XIPHIAS Immigration

PROGRAMME BROCHURE



SKILLED MIGRATION | GERMANY

Germany Opportunity Card (Chancenkarte) — Job Search Visa

Up to one year in Germany to find skilled work, with part-time work of up to 20 hours a week allowed while you search.

JOB OFFER

Not required

XIPHIAS Immigration DMCC
www.xiphiasimmigration.ae

Updated 1 October 2026

+971 52 727 5101 | dubai@xiphiasimmigration.com

At a glance

COUNTRY **Germany**	ROUTE **Skilled Migration - Temporary**
TIMELINE **Several months (no official processing standard)**	LANGUAGE **Points route: German A1 or English B2. No language proof where the qualification is fully recognised.**
JOB OFFER **Not required**	LAST UPDATED **1 October 2026**

Overview

Germany's **Opportunity Card** (*Chancenkarte*) gives a qualified professional from outside the EU up to **one year** in Germany to find skilled work, and allows part-time work while the search is under way. It is governed by **sections 20a and 20b of the Residence Act** (*Aufenthaltsgesetz*) and has applied since **1 June 2024**, when it replaced the previous job seeker visa. Section 20 of the Act now covers job search only for people who have completed studies, research, vocational training or the recognition of a qualification in Germany.

For a professional based in India or the UAE who does not yet hold a German job offer, the Opportunity Card is the route into the German job market.

Two ways to qualify

Route	What you need
Skilled-worker route	A vocational or academic qualification fully recognised in Germany. No points and no language certificate are required.
Points route	A foreign degree, a state-recognised vocational qualification of at least two years, or a certificate from a German Chamber of Commerce Abroad (AHK), plus German at **A1** or English at **B2**, plus at least **6 points**

The points table

Criterion	Points
Qualification partially recognised as equivalent in Germany	4
Occupation in a German shortage field	1
At least two years' professional experience in the last five years	2

Criterion	Points
At least five years' professional experience in the last seven years	3
German at A2 / B1 / B2	1 / 2 / 3
English at C1 or native level	1
Aged under 35 / aged 35 to 40	2 / 1
At least six months' previous legal residence in Germany	1
Spouse or partner also meets the Opportunity Card conditions and applies with you	1

Experience earns points; it is not a condition. Neither route sets a minimum period of professional experience: five years in the last seven is worth three points on the scale.

What the card allows

- **Up to one year** in Germany to look for skilled work, with no job offer needed to apply.
- **Part-time work of up to 20 hours a week** while you search.
- **Trial employment of up to two weeks** with each prospective employer.
- A move to an **EU Blue Card** or another work-based residence permit once you hold a qualifying offer. Where no other permit fits, the card can be extended as a follow-up card (*Folge-Chancenkarte*) for up to **two further years** with a qualified job offer.

Costs and proof of funds

Item	Amount	Notes
National (D) visa fee	€75	INR 8,400 at German missions in India, plus the visa service provider's charge
Proof of funds, 2026	€1,091 a month	Usually shown through a blocked account
Blocked account for a 12-month card, 2026	€13,092	Funds held in your name to cover living costs during the search

The monthly amount is set for each year. Applicants also need health insurance covering the stay.

Timeline

The Federal Foreign Office publishes no fixed processing time for national visas and states that long-stay visas may take several months. XIPHIAS prepares the complete file (qualification and recognition evidence, language certificate, points evidence and blocked-account confirmation) so that it is ready on the day of the appointment.

Family

The Opportunity Card is issued to the individual. A spouse or partner who also meets its conditions can apply for a card of their own, and applying together adds a point to your score. Family reunification is planned around the residence permit you move into once employed; XIPHIAS sets out the options for your family before you apply.

The next step: EU Blue Card

Most Opportunity Card holders aim for an **EU Blue Card**. The 2026 salary thresholds are:

Category	Gross annual salary, 2026
General threshold	€50,700
Shortage occupations, and graduates within three years of their degree	€45,934.20

IT specialists without a degree can qualify at the reduced threshold with three years of comparable experience in the last seven. Under the recognition partnership (*Anerkennungspartnerschaft*) introduced in March 2024, the recognition of a foreign qualification no longer has to begin before you enter Germany.

Settlement and citizenship

Time on the Opportunity Card is a search period. Permanent residence and naturalisation are built on the residence permit you hold once employed, and XIPHIAS maps that timeline for the permit you actually obtain. India does not permit dual citizenship: acquiring German citizenship would end Indian citizenship under Section 9(1) of the Citizenship Act 1955. German residence does not.

Risks to plan for

- The card lasts **at most one year**. Without qualifying work it cannot simply be renewed: the follow-up card requires a qualified job offer.
- Work is capped at **20 hours a week** plus two-week trials. Full-time employment needs a work-based residence permit.
- Every point must be documented. A partial equivalence, language level or period of experience that cannot be evidenced is not counted.
- Funds are assessed at the rate for the year of application: €1,091 a month in 2026.

Key benefits

- Up to one year in Germany to search for skilled work, with no job offer needed to apply.
- Part-time work of up to 20 hours a week allowed while you search.
- Trial employment of up to two weeks with each prospective employer.
- Move to an EU Blue Card or another work-based residence permit once you hold a qualifying offer.

- Follow-up card (Folge-Chancenkarte) for up to two further years with a qualified job offer.

Requirements

- Nationality of a country outside the EU, EEA and Switzerland.
- Skilled-worker route: a vocational or academic qualification fully recognised in Germany (no points or language proof needed).
- Points route: a foreign degree, a state-recognised vocational qualification of at least two years, or an AHK certificate.
- Points route: German at A1 or English at B2, and at least 6 points.
- Proof of funds of €1,091 a month in 2026, usually through a blocked account (€13,092 for a 12-month card).
- Health insurance covering the stay.

When this route may not fit

- A foreign qualification that is neither fully recognised in Germany nor eligible for the points route.
- Fewer than 6 points on the points route.
- No German A1 or English B2 certificate on the points route.
- Insufficient proof of funds for the stay.

Skills, language and points

ACCEPTED TESTS	MINIMUM LEVEL
German language certificate (A1 minimum on the points route), English language certificate (B2 alternative on the points route)	**Points route: German A1 or English B2. No language proof where the qualification is fully recognised.**

Job offer: No job offer needed to apply: the card is issued so that you can look for skilled work in Germany.

How the process works

1. **Choose your route**
   Full recognition of your qualification, or the points route with at least 6 points.
2. **Build the evidence**
   Qualification and recognition documents, language certificate and proof of every point claimed.
3. **Open the blocked account**
   €1,091 a month in 2026, or €13,092 for a 12-month card.
4. **Apply for the national visa**
   File at the German mission or its visa service provider and pay the €75 fee.

5 **Search and trial work**
Work up to 20 hours a week and take trial employment of up to two weeks per employer.

6 **Switch to a work permit**
Once you hold a qualifying offer, move to an EU Blue Card or another work-based residence permit.

Document checklist

Identity Documents

- Valid passport
- Biometric passport photographs

Qualification

- Degree or vocational qualification certificates
- Recognition notice, or evidence of partial equivalence where claiming points
- AHK certificate, where that is the qualifying route

Language

- German A1 or English B2 certificate (points route)
- Higher German or English certificates where claiming language points

Experience and Points Evidence

- Employer letters, contracts and payslips covering the experience claimed
- Evidence of previous legal residence in Germany, if claimed
- Spouse or partner documents, if applying together

Funds and Insurance

- Blocked-account confirmation (€13,092 for a 12-month card in 2026)
- Health insurance covering the stay

Questions clients ask

Is the Germany job seeker visa still available?

Not in its previous form. Since 1 June 2024, job search from abroad runs through the Opportunity Card (Chancenkarte) under sections 20a and 20b of the Residence Act. Section 20 now covers people who have studied, researched, trained or had a qualification recognised in Germany.

Can I work on the Opportunity Card?

Yes. You can work up to 20 hours a week, and take trial employment of up to two weeks with each prospective employer.

How long is the card valid?

Up to one year. With a qualified job offer it can be extended as a follow-up card for up to two further years, where no other residence permit fits.

How much money must I show?

€1,091 a month in 2026, usually through a blocked account: €13,092 for a 12-month card.

Do I need five years of experience?

No. Experience earns points (2 points for at least two years in the last five, 3 points for at least five years in the last seven), but there is no minimum experience requirement.

Do I need to speak German?

On the points route you need German at A1 or English at B2, and German at A2, B1 or B2 earns 1, 2 or 3 points. If your qualification is fully recognised in Germany, no language proof is required.

What salary do I need for an EU Blue Card afterwards?

In 2026, €50,700 gross a year, or €45,934.20 in shortage occupations and for graduates within three years of their degree.

Important notes

- Legal basis: sections 20a and 20b of the Residence Act (AufenthG), in force since 1 June 2024, when the Opportunity Card replaced the previous job seeker visa.
- Section 20 of the Residence Act now covers job search only after studies, research, vocational training or qualification recognition completed in Germany.
- Points are awarded only for factors supported by documents.
- National visa fee: €75 (INR 8,400 at German missions in India), plus the visa service provider's charge.

Official sources: Make it in Germany (Federal Government) — Opportunity Card; Make it in Germany (Federal Government) — EU Blue Card; Residence Act (AufenthG), section 20a — Opportunity Card; Residence Act (AufenthG), section 20b — follow-up Opportunity Card; Federal Foreign Office — visa information.



XIPHIAS Immigration

NEXT STEP

Plan your Germany application with our Dubai team

Tell us about your profile, family and timeline. We will confirm whether **Germany Opportunity Card (Chancenkarte) — Job Search Visa** fits, set out the full cost in writing and manage the application with you from start to finish.

CALL OR WHATSAPP	+971 52 727 5101
EMAIL	dubai@xiphiasimmigration.com
WEBSITE	www.xiphiasimmigration.ae
OFFICE	Jumeirah Lakes Towers, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

CREDENTIALS

- Advising clients on global mobility since 2009; XIPHIAS Immigration DMCC in Dubai since 2017.
- Named Best Immigration Consultant by The Times of India in 2022.
- Canada files handled by a CICC-licensed Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant, licence R516194.
- Australia files handled by a registered migration agent, MARA 1680615.

This brochure is produced from the programme information published at www.xiphiasimmigration.ae/skilled/germany/germany-job-seeker-visa as at 1 October 2026. Rules, fees and processing times are set by the relevant government and can change, and approval is always the authority's decision. Please confirm the current position with us before you apply. XIPHIAS provides immigration consulting and documentation support. It is not a law firm, and nothing in this brochure is legal advice.