

Chapter 1: Guide

The guide chapter deals with all relevant issues on integration in Castrop-Rauxel and serves the purpose of providing better orientation for immigrants on this subject. You will find information on different types of residency status, the citizenship process, the German education and school system and information on studying at a German university.

Fundamental aspects for legal residency in German are discussed under point 1.1. The different types of residency status such as foreigners or refugees are explained and visas, settlement permits and permanent residency permits are elaborated upon. Citizens of other EU member states can also inform themselves here. Furthermore, you will also find out which conditions apply to the possible immigration of spouses to Germany.

In sub-chapter 1.2, you can find information about the requirements for obtaining German citizenship and the general citizenship process. You can also receive information about various contact points and the contact details.

Chapter 1.3 introduces you to the German education and school system. There is detailed information about early and pre-school education in nurseries and day centres, and the three-branch school system in North-Rhine Westphalia. The different forms of education in secondary schools, secondary modern schools and in comprehensive and grammar schools are presented.

Subchapter 1.4 deals with occupational training. You can inform yourself about the dual training system in Germany.

In sub-chapter 1.5 you will receive information about studying at a German university. The different types of university and financial options are discussed.

1.1 Residency

The residency laws cover entering and leaving the country and residency for foreigners in Germany.

A passport is obligatory in Germany: this means that foreigners are only allowed to enter the federal territory or reside here if they are in possession of a recognised and valid passport or substitute passport.

The residence permit also states whether the foreigner is allowed to undertake employment (work) or not.

The Aliens' Registration Office is responsible for implementing the residency laws in Castrop-Rauxel.

More information on residency laws, work permits or citizenship can be found in the next level.

1.1.1 Residency Permits for Foreigners

All foreigners in Germany need valid residency. There are four different types of residency:

- Visa
- Residency permit
- Settlement permit or
- Permit for permanent residency EU.

The residence permit also states whether the foreigner is allowed to undertake employment (work) or not.

General prerequisites for residency

- Secured means of support
- Identity and nationality are clarified
- There is no reason for deportation (criminal convictions are an example of a reason for deportation)
- The passport obligation is fulfilled
- Entry with a valid visa

1. Visa

- A visa is required in order to enter Germany. The visa must be applied for from the respective authority (German consulate or German embassy) in the country of origin. Exception to the visa obligation: exceptions are possible depending on the nationality and reason for stay so that a visa is not required and entry may take place without a visa. You can contact the German authority abroad to ask whether one of these cases applies.
- The Schengen visa is issued for transit or stays of up to 3 months. It is generally valid for a visit. The Schengen states are: Belgium, Germany, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Switzerland. Citizens from these countries can enter the other member states without a visa. A person with a visa for one of the Schengen states can enter another member state during the period of validity of the visa.

Links:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/Laenderinformationen/DtAuslandsvertretungen-Laenderauswahlseite.jsp

Schengen states:

www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/WillkommeninD/EinreiseUndAufenthalt/Schengen.html

2. Residency Permit

A visa for the federal territory (national visa) is required for initial entry to Germany; this can be converted into a residency permit in Germany. These permits are issued by the local Aliens' Registration Office. Before you can apply for a residency permit in Germany, you must be registered at a residential address. The registration is done by the Aliens' Registration Office in Castrop-Rauxel.

The residency permit initially authorises a limited stay in Germany but is also the basis for a permanent right to residency in the form of a settlement permit.

The following documents are necessary in order to apply for a residency permit from the Aliens' Registration Office:

- Passport
- 1 passport photo (according to the specifications of the so-called e-Pass)
- Proof of health insurance
- Proof of living costs (attestation from your employer or a wage slip)

In most cases, foreigners have the right and duty to attend an integration course upon issue of a residency permit. The Aliens' Registration Office issues an attestation and provides you with information about the process and the language course providers. If a foreigner repeatedly fails to meet the obligation to attend an integration course, the application for extension of a residency permit may be rejected.

Contacts:

Aliens' Registration Office:

www.castrop-rauxel.de/buergerservice_politik_und_verwaltung/verwaltung/Bereiche.asp?seite=oe&id=864

Rathaus Castrop-Rauxel, Europaplatz 1, 44575 Castrop-Rauxel

Divided according to surname initial:

A-Ge Telephone: 02305-106-2362/92;

Gf-Oe Telephone: 02305-106-2363/93;

Of-Z Telephone: 02305-106-2364/94;

Fax: 02305-106-2388;

E-mail: alw@castrop-rauxel.de

3. Settlement Permit

Up until the year 2005, the settlement permit was known as an unlimited residency permit or residency authorisation. It is not limited to a specific time and place and applies to citizens of states that do not belong to the European Union. The settlement permit is an unlimited residency title. The settlement permit authorises you to undertake employment (work). Some reasons for the issue of a settlement permit are if a foreigner;

- Has been in possession of a residency permit for 5 years,
- Has a secured means of support,
- Has paid 60 months of contributions towards the state pension scheme,
- Has sufficient skills in the German language (gained through successful completion of an integration course),
- Has basic knowledge of the German legal and social order (gained through successful completion of an integration course),
- Has sufficient living space for him or herself and his/her family

People who only have a limited residency permit are also entitled to work.

A highly-qualified foreigner can be issued with a settlement permit if agreed by the Federal Employment Agency. Highly-qualified persons can be academics with specialist areas of expertise, teachers in higher positions or specialist and managing employees.

Anyone who possesses a residency permit which has been issued for subsequent immigration of family members of a German citizen may receive the settlement permit after just 3 years under certain circumstances.

4. EC Permanent Residency

The difference to the “national” settlement permit is that you are entitled to mobility with the EC permit for permanent residency. This means that with this title, you can also stay in European Union members states for longer periods (this means: for more than 3 months).

1.1.2 EU Citizens

Union citizens and nationals from Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland do not need a residency title. Irrespective of the length and purpose of the stay, they can enter Germany with a visa and remain here permanently if they want to stay in Germany as an employee or self-employed person for example. If requested, you can also receive a “freedom of movement” certificate. Union citizens report to the citizen’s office.

Union citizens, members of their family and partners who have remained in the federal territory for five years, receive the right to permanent residency. Family members who are not EU citizens (nationals of third countries) receive a “residency card for family members of union citizens”. This residency card is valid for five years.

1.1.3 Subsequent Family Immigration

Subsequent family immigration means that the family of a foreigner living in Germany also move to Germany. This is allowed for protection of the marriage and family. Family immigration can be refused if

- the marriage is fictitious to gain entry to Germany,

- the spouse has been forced into marriage or
- if the person living in Germany cannot support him or herself or provide support his/her family members.

1.1.3.1 Subsequent Family Immigration for Germans

If the family of a German citizen wants to join their family member, the following relations receive a residency permit:

- The spouse of a German citizen,
- A German citizen's child under the legal age,
- The parent of a German citizen's child under the legal age

if the German citizen's place of residence is in the Federal Republic. The following prerequisites must be fulfilled for subsequent family immigration to a spouse:

- Both spouses must be at least 18 years of age
- The spouse must have basic, verbal skills in the German language

1.1.3.2 Subsequent Family Immigration for Foreigners

A foreigner with any family members, who want to move to Germany to join them, must possess a settlement permit or a residency permit.

The spouse can join his/her partner,

- If both spouses are at least 18 years of age
- If the spouse has simple, verbal skills in the German language
- If their livelihood is secured
- If an appropriate residence is available
- The spouse joining their partner receives their own right to residency if;
- cohabitation has existed for at least two years in the federal territory or if
- the foreigner deceased during marital cohabitation

1.1.3.3. Subsequent Immigration of Children

The unmarried child, below legal age, of a foreigner will be issued with a residency permit if

- The child is born in Germany and both parents possess a residency permit or settlement permit
- Or if both parents/or the legal guardian possess a residency permit or settlement permit and the child enters Germany together with their parents
- Or if the child is 16 years of age, speaks German and if, due to their previous education, it is probable that the child will be able to adapt to the lifestyle in the Federal Republic.

A residency permit issued to a child under the legal age will be extended as long as a parent possesses a residency permit or a settlement permit.

When the child reaches the legal age, the residency permit becomes a residency right independent of the family immigration. The same applies if the child receives a settlement permit.

1.1.4 Temporary Residency

A foreigner can be issued a residency permit for the purpose of studying at an official or officially recognised university or an equivalent educational institute. The residency permit is valid for a minimum of 1 year and a maximum of 2 years, but can also be extended.

With a residency permit for studies, the foreigner may also work 90 full days or 180 half days per year alongside their studies.

After successful completion, the residency permit can be extended for up to a year in order to search for an appropriate job.

A foreigner who receives a residency permit in another country of the European Union for the purpose of studying will also be issued with a residency permit in the Federal Republic for the same purpose.

1.1.5 Refugees

The residency laws allow asylum seekers to stay in Germany as long as the asylum proceedings are being processed.

Tolerance does not justify legal residency.

Tolerance is solely a suspension/postponement of deportation due to legal or factual reasons. Tolerance is issued if the foreigner is hindered from leaving the country through no fault of their own, or if they cannot be deported due to other reasons e.g. if he/she has provided incorrect or no details about their country of origin or their identity.

Under some circumstances, a tolerated foreigner can be issued with a residency permit in order to be able to work. This is the case if the tolerated person gains qualified occupational training or a university degree in Germany or if he/she has been employed in a specialist position for a continuous period of three years. In addition, a definite offer of employment must be submitted and the Employment Agency must approve the position of employment.

Contact:

Flüchtlingsreferat des ev. Kirchenkreises Recklinghausen (refugee department of the evangelical church of Recklinghausen) www.kirchenkreis-re.de/seelsorgeberatung/fluechtlingsberatung
Limperstrasse 15
45657 Recklinghausen
Tel: 02361-206-260

Contacts:

Refugee advice www.im.nrw.de/aus/24.htm
www.vestische-arbeit.de/deutsch/service/notfalladressen/

Arbeiterwohlfahrt (Charitable Agency):
http://www.awo-ww.de/mastercms1/templates/index.php5?Select_id=6ca10c91-3dbd-8c3c-343a-ed91bf461534&Open_flag=plus

Employment Agency: Widumer Str. 26, 44575 Castrop-Rauxel, Tel: 01801 / 555111
www.arbeitsagentur.de

Federal Office for Migration

and Refugees: www.bamf.de

www.bundesrecht.juris.de/asylvfg_1992/index.html

1.2 Citizenship

Anyone who permanently resides in Germany can apply for citizenship. Citizenship does not take place automatically; an application must be made.

After their 16th birthday, foreigners can personally make an application. Younger foreigners have to be represented by their legal representative. The citizenship authorities have applications which simplify and accelerate the process.

The citizenship process has a number of different stages and can take months or years.

1. The first stage is to make an application to the responsible citizenship authorities.
2. If the authorities agreed to citizenship after viewing your documents, you will receive an assurance of citizenship by post in the second stage.

3. In the third stage, you must apply for release from your previous nationality. Multiple citizenship in Germany is only permitted for the following countries: Afghanistan, Algeria, Eritrea, Iran, Cuba, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and EU citizens.
4. In the fourth stage, you receive your citizenship certificate if you have either been released from your former nationality or if multiple citizenship has been accepted. The next step is the citizenship fee. Citizenship generally costs 255€ per person. It costs 51€ for children under the legal age who apply for citizenship together with their parents. The costs of citizenship are 255€ for children under legal age without their parents. After this, you can take your citizenship certificate into a citizens registration office and apply for your German identification card and your German passport.

Your application for citizenship is made at:

Stadt Castrop-Rauxel
Ausländerbehörde
Europaplatz 1
44575 Castrop-Rauxel

Telephone:

Mr Dorsch 02305-106-2391

Mrs Paul 02305-106-2359

E-mail: ewo-alw@castrop-rauxel.de

Opening times:

Monday between 08:00 – 12:00 and 14:00 – 16:00

Thursday between 08:00 – 12:00 and 14:00 – 18:00

(only by making a previous appointment outside of these times)

1.2.1 Principal of Descent

The principle of descent states that a child becomes a German citizen upon birth if at least one of the parents is a German citizen. If the mother and father of the child are not married, a paternity test must be carried out. Due to the fact that the principle of descent also applies in other countries, the child usually has multiple citizenship. The option model does not apply to this child. He/she can also permanently keep the other nationality.

The option model

People who receive German citizenship according to the birthplace principle must choose one nationality between their 18th and 23rd birthday. The option model only applies to children whose parents are not both German citizens.

1.2.2 The Birthplace Principle

The birthplace principle has been in place since 2000. This principle states that a child who is born in Germany is able to be a German citizen, even if neither of their parents is a German national. Following prerequisites must be fulfilled:

- 1 parent must have legally resided in Germany for at least eight years
- 1 parent must have an unlimited residency right

1.2.3 Citizenship Claim

You have a right to claim citizenship if the following conditions are met:

- Unlimited residency right
- Eight years of general and legal residence in Germany
- Secured livelihood without social assistance and unemployment benefit II
- Sufficient German skills
- Knowledge of the German legal and social order
- No convictions for an offence
- Declaration of belief in the free and democratic constitution of the fundamental law of the Federal Republic of Germany
- Loss or surrender of the former nationality

1.2.4 Discretionary Citizenship

If the prerequisites for a claim to citizenship are not met, foreigners can apply for discretionary citizenship. This means that it is at the discretion of the respective institution whether German national citizenship is issued or not. Discretionary citizenship is generally also subject to a period of eight years of residence in Germany.

1.2.5 Loss of German Citizenship

Although German citizenship is generally granted for life, it can be lost due to specific laws, such as if the affected person applies for release, he/she renounces citizenship or is adopted by a foreigner.

More information can be found at:

http://www.castrop-rauxel.de/buergerservice_politik_und_verwaltung/buergerservice/az.asp?seite=angebot&id=12606

<http://www.bundesregierung.de/Webs/Breg/DE/Bundesregierung/BeauftragtefuerIntegration/Einbuengerung/einbuengerung.html>

1.3 Learning and Education

1.3.1 Early Development, Care and Education

Education, social and family politics has been developed further in the past years, particularly in the areas of day care for children and in the fields of learning and education, including language development. Especially places for children under three years of age have been extended. In the year 2013, all children should have a right to a place in a day care centre from the age of one. Attending a day care centre for children has become a natural part of the educational ladder for almost all children. The legal right to a place in child day care centre has applied since the 1990s.

List of all childcare facilities in Castrop-Rauxel:

[http://www.castrop-rauxel.de/Familie Gesundheit Bildung und Soziales/Familie und Bildung/Kinder und Jugendliche/Kinderbetreuung/kibeon.asp](http://www.castrop-rauxel.de/Familie_Gesundheit_Bildung_und_Soziales/Familie_und_Bildung/Kinder_und_Jugendliche/Kinderbetreuung/kibeon.asp)

1.3.2 School Learning and Education

The general education school leaving certificate is an important prerequisite, and sets the course for further education and employment. The high number of school leavers without an examination certificate represents a significant social problem. In the year 2006 alone, 8% of young people left school without a secondary school leaving certificate. Children and young people are our future and Germany cannot morally or economically afford not to invest in its future.

Germany has three-branch education system. A child initially attends primary school before moving on to a further education school. Transition to one of these three mainstream schools depends on the recommendation issued by the primary school teaching staff.

In North-Rhine Westphalia, children start attending primary school from the age of six. The period spent in primary school is four years. Grades are only introduced in the 3rd class of primary school. Children generally move up into the next class so that learning deficits are not addressed by repeating the year, but with targeted support.

After primary school, learning is continued at one of the three different mainstream schools: a secondary, comprehensive or grammar school.

The Secondary School (Hauptschule)

The school has the task of preparing pupils for occupational training and is therefore directed towards the world of work. Pupils attend secondary school from the 5th to the 10th class. If pupils perform well, there is the opportunity of obtaining a comprehensive school leaving certificate or a qualification for attendance to grammar school from the 11th class. Unfortunately this school is often seen as a "problem school" or "school for leftover pupils" in lots of places. Throughout the nation, approximately 25% of secondary schools work with very problematic learning contexts.

The Comprehensive School (Realschule)

The comprehensive school extends from the 5th to the 10th class. It provides an extended general education and qualifies pupils for more demanding occupational training than the secondary school. A leaving certificate from a comprehensive school enables access to numerous training occupations but also to advanced technical colleges with a technical, vocational diploma or occupational grammar schools, where pupils can obtain the general higher education entrance qualification (Abitur: German equivalent of "A Levels").

The secondary stage I is completed after the 10th class, either with a secondary school leaving certificate or the comprehensive school leaving certificate (mittleren Reife). With good grades at a comprehensive school, pupils can obtain the qualification for the grammar school sixth form.

The Grammar School (Gymnasium)

The grammar school is the top school form and extends from the 5th to the 12th class. The school provides in-depth knowledge for general education and generally ends with the general higher education entrance qualification; also known as the Abitur. This qualifies pupils for access to a course of studies at a university or polytechnic. The grammar school is a selective school. It regularly checks the performance of its pupils and can refer them to a lower type of school if they perform poorly.

After the secondary stage I, which generally extends up to the 10th class, the secondary stage II follows; this is either undertaken in the school's sixth form or during the course of occupational training.

There is a course system in the school sixth form. This means that pupils select their preferred subjects and can set the focus of their studies. All subjects direct pupils towards preparing for an academic career.

Two other school forms, the secondary modern school (Gesamtschule) and the special schools (Sonderschule), are outside of this three-branch school system.

In the secondary modern school, pupils with different ability levels are educated together up until the 10th class. The selection, depending on their performance level, takes place relatively late. This means that it is possible to gain a secondary or comprehensive school leaving certificate, but it is also possible to obtain the Abitur. The secondary modern school demands more equal opportunities in the education system and would therefore like to improve the early selection after the 4th class and individual support. Promoters of the secondary modern school concept emphasise that not only do less capable pupils benefit, but that more capable pupils are also provided with better support.

Special schools are schools for pupils with particular pedagogical challenges. This can include support for pupils with visual, auditory and learning difficulties or support with the social, emotional and mental development of the child.

Information on school education and support options can be received from

Integrationsagentur Agora
Zeichenstraße 2A
Ansprechpartner Thorsten Schnelle
44581 Castrop-Rauxel
Telephone: 02305- 92304-0

www.agora-kulturzentrum.de

Schools in all school forms in Castrop-Rauxel:

[http://www.castrop-rauxel.de/Familie Gesundheit Bildung und Soziales/Familie und Bildung/Kinder und Jugendliche/Schulen/autostart.asp?db=330&form=list&D_highmain=1&D_highsub=1&D_highsubsub=6](http://www.castrop-rauxel.de/Familie_Gesundheit_Bildung_und_Soziales/Familie_und_Bildung/Kinder_und_Jugendliche/Schulen/autostart.asp?db=330&form=list&D_highmain=1&D_highsub=1&D_highsubsub=6)

1.4 Occupational Training

After attending any of the further education schools, pupils can apply for occupational training. Two thirds of young people, who begin occupational training, successfully complete the course. 70% of these young people undertake training using the dual system which means that they receive training in a company and a vocational school at the same time. In the year 2006, approx. 43% of a school year in Germany started training in the dual system, approx. 17% started training in the school occupational system and 40% had to be put in a transition system because they were unable to find an apprenticeship. The transition system involves vocational colleges which do not offer a generally acknowledged leaving certificate, but provide basic occupational expertise and the opportunity to retake the school leaving certificate. In addition, there are also measures provided by the employment agency to prepare young people for the world of work, vocational schools for pupils without a training contract, the occupational preparation year and the school pre-occupational training year.

Information on the subject of training and apprenticeships can be found at:

<http://www.aubi-plus.de/>

<http://jobboerse.arbeitsagentur.de/>

1.5 Studies

The further education institutes in Germany are divided into universities, technical colleges, music and art colleges, pedagogical colleges, universities for applied sciences and technical colleges for administration. A prerequisite for joining a course of studies is, depending on the type of institute and the field of study, the general higher education entrance qualification (Abitur) or the subject-related entrance qualification (vocational technical diploma)/advanced technical college certificate. If the student has obtained their school leaving certificate outside of Germany, the academic international office in the individual universities or the “uni-assist” service point makes a decision about whether the respective entrance qualification applies. In North-Rhine Westphalia, there are 68 universities and technical colleges offering approximately 2,300 courses of studies. North-Rhine Westphalia has introduced the most subjects with the tiered degrees, Bachelor (BA) and Master (MA). These courses of studies have different modules and focuses. A few subjects, such as law, medicine or teaching courses of studies are still completed with the state examination.

The universities in North-Rhine Westphalia make use of their right to charge study fees. The fees are around 500 Euros per semester. The semester contributions (social fees) of around 200 Euros are added to this. Lower fees, or no study fees, may be paid under the following conditions:

The student receives a grant, the student is employed in a university committee, the student has siblings studying at another university in North-Rhine Westphalia or is disabled. The exact regulations depend on the respective university. Private colleges are considerably more expensive. According to the federal training assistance act, the government can financially support students with the so-called Bafög. Bafög is a loan which is paid out each month and is not subject to interest rates. The amount of support depends of a variety of factors such as the parent’s income, the student’s income, the living situation and monthly expenditure etc. However, the maximum amount is 648 € per month. The application is made to the student services at the respective university and must be renewed each year. Five years after the end of studies at the earliest, half of the total sum of Bafög must be repaid. Instalment agreements for repayment are possible. In addition, there are also education loans that are charged interested, such as the studies contribution loan from the NRW.BANK.

Universities and technical colleges in North-Rhine Westphalia

http://www.innovation.nrw.de/hochschulen_und_forschung/hochschulen_nrw/hochschullandk_arte/index.php

Student services in North-Rhine Westphalia

<http://www.bafogeg-berater.de/bafogeg-aemter>

Opportunities for individual support with a grant can be found at

<http://www.stipendiumplus.de/>

Study contribution loans from the NRW.BANK

<http://www.bildungsfinanzierung-nrw.de/>

Chapter 3. Participants and Clubs

“Misch- mit- in- castrop- rauxel!” or “Get involved in Castrop-Rauxel” is the motto of the integration portal

You are a citizen with or without an immigration background, you are a Christian, Muslim, Buddhist or not a member of any faith; you live in this town, work here, have a family or are single. Everything that happens in this town is your business! "Misch mit!" is an invitation to all people living in Castrop-Rauxel to "get involved".

The "Misch mit!" motto highlights the important aspects of integration: if our society continues to become even more multifaceted and colourful, its development depends on whether all citizens participate together with solidarity and help organise matters. The important requirements are tolerance and respectful understanding for other ways of life.

On these pages you will find summary of all the relevant information for integration work in Castrop-Rauxel with all of the participants, immigration organisations, clubs and the integration council.

We hope that you will successfully find the right contact details when searching through the pages of this integration portal.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the clubs, organisations and institutions that are dedicated to integration in our town. The implementation of such an extensive project would not be possible without their help.

Your dedication of our asset!