

General Information on Residence/Work Permits in Germany

Under the current German Residence Law, separate work permits are not issued. The German Alien Registration Office, in coordination with the respective German labor agency, will issue either a temporary residence permit (*Aufenthaltserlaubnis*), which may include the permission to work, or a permanent residence permit that always includes a permit to work (*Niederlassungserlaubnis*). Residence permits are referred to as *Aufenthaltstitel*. Residence permits will be issued as either:

1. *Visum*. A visa is not a residence permit in the narrow meaning of the term, the main purpose of the visa is to permit entry into Germany for a specific purpose. The visa must be subsequently converted into a temporary residence permit (*Aufenthaltserlaubnis*) after the foreigner arrived in Germany and registers with the alien registration office.

A Visa slightly differs from a normal residence permit. It is issued by the consular section of the embassy or consulate general abroad. It is issued for a specific purpose and length of stay; for example, tourist visa or student visa. In general, a student visa will not permit a student to work on a permanent basis, however, students may work a limited number of hours e.g., in work study programs. Students do not automatically become ordinarily resident because their stay is permitted in their residence permit primarily for studying purposes. Student visas are converted into temporary residence permits for higher education purposes (*Studienzwecke*) when the foreigner registers with the alien registration office.

2. *Aufenthaltserlaubnis*. A temporary residence permit, which may or may not include permission to work. Permission to work must be specifically stated.

3. *Niederlassungserlaubnis*. A permanent residence permit, which always permits the foreign citizen to work.

In Germany, members of the U.S. Forces and their family members are exempt from regulations in regards to residence and alien's control. They may work in the private sector without obtaining any form of residence/work permit.