



# Research careers in Germany

A guide for international postdocs and experienced researchers



AN INITIATIVE OF THE  
Federal Ministry  
of Education  
and Research

Research in  
Germany



Land of Ideas

[www.research-in-germany.org](http://www.research-in-germany.org)





# Foreword

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## HERZLICH WILLKOMMEN!

Are you in the process of planning the next step in your university career? Or are you looking for a research job with good prospects? – In Germany you will find excellent working conditions, renowned institutes and interesting, international and interdisciplinary research projects.

This brochure outlines

- the advantages of Germany as a land of science and research,
- where you can research and teach here,
- the career opportunities Germany offers you as a postdoc or experienced researcher.

We also have much more information available for you online, so make sure you visit us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter. Take the next step – we look forward to seeing you in Germany!

[www.research-in-germany.org](http://www.research-in-germany.org)  
[www.facebook.com/research.in.germany](https://www.facebook.com/research.in.germany)  
[www.twitter.com/researchgermany](https://www.twitter.com/researchgermany)

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# Contents

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WHY GERMANY?	6
Five good reasons for doing research in Germany	
1. EXPLORE THE GERMAN RESEARCH LANDSCAPE	8
Research opportunities in Germany and the different institutions that offer them	
2. LAUNCHING YOUR POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH CAREER	12
How to find a suitable research job after completing your doctorate	
3. HOW TO BECOME A PROFESSOR	18
Moving up the career ladder at a German university	
4. CAREER OPTIONS FOR EXPERIENCED RESEARCHERS	22
Why a leadership position in research or industry is so attractive	
5. VISITING SCHOLARS WELCOME	30
How a research stay in Germany will benefit your career	
6. MOVING TO GERMANY	34
What you need to know about visas, insurance and living in Germany	
Imprint	39

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# Why Germany?

## 1. **TOP UNIVERSITIES**

Germany is a leading research nation. Its universities are considered among the best in the world. Why not work at a top international university and benefit from Germany's global reputation and long tradition of outstanding academic research and teaching?

## 2. **STRONG IN INNOVATION**

Innovative strength and scientific curiosity have taken Germany to second place among the most active nations when it comes to patent, brand and design applications. The country is one of the world's ground-breaking research nations, especially in the fields of the future. These are ideal conditions for a successful research career.

Germany is one of the most attractive host countries for researchers.





3. **GLOBAL NETWORKS AND INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH**  
Germany has a broad, innovative and diverse research landscape. Universities, higher education institutions and non-university research centres offer the very best conditions for international researchers. Here you will work with researchers from all over the world in interesting, often interdisciplinary projects. Or you can make a contribution to industrial research: German industry leads the world in many fields when it comes to research developments and patent applications.

4. **EXCELLENT SUPPORT AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**  
Are you among the world's best in education and research? Then you will receive a warm welcome in Germany. Simplified residence and employment regulations apply to highly qualified international academics and researchers – and their family members.

You will also find a wide range of support available from funding organisations. Many doors are also open to you as a specialist or manager – especially in research-intensive industries like the automotive, electrical and chemical sectors.

5. **HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE**  
The high quality of life and relatively low living costs make Germany one of the most attractive host countries in the world.

An excellent healthcare system, a diverse and reliable infrastructure, a clean environment, beautiful landscapes and attractive cities are just a few of the advantages that make life in Germany pleasant.

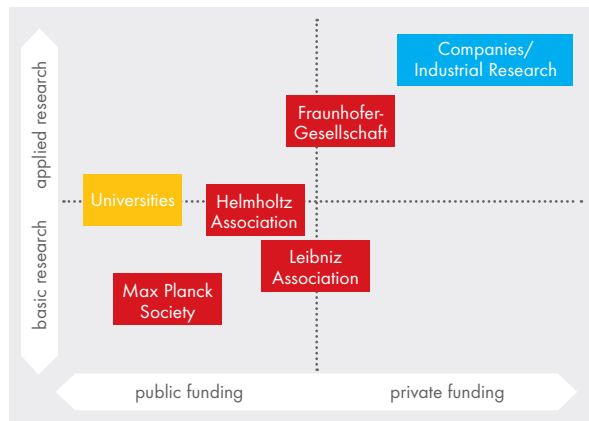
And Germany is cosmopolitan and international: roughly one in five inhabitants is an immigrant or stems from a migrant family.



# 1. Explore the German research landscape



Are you aiming for a career in research? Then Germany offers you many opportunities. Whether in higher education, non-university research institutions or industry, you can do research in many different locations and institutions all over Germany.



Germany has a substantial university and non-university research landscape with world-class institutions.

## EXCELLENT UNIVERSITIES

German universities are among the best in the world. They are also a very good springboard for a successful career. In recent years Germany has invested large sums of money in its universities to secure their long-term competitiveness.

## Different types of universities

A special feature of German higher education is the variety of different institutions it offers. Universities (Universitäten) have a strong research focus and cover a broad range of subjects. Research and teaching are closely linked at German universities.





You can do research in many different locations and institutions all over Germany.

They also include 14 **universities of technology (Technische Universitäten, TU)** that place special emphasis on engineering and natural science subjects. Universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen, FH), on the other hand, are characterised by a strong practical orientation. Learning and teaching are at the centre of attention here.

**German universities have a lot to offer:**

- A wide range of research - nearly 400 universities cover the complete range of academic subjects.
- Attractive working conditions - you will become part of the academic community, benefit from well-equipped research centres and work and research in innovative surroundings.
- Interesting partnerships - German universities maintain many collaborative projects with partners abroad.
- Good support - university international offices and welcome centres will help you with all aspects of your stay in Germany before your arrival.

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**Universities of technology** (Technische Universitäten, TU) concentrate on engineering and science subjects, but usually also offer other disciplines. They are entitled to award doctorates. Nine leading German universities of technology have come together in the TU9 initiative. They are especially active in promoting excellence in engineering and the natural sciences.  
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### NON-UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

Research of a high standard is also carried out outside universities. In comparison to other countries, Germany has a substantial non-university research landscape with world-class institutions engaging in both applied and basic research. This sector employs researchers from all over the world. Excellent equipment, innovative and often interdisciplinary projects and an international orientation make these non-university research institutions attractive employers.

#### The four large research organisations

Perhaps you have already heard of Fraunhofer, Helmholtz, Leibniz and Planck? The four large and internationally renowned research organisations are named after these significant German scholars:

- The application-oriented research institutes of the **Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft** collaborate closely with industry.
- The research centres of the **Helmholtz Association** offer a wide range of research and also operate large research infrastructures such as Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron (DESY).
- The institutes of the **Leibniz Association** focus primarily on demand-oriented and interdisciplinary research.
- The institutes of the **Max Planck Society** concentrate especially on basic research.

### RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN INDUSTRY

Are you looking for a place in applied research? Research-based companies in Germany are attractive employers. They also actively seek specialists on the international labour market. German firms top the ranking of the world's most research-intensive companies. Volkswagen, Daimler, BMW, Siemens and Robert Bosch take five of the top six places in the European ranking of corporate research and development spending.



#### DID YOU KNOW?

60%

of all German companies employ non-German researchers in their R&D departments.

Germany spends

80

billion euros a year on research and development. That is almost 3% of its gross domestic product.

Over

1,000

research institutes receive government funding.



Almost all large German companies maintain their own research and development departments. Roughly 360,000 people are employed in research and development in companies – primarily in the vehicle manufacturing, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, chemical and pharmaceutical industries, but also in the services sector.

Many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) also engage in research. They often enter into partnerships with universities and non-university research centres for this purpose. Many of these SMEs are so-called **hidden champions**.

**German companies have a lot to offer:**

- You will often be able to work in an international team, sometimes in cooperation with universities or non-university research centres.
- You can do research on practical applications and see your ideas being put into practice.
- Compared to other countries, salaries are good to very good.
- You can enjoy extensive social benefits.
- As a rule, you will have long-term career prospects and interesting opportunities for promotion.

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**Hidden champions** are little-known small and medium-sized enterprises that are world market leaders in their often highly specialised fields.  
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**LINKS**

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You will find detailed information about the German research landscape at

[www.research-in-germany.org/research-landscape](http://www.research-in-germany.org/research-landscape)  
.....

You will find more information about a career in Germany at  
[www.make-it-in-germany.com/en](http://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en)  
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## 2. Launching your postdoctoral research career

If you want to carry on working in research after completing your doctorate, you have various options. German universities, non-university research institutes and companies offer young international researchers opportunities to gain research experience and develop skills for their future careers.



**Get your doctorate recognised:** Academic degrees are protected by law in Germany. The higher education laws of the 16 German states (Länder) clearly define when an academic title can be used in Germany. You can obtain a basic idea of whether and how your qualification is recognised from the anabin database. It also offers links to relevant advice centres at [www.anabin.kmk.org](http://www.anabin.kmk.org) (German only).

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Candidates for a professorship in Germany are usually expected to hold a **habilitation** qualification. As a rule, this postdoctoral degree involves writing a professorial thesis (Habilitationsschrift) and completing an examination that determines the candidate's ability to teach in an academic subject. Universities specify the requirements in their habilitation regulations (see page 18).  
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### Academic or industrial research?

What are the consequences of entering industry after completing your doctorate? Can you still become a professor? Or conversely, what happens if you stay at a university, but don't want to complete a professorial qualification like a postdoctoral **habilitation** degree? What you do after completing your doctorate determines your initial career path.

#### UNIVERSITY/NON-UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE

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Depending on the nature of the institute and your subject, you will engage in either applied or basic research.  
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At a university you will enjoy freedom of research and teaching. New knowledge is the goal. At a non-university research institute, e.g. a departmental research institute or in contract research, the content and purpose of your research may be prescribed.  
.....

You will have regular teaching duties and be responsible for providing student support.  
.....

In most subjects it is important for your future career that you regularly publish research results.  
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#### INDUSTRY

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Your research contributes directly to the development of new products or solutions.  
.....

As a rule, the content and purpose of your research work will be prescribed and oriented towards achieving corporate goals.  
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There are no teaching obligations.  
.....

There is no pressure to publish.  
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## 2. Launching your postdoctoral research career

Because postdoctoral research is organised differently in industry, returning to a university at a later date is not easy; industrial researchers do not have lists of publications or experience of teaching and administration. Conversely, depending on the subject area involved, it can be difficult to make a fresh start in industry after many years of working at a university. Your chances are better here if you have experience of leading a research team and administering your own budget. Engineers and specialists in applied research generally find it easier to move from higher education to industry and in the opposite direction.

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The **12-year rule** says that academic staff can be employed on temporary contracts for six years until they complete their doctorate and then for another six years (in medicine: nine years) after that. There are exceptions to this rule when the researcher, for example, is employed using third-party funding or if there are children in the researcher's household.  
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### POSTDOC IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

If you want to work in academic research, then a postdoc position at a university or non-university research institute is a logical career step. The postdoc phase primarily serves as a period of academic training. During this time you can qualify for a professorship or a position in senior (research) management. In most cases, jobs for research associates are temporary (**12-year rule**).

Postdoctoral researchers usually work as research associates in a department, in a research group or in a sponsored project.

At a university you will enjoy freedom of research and teaching.



### Working in a department

If you are employed as a research associate at a university, you will hold seminars or practical exercises, support graduates and perform administrative duties. You may be part of an existing research programme or work on your own research project.

### Working in a research group or a sponsored project

Postdocs also work in (junior) research groups and sponsored research projects while pursuing their own research project. The focus here is firmly on research. However, teaching duties can also be involved.

Research groups frequently work with other universities, non-university research institutes or companies. They also form a useful springboard for a successful career outside higher education.

### Salary

Employed research associates are paid according to a **collective agreement** for the public sector. The starting monthly salary for a full-time position is roughly 3,500 euros gross. Salaries for employees of projects with third-party funding are at a similar level.

### Scholarships

Research funding organisations and non-university research institutions also support postdocs with scholarships. The amount depends on the respective programme and can vary considerably. There are often additional allowances for insurance or travelling expenses as well as family allowances. Scholarships are usually limited to a period of two to three years.

### LINK

You will find information about selected funding programmes on our website at [www.research-in-germany.org/funding-programmes](http://www.research-in-germany.org/funding-programmes)

## DID YOU KNOW?



Germany is one of the most popular host countries for postdoctoral junior researchers.

Over **10%** of the academic staff at German universities come from abroad.

German funding organisations support research stays in Germany by over **52,000** international researchers a year.

A **collective agreement** (Tarifvertrag) is a legally binding contract between the representatives of the employers and employees in one industry or one company. Among other things, the collective agreement regulates pay scales, working hours and employees' leave entitlement.



Engineers and natural scientists often find interesting positions in industry.

### POSTDOC IN INDUSTRY

Would you like your research findings to be quickly applied in products? Are you eager to discover how what is feasible can be realised in an economically viable way? If so, then a research job in industry could be just what you're looking for. In addition to large, international companies, many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Germany engage in research. They also offer interesting jobs and long-term career prospects.

There are far fewer jobs for postdoctoral researchers in companies than there are in universities or research institutes. Nevertheless, above all engineers and natural scientists often find interesting positions here.



Help in finding a job is provided by the International Placement Services (ZAV) of the Federal Employment Agency at [www.arbeitsagentur.de/zav](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/zav).

Alternatively, you can search the job exchange at <http://jobboerse.arbeitsagentur.de>.

### Employment

If you are employed as a postdoc – usually on a temporary contract – you can take advantage of statutory social benefits: you are covered by the health insurance, accident insurance and retirement pension schemes. Many companies offer additional social benefits such as a company kindergarten, a dual career service or home office facilities.

### Salary

Your salary depends on your qualifications, your experience and the requirements your employer expects you to meet. If there is a collective agreement for your industry, you will usually be paid according to the agreed scale. Depending on the employer, you may also receive additional benefits. Your salary expectations will also play an important role in a job interview.

### LINKS

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**Job advertisements** are published in major German daily and weekly newspapers as well as research journals.  
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Online portals enable you to carry out specialised searches in the field of science and research. You will find a list of selected websites at [www.research-in-germany.org/jobs](http://www.research-in-germany.org/jobs)  
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At Merck, a global R&D leader whose everyday business is to innovate, I have freedom, talented colleagues and a synergistic environment that allows the pursuit of difficult, real world challenges, transforming lives in the process.

**Dr Sakshi Garg** is a researcher at the German science and technology company Merck. The Indian-born scientist works in the Department Healthcare - Discovery Technologies.



### 3. How to become a professor



Would you like to become a professor at a German university? First of all, you will have to achieve “eligibility for appointment” (Berufungsfähigkeit). This qualification requires a period of postdoctoral training that can vary considerably depending on your subject, the main emphasis of your research and your academic interest.

In the first postdoc phase – as a rule, the first two to four years after you completed your doctorate – you should gain research and possibly initial teaching experience at a university or a non-university institute, perhaps also in industry.

During this time you should publish your own research papers, engage in training at congresses and develop your soft skills. Gaining international research experience is also part of this initial qualification period.

Experienced postdocs can satisfy the requirements for appointment to a professorship by producing a habilitation thesis (Habilitationsschrift), holding a junior professorship or presenting other evidence of academic achievement. This can include, for example, a leadership role in a junior research group or in industry.

#### QUALIFYING FOR A PROFESSORSHIP AT A UNIVERSITY

These are important requirements for appointment to a professorship at a university:

- successful completion of a course of higher education
- pedagogical suitability
- special academic ability (usually demonstrated by an **outstanding doctorate**)

In addition, you must present further proof of academic achievement. This can be done in various ways in Germany:

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An **outstanding doctorate** (Qualitätspromotion/ qualifizierte Promotion) is an important requirement for appointment to a professorship and involves above-average performance in doctoral examinations – above all, in the doctoral thesis. This is usually documented by an evaluation of at least magna cum laude (with great honour); however, some universities expect summa cum laude (with highest honour).

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Experience gained as a group leader prepares you for a leadership position.

### Habilitation

Most people in Germany qualify for a professorship at a university through habilitation. Traditionally, you must first produce a habilitation thesis and then go through an examination process that ascertains your ability to teach in an academic subject. The habilitation process can also be completed cumulatively – in other words, by publishing several relevant papers in renowned specialist journals. Universities lay down the precise requirements in their habilitation regulations.



**DFG funding for “your own job”:** The German Research Foundation (DFG) provides one of the most important funding instruments for postdoc researchers in Germany: its module for Temporary Positions for Principal Investigators. This programme enables (junior) researchers not only to apply for funding for their own research project, but also for their own job as part of that project. The precondition for this is that the German host institution provides the necessary basic facilities and assumes the role of employer. You can also apply for “your own job” from abroad. More information is available at [www.dfg.de/research\\_grants](http://www.dfg.de/research_grants).

DID  
YOU KNOW?



Over  
**70%**

of junior professors are subsequently appointed to a professorship.

**9%**

of the habilitation degrees that qualify their holders to become professors in Germany are completed by international researchers.

Germany's Federal Government intends to spend one billion euros on additional tenure-track professorships within ten years.

.....  
**A junior professorship**

represents an alternative to completing the habilitation process. It enables junior researchers to engage in independent research and teaching. As a result, they are treated the same as other university teachers.  
.....

**Junior professorship**

Although they are relatively new, **junior professorships** have become an established alternative to habilitation. Over 1,600 junior professors – including 645 women – research and teach at German universities. Junior professorships are mainly found in mathematics and the natural sciences, followed by law, economics and the social sciences. Close behind come language and cultural studies.

**Leading your own junior research group**

Experienced postdocs can also qualify for appointment to a professorship by leading a junior research group. Experience gained as a group leader at either a university or a large non-university research institution prepares outstanding junior researchers for a subsequent leadership position. International research experience is also advantageous. Sometimes – for example, in the case of leaders of Helmholtz junior research groups – it is even mandatory.

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In Germany, professors are paid in accordance with what is known as **W-Besoldung**, the remuneration regulation for scholars (W stands for “Wissenschaft”, which means scholarship or science). It regulates the salaries and performance-related benefits of (junior) professors at German higher education institutions. Because the regulation gives the Federal Government and the German states a certain amount of scope, salaries can differ significantly between different states.  
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**Salary**

**Junior professors** are usually paid on the basis of the relevant salary scale, the so-called **W1-Besoldung**. Depending on the German state involved, the gross basic monthly salary will be between 3,900 and 4,600 euros.

As a rule, **leaders of junior research groups** are paid on the basis of the collective agreement for the public sector (of the German states). Depending on your previous work experience and employment grading, the gross monthly salary will be between 3,800 and 4,700 euros. What is also important, in addition to your own salary, is the amount of funding allocated for staff and materials. This can vary considerably.

In **industry**, your salary will depend on the respective sector, your qualifications, a possibly applicable collective agreement and also your negotiating skills.



**!** There are interesting funding programmes for leaders of junior research groups and their research projects. They are administered, for example, by the DFG, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, the Max Planck Society, the Helmholtz Association, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the European Union. You will find more information about funding programmes for postdocs at [www.research-in-germany.org/postdoc-funding](http://www.research-in-germany.org/postdoc-funding).

### Postdoc position in industry

However, you can also demonstrate the necessary academic achievement without taking part in a formal procedure: for example, as a result of research activity outside higher education. A position in industrial research offers a promising route to a university professorship in engineering sciences. Many professorial appointments in this field traditionally go to highly qualified engineers who have conducted research and worked in companies. Working in a company is also a good qualification for appointment to a professorship at a university of applied sciences.

**!** **Professorship at a university of applied sciences:** In addition to the universities entitled to award doctorates and habilitation degrees, Germany also has a large number of universities of applied sciences. They tend to have a more practical orientation. Often, a doctorate, practical work experience and pedagogical suitability are sufficient for appointment to a professorship at a university of applied sciences.

### LINK

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You will find selected funding programmes for international researchers on our website at [www.research-in-germany.org/funding-programmes](http://www.research-in-germany.org/funding-programmes)  
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Germany invests a great deal in excellence in research. The practice of funding large-scale, innovative projects provides outstanding opportunities for young researchers to maximally boost their research output and careers.

Experimental psychologist **Dr Katja Dörschner-Boyaci** is leading a research group at the Justus Liebig University Giessen. In 2014 she received the Sofja Kovalevskaja Award from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for her work.





## 4. Career options for experienced researchers

A leadership position in research or industry is an attractive prospect. If you have already worked in research for several years, you probably have a good chance of being appointed to one of these positions. We outline the opportunities open to you in Germany.

### PROFESSORSHIP AT A UNIVERSITY

Are you interested in a professorship? German universities are very keen on building international teams of highly qualified scholars and scientists – in research and teaching.

#### Qualifications

To be appointed to a professorship, you need to meet the formal requirements. You will find more detailed information in the chapter “How to become a professor” (see page 18).

In addition, you will need proven specialist knowledge, relevant publications and (international) experience of research and teaching.

#### Duties

If you become a professor at a German university, you will enjoy independence of research and teaching. As the holder of a professorial chair, you will also represent your department. You will support up-and-coming academic talent, carry out examinations and perform teaching duties. You will also be involved in the self-government of the university. You can apply for research funding and initiate international partnerships. And you are responsible for managing your team.



Researching in Germany is excellent. The outstanding findings of our research project are the result of this favourable research atmosphere at Germany's universities.

Environmental scientist  
Dr Hamid Taheri Shahraini  
is a senior scientist  
at Freie Universität Berlin.  
He is continuing his  
previous studies on air  
pollution in urban  
areas and collaborating  
in other urban climate  
studies.

### PROFESSORSHIP AT A UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

A professorship at a **university of applied sciences** (Fachhochschule) is an alternative to a professorship at a university.

#### Qualifications

Universities of applied sciences primarily teach practical and application-oriented subjects. If you would like to become a professor here, you should therefore have several years of work experience outside higher education. As a rule, a doctorate is accepted as proof of a candidate's academic qualification for a professorial position. Teaching experience is also required. There will also be additional requirements relating to the respective position.

#### Duties

The main emphasis of your work will be on (practically oriented) teaching. In addition, you will be responsible for supporting students with final dissertation papers and internships or practical courses. German universities of applied sciences are increasingly engaging in research – mainly in engineering sciences.

#### Salary

Professors – also at universities of applied sciences – are paid on the basis of what is known as W-Besoldung, a pay scale for professors. There are three salary grades for professorships: W3, W2 and W1. Germany is a federation in which the individual states decide on basic salaries for public servants. That is why salaries can vary – sometimes quite significantly. The university itself decides on the salary grade it allocates to a professorship. In particular, this means:

- A W3 professorship is usually associated with a prominent role. These professors are holders of a chair or directors of an institute – also at universities of applied sciences. The basic starting salary is between roughly 5,600 and 6,600 euros a month gross.

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In addition to the general universities entitled to award doctoral and postdoctoral degrees, Germany also has a large number of **universities of applied sciences** and other colleges. These institutions are very practice- and application-oriented. They usually focus mainly on technical and engineering subjects as well as economic and social sciences.  
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- W2 professorships are regular positions for academics who engage in independent research and teaching. As a rule, professors at universities of applied sciences are also paid on the basis of this salary scale. The initial basic salary is between roughly 4,600 and 5,800 euros a month gross.
- Junior professors are generally paid according to the W1 scale. Depending on the state in which you work, the basic salary is between roughly 3,900 and 4,600 euros a month gross.
- In addition to the basic salary you may be entitled to additional payments based on performance or responsibilities.
- The resources available to the professorship and the level of additional payments depend largely on the appointment negotiations and the specific circumstances at the respective university and department.

Professors in Germany are usually employed as public officials (Beamte). This status, which is granted for a probationary period, for a fixed period or for life, means that no social insurance contributions have to be paid. However, professors can also be appointed as regular employees. Their net salaries are significantly lower than those of professors who have been granted the status of public officials.

#### LEADING A RESEARCH GROUP

Would you like to do research on innovative projects and lead a research team? Then you should apply for a leadership role in a research group at a university or a **non-university research institute**.

#### Qualifications

Applicants for the leadership of a research group should already

- be a university teacher or experienced postdoc and work at an institute in a university or a non-university research centre,

#### DID YOU KNOW?



3,000

out of the total of roughly 46,000 professors at German universities come from abroad.

The large research organisations employ a very high proportion of international researchers. At the Max Planck Society, for example, nearly 42% of the researchers come from outside Germany.

As a researcher in Germany, you and your family can benefit from simplified entry procedures and employment regulations.

In addition to the research conducted at universities, a wide range of work is carried out at private and public **non-university research institutes**. A central role is played in this sector by the four large, government-funded research organisations: the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, the Helmholtz Association, the Leibniz Association and the Max Planck Society.

- have several years of (international) research experience after completing their doctorate,
- have excellent subject competence, and
- have published outstanding contributions in internationally prestigious journals.

Will you develop your own project as leader of a research group or be expected to realise a project on a specified subject? That all depends on the respective vacancy and will be explained in the relevant advertisement or call for proposals.

### Duties

As leader of a research group you determine the direction of research and realise your own research project with a team of doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers. You will therefore contribute to the training of up-and-coming research talent and, possibly, to teaching at your institute.

**Research groups are usually financed for a period of three to five years; if necessary, funding can be extended.**



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 If you are a regular employee of a university (without public official status), you will be paid according to the **collective agreement for the public sector (of the states)**. Salaries can vary considerably, depending on which state you are working in or whether you are employed by a federal higher education institution. The collective agreement also regulates working hours.  
 .....

### Salary

Your salary as a research group leader depends on your qualifications and the classification of the respective position. Normally, you will be paid according to either the **collective agreement for the public sector** (of the German states) or the W pay scale for professors. As a result, salaries can vary considerably. In particular, this means:

- The basic starting salary for a research group leader can correspond to the pay for qualified postdoctoral researchers. It is then between roughly 3,400 euros and 4,200 euros gross per month.



- If you meet the requirements for appointment to a university professorship or are already a university teacher, you will generally be paid on the basis of the W pay scale for professors. You will find more information about this in the section on “Salary” on page 24.
- In addition to the basic salary you may be entitled to additional payments based on performance or responsibilities.

However, research group leaders can also be paid out of third-party funding. Salaries are then usually based on collective agreements, but can also deviate from them.



**Research projects and the associated positions for research group leaders** are also supported by various funding organisations and foundations. You will find more information about research funding at [www.research-in-germany.org/funding](http://www.research-in-germany.org/funding).

As leader of a research group you will realise your own research project.





A leadership position in research and development will offer a wide range of interesting duties.

### **RESEARCH IN A COMPANY**

Do you enjoy looking for solutions to practical problems? A leadership position in research and development at a German company will offer a wide range of interesting duties.

#### **Duties**

Different qualifications and skills will be expected, depending on the advertised position. As a team leader, for example, you will manage a team of (international) researchers in application-oriented and project-related research. You will work on innovative solutions to concrete needs, develop standards or find alternatives for existing processes. You will also coordinate processes between the research department and senior management and procurement, production and sales departments.

#### **Salary**

How much you will earn here depends on your position and its requirements, your qualifications and your experience. As a manager, your salary will usually not be subject to collective agreements. This means that you will need good negotiating skills and should be aware of your true value. After all, your salary expectations will play a central role in the job interview. Performance-oriented bonuses and additional company benefits are often paid on top of a basic salary.



### Setting up a business

Do you have a convincing idea for a new product or service? Then why not found a business in Germany? The German startup scene enjoys a strong international reputation – especially because of its favourable framework conditions and well-developed funding programmes. One in ten of all business startup founders in Germany come from abroad.

**Requirements:** Your company must be less than ten years old to be considered a business startup and eligible to receive funding. You are likely to work with innovative technology and pursue a highly innovative business model. And your company should be aiming for growth – in terms of both workforce and sales.

**Support:** The Federal Government supports business founders with attractive funding programmes:

- Funding for **ICT startups**: [www.high-tech-gruenderfonds.de](http://www.high-tech-gruenderfonds.de)
- Initial capital for marketable ideas in the life sciences: [www.bmbf.de/de/go-bio.php](http://www.bmbf.de/de/go-bio.php) (German only)
- Help in developing ideas and finding partners is available from the Innovation Academy Biotechnology: [www.biooekonomie.de](http://www.biooekonomie.de)
- Research-based business startups are supported by EXIST: [www.exist.de](http://www.exist.de)

The Federal Funding Advisory Service on Research and Innovation will advise you on setting up a business, support for technology transfer and funding for your research and development project: [www.foerderinfo.bund.de](http://www.foerderinfo.bund.de)



.....  
**ICT startups** are new businesses in the information and communications technology sector.  
.....





## 5. Visiting scholars welcome

Are you interested in doing research in Germany, but unsure whether you would fit into the research environment? A research stay or a short period as a visiting scholar will help you decide whether you would like to continue your research career in Germany. It will give you an accurate impression of the research and higher education landscape. Another advantage: you can already start making useful contacts in Germany.

### RESEARCH STAYS

#### Requirements

In principle, all universities and research institutions in Germany allow international postdoctoral researchers to complete short-term research stays. Ideally, you have already established contact with fellow researchers through your work and can clarify directly whether they are willing to accept you as a visiting researcher at their institution.



Details of contact persons at German universities can be found in the database of the **German Rectors' Conference** (HRK) at [www.higher-education-compass.de](http://www.higher-education-compass.de).

You can find the addresses of non-university research institutions in the Research Explorer at [www.research-explorer.de](http://www.research-explorer.de).

#### Scope

A research stay in Germany can last from one month to five years. Visiting scholars often work on a specific project within the framework of international research collaboration. Opportunities also exist to realise your own research project.

#### Funding

Funding is available for short research stays, especially by prize winners or scholarship holders, and for stays within the framework of international collaboration:



.....  
**The German Rectors' Conference** (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz, HRK) is the voluntary association of universities and colleges in Germany. The HRK has almost 270 affiliated higher education institutions, in which about 95% of all students are enrolled.  
.....

- DAAD scholarships: [www.funding-guide.de](http://www.funding-guide.de)
- EU funding:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions>
- Information on research funding:  
[www.research-in-germany.org/funding](http://www.research-in-germany.org/funding)

### VISITING PROFESSORSHIPS AND VISITING LECTURESHIPS

Would you like to increase your international research and teaching experience, establish new contacts or realise a research project in excellent research conditions? Why not spend a few months at a German university or college?

#### Requirements

Usually you will need to have completed the habilitation process or reached a similar level of academic achievement to teach as a visiting professor at a German university. You may be asked to fulfil additional academic and administrative requirements – for example, an appropriate list of publications or evidence of the level of third-party funding obtained.

On the other hand, a university degree, several years of academic work and teaching experience are usually sufficient to qualify for a visiting lectureship. Sometimes, however, a doctorate is also required.

#### Duties

As an international scholar you can teach or research at a German university or college for one or more semesters. A visiting lectureship is usually intended to expand and internationalise teaching at the respective institution; a visiting professorship can also be associated with a research project.

#### Remuneration and support

Remuneration for visiting professorships and lectureships can vary very considerably depending on the respective job profile, state and institution. They can



I was able to achieve a great deal in just one semester. My friendly and competent colleagues immediately made me feel part of the team. The library also offered an excellent opportunity to study there until midnight every day and during the weekends.

**Professor Luisa Giacomini** (University of Turin, Italy) taught and researched Italian linguistics as Senior Fellowship Professor at TU Dresden during the summer semester 2015. She has been Regional Ambassador of TU Dresden since July 2015.



be arranged on a **free-lance** basis, which means they are not covered by a collective agreement. Alternatively, remuneration for visiting professorships can be based on the pay scale for professors (see page 24). Remuneration for visiting lectureships is roughly based on the W1 pay scale for professors (see page 25) or the collective agreement for the public sector (see page 26).

.....  
The special feature of **free-lance** employment is that staff are not bound by instructions and are free to decide how and when they work.  
.....

In addition, there are a number of funding programmes for international researchers who would like to come to Germany as a visiting professor or lecturer:

[www.research-in-germany.org/funding-programmes](http://www.research-in-germany.org/funding-programmes)



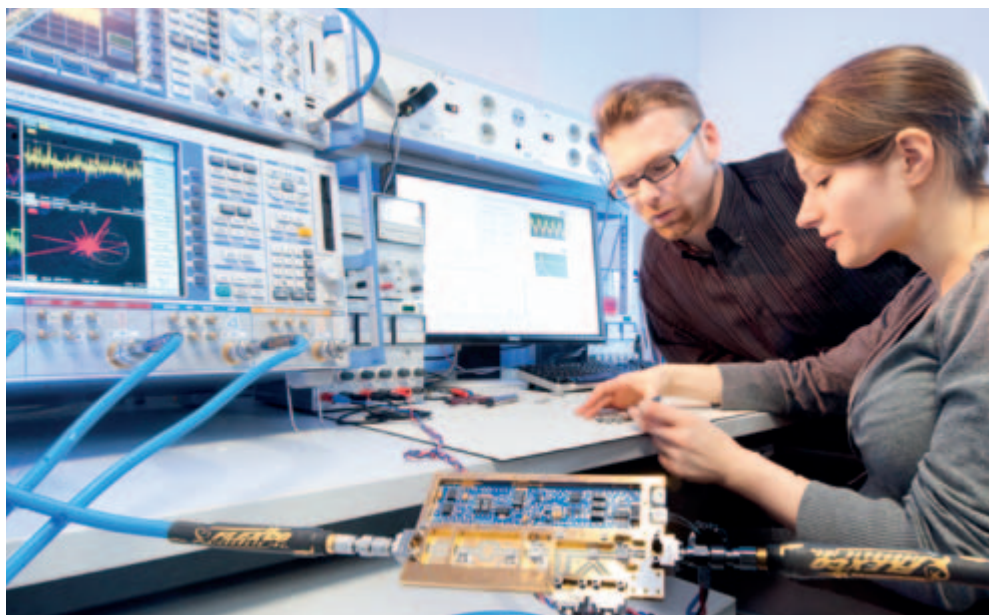
The German Research Foundation (DFG) funds visiting professorships – especially those involved in joint research projects – through its Mercator Fellows module:

[www.dfg.de/en/research\\_funding/programmes](http://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes)

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) supports visiting lectureships to promote the internationalisation of teaching in German higher education:

[www.daad.de/gastdozenten](http://www.daad.de/gastdozenten) (German only)

Visiting scholars often work on a project within the framework of international research collaboration.





# 6. Moving to Germany

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The **European Economic Area (EEA)** consists of the 28 member states of the European Union and Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.  
.....

Highly qualified specialists can receive an **EU Blue Card**. Among other things, you must present proof of a firm job offer and a specific gross salary.  
.....

**Approved research organisations** have completed a special recognition procedure with the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. Afterwards they can conclude hosting agreements with researchers from non-EU countries.  
.....

The **Resident Registration Office (Einwohnermeldeamt)**, sometimes known as the Citizens' Service Centre (Bürgerservice), is the city or municipal authority where new residents must register immediately after their arrival.  
.....

The **Aliens Authority (Ausländeramt or Ausländerbehörde)** is the local government agency responsible for dealing with all matters relating to residence.  
.....


Do I need a visa? Will I have to take out insurance? How important is it to speak German? Many questions need to be answered before you can start doing research in Germany.

## VISAS AND REGISTRATION

If you come from the European Union, an **EEA** country or Switzerland, you don't need a visa. Everyone else requires a visa to work in Germany.

However, there are other options. Highly qualified individuals can enter the country with an **EU Blue Card**. If you have a contract with an **approved research organisation**, you can also apply for admission on the basis of the EU researcher directive. Simplified conditions for residence and employment then apply to you and your family.

One thing applies to everyone though: when you arrive in Germany you have to go straight to the **Resident Registration Office (Einwohnermeldeamt)**. If you are not from an EEA country, you will also have to apply for a residence permit at the local **Aliens Authority (Ausländeramt)**.

**University international offices offer help** in settling in. Euraxess, a Europe-wide career network for researchers, also offers very useful advice: [www.euraxess.de](http://www.euraxess.de). Many universities and research institutes have a Euraxess service centre. 

## INSURANCE AND TAXES

### Health insurance

In Germany you will need health insurance. If you have a contract of employment and earn less than a specified maximum income, you will automatically be subject to the statutory insurance scheme. Everyone else can choose between a statutory or a private health insurance plan. Europeans who only want to work in Germany temporarily should find out whether the health insurance they have



Highly qualified individuals can enter Germany with an EU Blue Card.

from their home country will give them enough cover during their stay.

### **Social security and taxes**

Researchers who work on the basis of a contract of employment must pay contributions to the different social insurance schemes and pay tax on their income. As a rule, scholarship holders do not have to pay social security contributions or income tax (with the exception of health insurance, see above). If you come from a country with which Germany has concluded a social security agreement, you should find out whether your insurance cover continues to apply in Germany.

 You can find an overview of “Bilateral Social Security Agreements outside the European Union” on the website of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs at [www.bmas.de](http://www.bmas.de).



### IS GERMAN A MUST?

English is often used as the language of communication in German research. This means you can do research without being able to speak fluent German.

Nevertheless, learning German is worthwhile. If you can understand and speak German, you will find it easier to deal with everyday situations.

### Where can I learn German?

German is easier than many people think. The Goethe-Institut and other institutions offer courses – also online.

You will find more information about German courses abroad and online on the websites at

[www.goethe.de/deutsch](http://www.goethe.de/deutsch), [www.dw.com/deutschkurse](http://www.dw.com/deutschkurse) and [www.deutsch-uni.com](http://www.deutsch-uni.com).



### How can I prove my language skills?

Does your future employer require you to have knowledge of German? You can demonstrate your German language skills by taking one of the recognised examinations of the Goethe-Institut or the Test in German as a Foreign Language (TestDaF).

You can check your knowledge of German with the online grading test on German as a foreign language at [www.ondaf.de](http://www.ondaf.de) (German only).

### WHAT ABOUT MY FAMILY?

If you are a citizen of an EEA country or Switzerland or are working in Germany as a researcher at an approved research organisation or with an EU Blue Card, your spouse is also permitted to work.

You will find information about work permits on the website of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees at [www.bamf.de](http://www.bamf.de).



### Finding a job for your partner

The first place to go when you are looking for a job is the Federal Employment Agency. You can begin looking for a job online at <https://jobboerse.arbeitsagentur.de>.



Ask your future employer whether they offer a dual career service. Highly qualified couples then receive targeted support. You will find a list of the universities affiliated to the Dual Career Network Germany at [www.dcmd.org](http://www.dcmd.org).

### Nursery care for small children

Children between the ages of one and six are entitled to a nursery place. In addition to publicly funded facilities, there are also private and church-run nurseries. Workplace nurseries often provide longer hours of childcare. Fees vary considerably.

### Schools in Germany

The system of compulsory school attendance in Germany means all children must go to school from the age of six. Attendance at state schools is free of charge.

You can do research in Germany without being able to speak fluent German.





After primary school, there are different kinds of secondary schools. Lessons usually only take place during the morning, but increasing numbers of all-day schools are being established.

**The Association for Early Multilingualism in Day Nurseries and Schools (FMKS e. V.)** offers an extensive list of multilingual nurseries and schools in Germany at [www.fmks-online.de](http://www.fmks-online.de).



#### **Benefits for families**

Child benefit of roughly 200 euros a month is provided for each child up to the age of at least 18. You will need to apply to the Family Benefits Office of the Federal Employment Agency. Find out more at [www.arbeitsagentur.de](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de) > EN > Benefits > Child Benefit.

Do you want to take a break from work following the birth of your child? Under certain circumstances you can apply for a parent's allowance. This means that you or your partner may be able to receive up to two thirds of your last net income (up to a maximum of 1,800 euros a month) for up to 14 months.

#### **WHAT IS THE COST OF LIVING IN GERMANY?**

The cost of living varies considerably. Life in a big city in western Germany is much more expensive than in a small town in the eastern part of the country. People spend most money – roughly 845 euros a month – on accommodation; spending on food amounts to roughly 320 euros per household.

#### **LINKS**

.....  
You can find more information at

[www.research-in-germany.org](http://www.research-in-germany.org) > Living in Germany  
.....

Advice on residence, employment and career planning is available at [www.make-it-in-germany.com/en](http://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en)  
.....



# Imprint

## ABOUT RESEARCH IN GERMANY

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) launched the initiative to “Promote Innovation and Research in Germany” in 2006. Since then various measures and events have been organised under the brand “Research in Germany – Land of Ideas” to present German innovation and research in key international markets on behalf of the BMBF. The initiative seeks to strengthen and expand R&D collaboration between Germany and international partners. This and many other Research in Germany publications are available at [www.research-in-germany.org/downloads](http://www.research-in-germany.org/downloads).

We hope that our brochures will offer you guidance for your career in the German research sector. For more information about Research in Germany, please visit our website [www.research-in-germany.org](http://www.research-in-germany.org) and subscribe to our newsletter [www.research-in-germany.org/newsletter](http://www.research-in-germany.org/newsletter).

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