family life in Germany [here](#).

Tip: The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) offers a hotline to provide expert advice in German and English on finding a job, work and careers. You can reach the „Working and Living in Germany“ hotline Mondays to Thursdays, 09:00 - 16:00 CET and Fridays, 09:00 - 12:00 CET by calling +49 (0)30-1815-1111.

1.5 Important documents for your employment contract

- Visa (if applicable), fiction certificate (Fiktionsbescheinigung) or residence title/work permit
- Originals of personal status documents (e.g. birth, marriage, children, divorce)
- Personal identity card, passport or other valid proof of identity
- Disability ID card (proof of severely disabled status providing information on the severity of the disability)
- [Recognized certificates and qualifications](#) → please note that foreign qualifications must be verified with the ZAB (this will be relevant for your pay bracket)
- Curriculum vitae
- Proof of health insurance
- Proof of an EU bank account
- Certificate of military or alternative civilian service
- Official certificate of good conduct
- Export control check (Prüfung Exportkontrolle) filed in PIP via the FHE website → Legal Counsel (Justizariat)
- Complete translations of work references
- Tax ID → see "Information for the Thuringian State Office for Finance"
- Consultation required to help you fill in the documents? (yes/no)
- Passport photo for your Thoska card

2 Starting out in Germany

There are a few things that need to be done in person or require you to have certain documents that you will only have after registering at the Residents' Registration Office.

2.1 Registration authorities

If you plan to stay in Germany for more than three months, you must register with the city's Registration Office (Einwohnermeldeamt). Citizens from non-EU countries must also register with the Foreigners' Registration Office (Ausländerbehörde).

The two departments are in the same building. You can find them at the following address:

Bürgermeister-Wagner-Straße 1, 99084 Erfurt
(Tram stop: Hauptbahnhof)

The central service number for both departments is (0361) 655-5444.

Please note: You will need to make an appointment online. All of the documents that you need will be listed in the email confirming your appointment. In any case, you will have to present confirmation of residence from your landlord (Wohnungsgeberbescheinigung) and your rental agreement. Use this [link](#) to make an appointment with the registration office. Click on "Online-Terminvereinbarung Bürgerservice im Bürgeramt". Appointments with the Foreigners' Registration Office must be made by email to auslaenderbehoerde@erfurt.de.



2.2 Opening a bank account

It is now possible to open a bank account online. However, this requires proof that you are registered and liable to pay taxes in Germany. You will only receive your registration certificate once you have registered at the Registration Office. If you live in Germany, banks generally assume that you are also liable to pay tax.

It is essential that you have a bank account in order to receive your salary and be able to pay for expenses such as rent, electricity, insurance and so on. In Germany, it is neither common nor - for the most part - even possible to pay your bills by cheque or in cash.



3 Good to know

3.1 Translations

To be sure that they are accepted by the authorities, you should have certified translations into German or English done by approved agencies in Germany. Erfurt has a number of translation agencies, which you can find on the Internet.

3.2 Language courses

The University of Applied Sciences Erfurt does not offer German courses exclusively for foreign employees. However, you can take part in the student language courses free of charge. For more information please visit this [page](#).

Other providers, such as language schools, the local adult education centre (Volks-hochschule) or the University of Erfurt also offer online or on-site German courses at various levels. It is highly recommended that you continue to work on your German proficiency. German is the official language, especially in public administration or authorities, and the people who work there sometimes only speak little English.

Tip: Whenever possible, it is helpful to take a native speaker with you (or someone who speaks German very well) whenever you have important appointments with the authorities. This makes communication easier and ensures that you have understood all of the key information. The International Office at FH Erfurt has a buddy network (Welcome Project) for international students. It is worth asking them if they have time to help. For more information on support services for internationals, visit our [website](#).

3.3 Work culture

Here are a few important points relating to work culture at FHE.

- Equality. As an employer, FH Erfurt is subject to the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG), which provides wide-ranging protection against discrimination and aims to prevent or eliminate discriminatory treatment on the grounds of ethnic origin, gender, religion or beliefs, disability, age or sexual identity.
- Flexitime. In some areas of FHE, core working hours are agreed with the respective department heads, and these have to be adhered to. Otherwise, you are free to structure your working hours as you wish between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. It is also possible to divide your weekly working hours unevenly across the week, unless otherwise agreed. Overtime is paid but can also be compensated by time off. You have to make up for any hours lost.
- Remote work. It is possible to split your working hours 50/50 (maximum) between the office and another location. Your department head can decide whether you need to specify fixed days, and they will also ensure that you receive the necessary authorization. Please note that permission to work remotely is only granted for fixed periods and therefore needs to be reapplied for on a regular basis. As an employee of FH Erfurt, you have a fully equipped workspace at one of our three campuses and access to the appropriate resources for remote work.

If you have any further questions about working at FHE, please contact your administrator in Human Resources. For any questions relating to your specific tasks, you should consult your department head.

3.4 Useful phone numbers and contacts

Telephone numbers in case of emergency:

- **Emergency doctor and fire department: 112**
- **Police: 110**
- **Poison control centre** for the states of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia: **0361/730-730**
- **Urgent medical treatment** (general practitioners, ENT specialists, paediatricians, ophthalmologists) for those covered by statutory health insurance: emergency room at Helios hospital, Nordhäuser Straße 74, 99089 Erfurt. Opening hours: Mondays - Fridays: 7 p.m. - 7 a.m.; Saturdays, Sundays, public holidays: 7 a.m. - 7 a.m. (next day).
Telephone: 0361/781-4833 or 0361/781-4834
- The **after-hours pharmacy service** changes daily. To check which pharmacy is on duty, please check the City of Erfurt homepage or use this [link](#).



3.5 Leisure

Culture in the City of Erfurt

Erfurt is home to numerous theatres, cinemas, museums and leisure facilities. The Erfurt Tourist Information Centre (Tourismus GmbH Erfurt) can provide you with more information and a monthly calendar of events (Erfurt-Magazin) for a current overview of what is going on in the city.

Tourismus GmbH Erfurt,
Benediktsplatz 1, 99084 Erfurt
Telephone: +49(0)361/664-00
Email: service@erfurt-tourist-info.de

<http://www.erfurt-tourist-info.de>

<http://www.erfurt.de/>

<http://www.erfurt-magazin.info/>

Radio and television licence fees

If you own a radio or television set, you are legally obliged to pay licence fees (Rundfunkbeitrag) to the GEZ (Gebühreneinzugszentrale, the agency responsible for collecting these fees). Additional information is available at every post office and on the licence fee [website](#).

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