

Information sheet

about the integration course
for foreign nationals who have been living in Germany for some time
and non-German EU citizens

Dear Sir or Madam,

If you are a foreign national who has been living in Germany for some time, or if you are a non-German EU citizen, then you can apply to the Federal Office for permission to take an integration course. You can apply for this if according to the Residence Law (Aufenthaltsgesetz) you never had a legal right to take the course, or if you no longer have this right.

Children, juveniles and young adults who are still attending school may not take the course.

What is an integration course?

The integration course consists of a language course with up to 600 hours of instruction and an orientation course with 30 hours of instruction.

In the language course you will learn the vocabulary you need for speaking and writing in everyday life. This includes interactions with government authorities, conversations with neighbours and co-workers, writing letters and filling out forms. The language course is subdivided into sections of 100 hours each. Which section you should begin with will be determined by a test you take before the beginning of the course.

In the orientation course you will learn about life in German society, as well as about the legal system, culture and history of the country.

At the end of the integration course there will be a final examination consisting of two parts. In the first part, if you pass an oral and written language test you can earn the German Certificate (Zertifikat Deutsch), a recognised language certificate. The second part tests what you have learned in the orientation course. The institution offering the course will give you a certificate showing the results of your final examination.

You will also be entitled to a certificate of regular attendance at the integration course. The institution offering the course must issue this certificate to you at the end of each section of the course.

Benefits from taking the integration course

Foreign nationals from countries not belonging to the European Union must meet certain requirements if they wish to receive a permanent right of residence in Germany. These requirements include adequate knowledge of the German language and basic knowledge of the legal system, social order and circumstances of life in Germany.

Successful completion of the integration course fulfils one of these requirements.

You may also be able to receive German citizenship sooner.

Registration for the integration course

Please fill out the application for permission completely and legibly. You can also ask an institution in your area that offers the course to help you in making the application. Application forms are available at the aliens office (Ausländerbehörde), at institutions offering the course, and at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees' website (www.bamf.de). Send your application to the branch of the Federal Office that is responsible for your region.

If you are granted permission to take an integration course the Federal Office will send you a written confirmation. At the same time you will also receive a list of institutions that offer the integration course near where you live.

Where the confirmation says "Die Teilnahmeberechtigung ist gültig bis..." ("Your right to take the course is valid until...") there is a date. This is the date up until which you can begin your integration course.

Therefore please register with an institution offering the integration course as soon as possible, presenting them with the written confirmation of your right to take the course.

Cost of the integration course

To participate in the integration course you must pay your own contribution of 1 euro per hour of instruction to the institution offering the course. This contribution must be paid for each course section of 100 hours of instruction and for the orientation course before the beginning of the course.

If you do not have any income of your own, these contributions must be paid by the person responsible for supporting you.

Persons with a right to take the course who are receiving "unemployment benefits II" (Arbeitslosengeld II) or social welfare (Hilfe zum Lebensunterhalt/Sozialhilfe) can be exempted from making these contributions.

This also applies if the person who has to support the person taking the course is receiving these benefits.

To be exempted from making these contributions you must apply in writing to the branch of the Federal Office that is responsible for your region (see address list). Please enclose evidence of the reasons for exemption (i.e. a copy of the applicable document). Please make this application at the latest when you register with the institution offering the course. You can obtain the application forms either there or from your aliens department (Ausländerbehörde).

Persons with a right to take the course who are exempted from making contributions must inform the Federal Office immediately if they are no longer receiving "unemployment benefits II" (Arbeitslosengeld II) or social welfare (Hilfe zum Lebensunterhalt/Sozialhilfe).

You must pay for the final examination yourself. Here, too, however, you can apply for exemption from the costs in writing to the branch of the Federal Office that is responsible for your region. This application form is also available from the institution offering the course or via the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees' website (www.bamf.de).