What category do I fit into?

You can discover on these pages whether you fall into any of the categories of people covered by the EU Directives. Further information on the basic criteria can also be found on this page. If you already know which category you come under and which Member State you wish to immigrate to, you can directly look for information on this map [1].

The information on these pages applies in 25 of the 27 EU countries, excluding Ireland and Denmark.

Highly-qualified Workers - Eu Blue Card

Individuals with a work contract to work in the EU and with proof of a higher professional qualification or equivalent experience

Who is a highly-qualified worker under the EU Blue Card Directive?

You are considered a highly-qualified worker if you have a work contract (or a binding job offer) of at least one year, and if you meet the conditions listed below:

- You must prove that you have ‘higher professional qualifications’, either by showing a higher education qualification (such as a university degree) or by having at least five years of relevant professional experience (if such experience is recognised as qualifications in the Member State concerned);
- You must work as a paid employee - the EU Blue Card does not apply to self-employed work or entrepreneurs;
- Your annual gross salary meets the national salary threshold which must be at least one and a
half times the average national salary;
• You must have the necessary travel documents. You must have health insurance for yourself and any relatives who come to the EU with you;
• You must prove that you fulfil the legal requirements to practice your profession, where this profession is regulated.

More on recognition of qualifications [2]

What is an EU Blue Card?

An EU Blue Card gives highly-qualified workers from outside the EU the right to live and work in an EU country, provided they have higher professional qualifications, such as a university degree, and an employment contract or a binding job offer with a high salary compared to the average in the EU country where the job is. For more information visit the Blue Card [3] section of the website. Member States may also have their national schemes for highly qualified workers with different definitions and conditions compared to the EU Blue Card.

Intra-corporate transferees (ICT)

Individuals from third-countries with a work contract in a company established outside of the EU who are temporarily transferred to the branch(es) of that company in one or several EU countries (with the exception of UK, Denmark and Ireland).

You may be transferred to work as manager, specialist or trainee employee.

What conditions must I fulfil to enter an EU country as an intra-corporate transferee?

To enter an EU country as an intra-corporate transferee you (or your company) shall:

• Prove that the branches in your home country and the host country belong to the same company;
• Prove that you have been employed by the same company from three to twelve months prior to your transfer (depending on the specific case and EU Member State);
• Present a work contract;
• Prove that you have the professional qualifications and experiences required;
• Present a valid travel document (and a visa if required);
• Prove that you have or will have a sickness insurance.

In addition to a work contract you may be asked to present an assignment letter from the employer with the following information:

• The duration of the transfer;
• The location of host unit or units;
• Confirmation of your position as a manager, specialist or trainee employee;
• The salary and other terms and conditions;
• Evidence that you will be transferred back to the company unit in your home country.

You may also be required to provide your address in the EU country and if you are a trainee employee you may have to present a training agreement.

Additionally, your salary shall not be lower than the salary earned by nationals occupying comparable
positions.

For details please check the page related to ICT of each specific Member State and provisions of Directive 2014/66/EU.

I meet the conditions and have the necessary documents. What do I do next?

The application shall be submitted to the competent national authorities of the EU country of destination, while you are still outside the EU. Depending on the EU country, either you or the host organisation needs to submit the application. If you will reside in more than one EU country, the application needs to be submitted to the country where the longest overall stay will take place.

Do I need to pay a fee?

In general, you or your organisation will need to pay a fee for the handling of the application.

Do I need a visa?

You may need a visa. This depends on your nationality and on the rules in the EU country where you plan to work.

For how long is my permit valid?

Your combined residence and work permit is valid for the duration of the transfer, with a maximum of three years if you are a manager or specialist and one year if you are a trainee employee.

Under what circumstances could I have an application rejected or permit withdrawn or non-renewed?

Your application can be rejected or your permit can be withdrawn or non-renewed under certain circumstances, such as if:

- You do not, or no longer, meet the conditions outlined above;
- The documents you submitted were based on false information, falsified or tampered with;
- The employer/host entity does not meet certain legal obligations (e.g., has been sanctioned for undeclared work);
- You do no longer live in the country for the same purpose that you were admitted for;
- You have not fulfilled the rules regarding intra-EU mobility (see below);
- For reasons of public policy, public security or public health.
- When you have reached the maximum duration of a stay in the EU, depending on the country, you may be required to leave and wait for up to six months before being allowed to submitting a new application.

May I argue against a decision to refuse or withdraw my residence permit?

Yes, you will have the right to challenge any decision with the relevant national authorities.

Can I work and live in more than one EU country?

Yes, you can under certain conditions enter, work and live in more than one EU country on the basis of the permit issued in the first EU country, working for different branches of the same transnational company.

If your stay in the second country is 90 days or shorter during a 180-day period, the stay is categorised as short-term mobility. In this case the second country may require a notification from the
first country.

If your stay in the second country exceeds 90 days it is categorised as long-term mobility. Depending on the country, long-term mobility can take place according to the procedures regulating short-term mobility and you will be allowed to stay for as long as the permit issued by the first country is valid, or you will have to submit an application to the second country. You may be allowed to work in the second country before a decision has been taken.

Can I bring my family with me?

Yes, your spouse/partner and minor children (according to the conditions for family reunification) may be authorised to stay and work in the EU during the period of your transfer, subject to prior authorisation.

Will I get similar treatment as citizens of the host EU country?

You will benefit from similar treatment with citizens of the host EU country as regards:

- Certain branches of social security;
- The freedom to join or be associated with organisations representing workers or employers;
- Recognition of diplomas and qualifications;
- Access to and supply of public goods and services.

Researchers

Individuals who wish to carry out research in an EU country for more than 3 months and who have a signed hosting agreement with an authorised research organisation.

What conditions must I fulfil to enter an EU country as a researcher?

First, you must sign a so called hosting agreement with an authorised research organisation, such as a university or a company. This hosting agreement establishes that a valid research project exists and sets out your working conditions. You must also demonstrate that you have:

- The required scientific qualifications;
- Sufficient financial resources;
- Health insurance.

What is an authorised research organisation?

An authorised research organisation is one which has been approved by the national authorities to host researchers who are non-EU citizens, such as universities, research institutes, private companies, etc.

I have met these conditions. What do I do next?

You apply for a residence permit to the competent national authorities. The immigration services of the host EU country will issue the permit as soon as possible.

What documents must I present when I file my application?

You must present the following documents:
- A hosting agreement;
- A valid passport or other travel document.

Depending on the rules in the EU country where you plan to do your research, you may also be required to send in a written promise from the research organisation that it will reimburse any costs to the State if you overstay your residence permit.

**For how long is my residence permit valid?**

Your residence permit will be valid for at least one year and is renewable for as long you continue to meet the necessary conditions.

If the research project lasts less than one year, your residence permit will cover the duration of the project.

**In what circumstances could I have my application refused or my residence permit withdrawn?**

Your permit can be refused or withdrawn if:

- You do not, or no longer, meet the conditions outlined above.
- Your application was based on false information or documents.
- You represent a threat to public policy, public security or public health.

If anything like this happens, the national authorities will inform you of their decision.

**May I argue against a decision to refuse or withdraw my residence permit?**

Yes, you will have the right to legally challenge any decision with the relevant national authorities.

**Do I need a visa?**

You may need a visa. This depends on your nationality and on the rules in the EU country where you plan to do your research. For information on the visa requirements that apply to you, select the country of your destination on [this map](#).

**Am I allowed to teach?**

It depends on the rules in the country you plan to visit. In some EU countries you will be allowed to teach for a certain number of hours or days per week. In other countries, you will not be allowed to teach.

**Can I bring my family with me?**

In some countries, you will be allowed to bring your family with you, generally for the duration of your stay. For details on the rules in a particular EU country, select the country on [this map](#).

**Will I get similar treatment as citizens of the host EU country?**

You will benefit from similar treatment with citizens of the host EU country as regards:

- working conditions, including rates of pay and terms of dismissal;
- recognition of diplomas and qualifications;
- tax benefits;
- certain branches of social security; and
Can I carry out part of my research in another EU country?

Yes. Your residence permit will allow you to carry out part of your research project in another EU country, as long as you meet the relevant conditions. If you go to the other EU country for less than three months, you can do so on the basis of your hosting agreement. If you go for longer than three months, you may need a new hosting agreement in the other EU country.

Students

An individual who has been admitted to a higher education instituted to follow a full-time course of studies in an EU country

What conditions must I fulfil to get a residence permit to study in an EU country?

- You must have been admitted to a higher education institute to follow a full-time course of studies leading to a higher education qualification, such as a diploma, certificate or doctoral degree;
- You must have enough financial resources to cover your living and study costs for your stay, as well as you return travel costs;
- You must not be a threat to public policy, public security or public health.
- Depending on the country that you wish to study in, you may also have to prove:
  - That you have knowledge of the language of the study programme.
  - That you have paid the fees charged by the higher education institution.

What documents must I present to apply for a residence permit?

You must present evidence that you fulfil the conditions above. You must also present the following documents to the authorities in the country where you plan to study:

- A valid travel document. Exactly what type of document is required varies from country to country.
- Parental authorisation, if you are not legally an adult under the national law of the host EU country – in most EU countries this means that you need proof of your parents’ agreement if you are younger than 18;
- Health insurance, if requested by the relevant EU country;
- Proof that you have paid an application fee for the residence permit, if that is requested by the relevant EU country.

I fulfil all the necessary conditions and have presented the proper documents. What happens next?

For studies that last longer than a year, you will be issued a residence permit valid for at least one year. The permit is renewable if you continue to meet the necessary conditions. You may have to pay a renewal fee.

If the period of study is less than one year, your residence permit will cover the the study period.

Applications for residence permits must be made to the national authorities of the country where you wish to study.

In what circumstances could I have my application refused or my residence permit withdrawn?
Your permit may be refused or withdrawn if:

- You do not/no longer meet the admission conditions;
- You do not respect the conditions related to working;
- You do not make acceptable progress with your studies;
- Your application was based on false information or documents;
- You represent a threat to public policy, public security or public health.

If anything like this happens, the competent national authorities will inform you of a decision to refuse or withdraw your permit.

May I argue against a decision to refuse or withdraw my residence permit?

Yes, you have the right to legally challenge such a decision with the relevant national authorities.

May I work during my studies?

Yes, you may work on a part-time basis. Each EU country can set its own limit on the maximum amount of hours you can work but must allow a minimum amount of ten hours per week.

You or your employer might have to inform the relevant national authorities that you are working.

In some countries, you may only start work after you have been resident for one year.

*I have been admitted as a student in one EU country. Can I go on to study in another EU country?*

Yes, you can apply to the authorities in a different EU country to move there either to continue your course or to study something related to your original area of studies.

What conditions must I fulfil to study in a second EU country?

- You must fulfil the general conditions outlined above;
- You must provide all necessary documents proving your academic record;
- You must prove that the course in the second EU country is properly related to the course you were following in the first EU country;
- You must have been studying in the first EU country for at least two years or you must be participating in an EU or bilateral exchange programme.

What happens if I overstay my residence permit?

If you overstay the validity period of your student residence permit, you will be in an irregular situation and may be required to leave the country.

**Unpaid Trainees, Exchange Pupils And Volunteers**

Individuals with a signed training agreement for unpaid work, and with sufficient financial resources to support themselves

For detailed information on a specific EU country, select your destination on this map [1]

Unpaid Trainees
What conditions must I fulfil to work in an EU country as an unpaid trainee?

To apply for a residence permit to work as an unpaid trainee you must show that:

- You have signed a training agreement for unpaid work with an enterprise or a training centre in an EU country;
- You have sufficient financial resources to cover your everyday living costs, training and return travel costs.

Depending on the rules in the EU country you wish to go to, you may need to undertake basic training to ensure you have the language skills needed.

Exchange School Pupils

What conditions must I fulfil to attend a school in an EU country as an exchange pupil?

To apply for a residence permit to attend a school in an EU country as an exchange pupil, you must show that:

- You have been accepted by a secondary education centre (i.e. between primary education and tertiary education, typically between 12 and 18 years);
- You are taking part in a pupil exchange programme agreed by the EU country;
- The pupil exchange organisation accepts responsibility for all your costs (living, study, return travel, health insurance);
- You will stay with a host family;
- You are within the age limits set by the host country.

Volunteers

What conditions must I fulfil to do voluntary work in an EU country?

To apply for a residence permit to do voluntary work in an EU country you will have to meet the following conditions:

- Be within the age limits set by the host country;
- Show that you have an agreement with the host organisation responsible for the voluntary service programme. This agreement would set out your tasks and working hours and any training you may receive, explain how you would be supervised, and describe the funds available to cover the costs of your stay (travel, living, accommodation);
- Provide evidence that the voluntary service organisation will accept responsibility for you throughout your stay and look after your health care needs.

Depending on the rules in the EU country you wish to visit, you may also be required to take part in a basic introduction to the country’s language, history and political and social structures.

Unpaid Trainees, Exchange School Pupils and Volunteers

I meet the necessary conditions for one of these three categories.

What further documents must I present when applying for a residence permit?

You will have to present the following documents:

- A valid travel document. The exact type of document required depends on which country you
Under 18 and wish to visit;
- Parental authorisation, if you are not considered an adult under the national legislation of the host country;
- Health insurance;
- Depending on the country, proof that you have paid the fee for a residence permit.

**For how long is the residence permit valid?**

- If you are a school pupil, your residence permit will last for one year;
- If you are an unpaid trainee or a volunteer, the residence permit will last for the duration of your placement/programme and for a maximum of one year. In exceptional cases, the residence permit may be renewed once.

**In what circumstances could my application be refused or my residence permit withdrawn?**

Your permit can be refused or withdrawn if:

- You do not or no longer meet the conditions outlined above;
- Your application was based on false information or documents;
- You represent a threat to public policy, public security or public health.

**Can I argue against a decision to refuse my application?**

Yes, you have the right to challenge a decision to reject your application.

**What happens if I overstay my residence permit?**

If you overstay the validity period of your residence permit, you will be in an irregular situation [4] and may have to leave the country.

**Further information:**

More on coming to a particular EU country as a school pupil, unpaid trainee or volunteer [5]

EU-wide rules on unpaid trainees, exchange pupils and volunteers [6]

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Source URL: https://ec.europa.eu/immigration/general-information/what-category-do-i-fit_en

Links