



Guidance for Occupational Language Training as per § 45a Aufenthaltsgesetz (German Residence Act)

The objective of occupational language courses is fast and sustained integration in the vocational training or labour market.

In principle, you can attend an occupational language course if you:

- are a foreign national or
- are a citizen of the European Union or
- are a German national with migration background and have insufficient knowledge of German to be integrated in the vocational training or labour market.

1. What are occupational language courses?

The occupational language courses teach German that is job-specific. The occupational language courses are available as basic occupational language courses and special occupational language courses.

Basic Occupational Language Special Occupational Language Courses

These courses comprise 400 to 500 lessons of 45 minutes each. These types of courses can target the language levels A2, B1, B2, C1 or C2. The occupational language courses focus on achieving job-related German language proficiency to a certain targeted language level in a general occupational context. You will be learning German with occupational elements. Above all, in addition to grammar, you will learn the vocabulary you will need in the job in order to communicate with colleagues and superiors and to contact customers.

Special Occupational Language Courses: Subject-specific lessons/Recognition process

These specialised courses teach job-related German in the context of specific professions and occupational groups. You will in these special courses learn specific terminology and the grammar you will need for your type of occupation. These courses focus on the technical content and language skills you will need for your job.

2. Attendance qualification for occupational language courses

Attendance qualification issued by Employment Agencies (Agenturen für Arbeit) and Jobcenters

You can qualify for the occupational language courses if you are

- registered as seeking vocational training or
- registered as seeking employment or
- registered as unemployed or
- attending a vocational or advanced training course with the Employment Agency or
- in receipt of benefits as per Book II of the Social Code (SGB II).

The responsible Employment Agency or Jobcenter will qualify you for attending an occupational language course.

If you are a customer of an Employment Agency, this qualification takes the form of an entitlement.

If you are a customer of a Jobcentre, this also takes the form of an entitlement, provided that you have created a so-called cooperation plan together with your integration adviser. If you do not have such a cooperation plan, you will receive an obligation to attend a vocational language course.

With the entitlement/obligation you will receive a list of occupational language courses that are soon to begin close to where you live (so-called KURSNET printout). You can register with a course provider of your choice.

Attendance qualification issued by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)

You can apply with the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) for an attendance qualification if you are not registered as seeking vocational training or employment, not registered as unemployed and not in receipt of benefits as per Book II of the Social Code (SGB II) and

- in employment or
- need a certain language level for the recognition of your foreign professional qualification or for the issuance of a professional permit or
- in the process of completing a vocational training course or
- wish to prepare for a vocational training course.

You will receive an attendance qualification in writing. At the same time you will also receive a list of course providers who soon will be offering a suitable occupational language course close to where you live (KURSNET printout). You can register with a course provider of your choice using the attendance qualification.

Period of Validity

Your attendance qualification for an occupational language course is valid for a maximum of three months. You must register for an occupational language course with a course provider within this fixed time limit. Therefore please register as soon as possible and hand in your original attendance qualification (no copies) to the course provider. The time limit for registering may be shorter if you have been placed under obligation to attend the course. The time limit in which you must register with a course provider is given on the obligation. The attendance qualification is transitionally valid for nine months only in cases where the application for an attendance qualification has been made abroad.

3. At the course provider

The course provider must tell you the prospective starting date of an occupational language course. The occupational language course should start within 4 weeks following your registration. If no occupational language course comes about within this time frame, you will be referred to a different course provider. In this case, the course provider must give you back your original attendance qualification. Give this attendance qualification to the new course provider.

Please always ensure that the course provider and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees can contact you. Please notify your course provider immediately if you move.

4. Regular course attendance

You need to properly attend the occupational language course in order to attain the course objective. This means that you regularly attend the lessons and sit the certification examination. The lessons and examinations are demanding. If you are absent too often, you will no longer achieve the course objective. It will then no longer be possible to continue attending the course. Changing to a different course provider during an ongoing course is strictly not possible. The course provider must report absences to the Employment Agency or the Jobcenter. Should you fall ill, you must provide a doctor's note from the second day of absence.

5. Contribution to costs

Attendance of an occupational language course is basically free of charge.

If you are employed and your taxable annual income is more than €20,000 if you are taxed individually or more than €40,000 if you are taxed jointly with your spouse, you must pay a contribution of 50 per cent of the applicable cost reimbursement rate per lesson to the course provider. Please refer to Appendix 3 of the DeuFöV payment guidelines on the website of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees for the applicable cost reimbursement rate. This contribution to costs is payable prior to commencement of an occupational language course. The contribution to costs for teaching units you missed cannot be refunded.

If you are in employment but did not need to pay a contribution to costs prior to commencement of the course and you drop out of the course, you must pay the contribution to costs for all lessons. The course remains free of charge only if you drop out for reasons you are not responsible for.

6. Reimbursement of the Contribution to Costs

Upon request, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees will reimburse you 50 per cent of the paid contribution to costs if you provide evidence of having passed the certification examination within two years after issuance of the attendance qualification.

7. Travel expenses

Where required and subject to request, you will be granted a lump sum grant in aid to travel expenses if you are in receipt of

- unemployment benefit II (Arbeitslosengeld II, SGB II)
- citizen's benefit (SGB II)
- social security benefits (Sozialhilfe, SGB XII)
- youth aid (Jugendhilfe, SGB VIII, instead of benefits as per the Asylum Seeker Benefits Act)
- benefits as per AsylbLG (Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz – Asylum Seeker Benefits Act) or
- vocational training benefits (Berufsausbildungsbeihilfe) as per § 56 SGB III (Social Code III).

This is always on condition that the course location is at least three kilometres from your place of residence (shortest route on foot).

You can apply to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees for contribution to travel expenses through your course provider as soon as you know when you will start the occupational language course.

8. Childcare

Please contact the course provider if you need help in organising childcare.

9. Attendance of Examinations

All occupational language courses, except for occupational language courses with subject-specific tuition, end with an examination. Should you fail the exam, you can retake it once. Attendance of the examination (including the one-time retake) is free of charge.

10. Repeating an occupational language course

You can repeat the occupational language course once if you have failed to prove sufficient knowledge of German in the final examination and if you are not expected to pass the examination without repeating the course. For a one-time repeat of an occupational language course, you must submit an application for a new attendance qualification to the Employment Agency/ the Jobcentre/ the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. You will then receive a new attendance qualification.

11. Additional Information

All application forms mentioned in this guidance are available from the course provider, your Employment Agency, Jobcenter or on the www.bamf.de website.
Please contact your course provider for any further information.