

All the information below rests on the assumption that the [draft Withdrawal Agreement](#) will be signed and ratified before the end of March next year. If this does not happen for whatever reason, there are no guarantees.

You can apply for German citizenship if you've been living in Germany permanently for 8 years or more, or if you have been married to a German citizen for two years, living here legally for three years, and meet the general citizenship requirements.

If you've been here between 5 and 8 years, you automatically acquire the right of permanent residence.

Under German law, **dual citizenship** may be granted to citizens of EU states, the EEA and Switzerland, refugees, children born to a German parent abroad, and children born after 2001 in Germany to non-German parents.

We don't yet know whether there will be a transition period after Britain leaves the EU on 29 March 2019. **If there is a transition period**, then the German Federal Brexit Implementation Act (Übergangsgesetz, also referred to as BrexitÜG) will apply, under which the UK is regarded as an EU member state until 31 December 2020. This means that applications for dual citizenship and permanent residence will be considered up to this date. We have a brief English-language summary of the BrexitÜG [here](#).

In the event that there is no transition period, you will be able to retain your British citizenship if your application for German citizenship is approved before 29 March 2019. If your application is approved or submitted after that date, you will be asked to give up your British citizenship.

If you are eligible to apply for German citizenship (*Einbürgerung*), you need to find out which authority in your area handles citizenship applications. If you live in an urban municipality, your local authority is the city council; if you live in an administrative district, you can contact your regional district office for help. You can ask your [local advice office](#), [regional advice office](#) or [local foreign affairs office](#).

The process is the same everywhere, but the time it takes to process your application may differ.

Parents or legal representatives can apply for children under 16 years of age; those aged 16 or over can submit a German citizenship application themselves. The German citizenship application costs €255, plus €51 for each child.

You will also need to take the naturalisation exam, unless you are under 16 or have graduated from a German university in certain subjects.

8+ years:

If you have been living permanently in Germany for **eight years or more**, you can apply for German **citizenship**, which gives you the same rights and legal status as other German citizens. You can also apply after three years if you have been married to a German citizen for two years, living here legally for three years, and meet the general citizenship requirements. To qualify, you must:

- have right of residence when you apply;
- have passed the [naturalisation test](#);
- have been living in Germany permanently and lawfully for 8 years (which can be reduced to 7 years if you have attended an integration course, or 6 years in special integration circumstances, i.e. a unique contribution to German society);
- be able to support yourself and your family without recourse to welfare benefits;
- have adequate German language skills (B1 level of the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#));
- have no criminal convictions; and
- be committed to the constitutional principles of freedom and democracy.

See [this article](#) for more details.

5-8 years:

If you have been in Germany permanently and legally for **between 5 and 8 years**, you automatically acquire the right of **permanent residence** (*Daueraufenthalt*).

You have to have been exercising your treaty rights (e.g. working, studying, or as a pensioner) during this period. Breaks in residence of up to six months per year are possible. Longer than this, and the clock is usually reset to zero. You can find out more about permanent residence from the [European Commission site](#).

If you wish to request a document confirming you hold the right to permanent residence in Germany, it is not expensive to do so (around €10). The document is called a *Bescheinigung über das Daueraufenthaltsrecht für Unionsbürger* (Certificate of the Right to Permanent Residence for EU Citizens). Applications must be submitted to your local [Foreign Affairs Office](#).

This certificate is a *Bescheinigung* (confirming what you already have) and not an *Erlaubnis* (something you have to apply for). British citizens in Germany who currently qualify for permanent residence may wish to apply for a *Bescheinigung*, but do not have to do so.

Under the draft Withdrawal Agreement, a similar permanent residence status is planned for British citizens already resident in Germany. It not yet certain whether this new status is one that you will need to apply for (and possibly be rejected from), or whether it will simply be administratively confirmed. How the new system will work also remains to be seen.

There is currently no firm information on what the legal status of British citizens in Germany would be in the event of the UK leaving the EU with no deal. New legislation is likely to be required if Brits are to be able to continue to enjoy similar rights in Germany as they do today.

Permanent residence in Germany does not allow you to move around the EU, and, in certain circumstances, you can get it much sooner than five years. These exemptions include:

- highly qualified workers earning over €84,600 may be issued a settlement permit immediately;
- graduates of a German higher education institute who may be able to get permanent residence after two years;
- EU Blue Card holders who can apply after working for 33 months, or 21 months with the B1 language certificate;
- self-employed people with an established business may be able to get permanent residency after three years.

3 months to 5 years

You can reside in Germany with family members for more than three months if you are employed, self-employed, self-sufficient, or a student. Family members of those in the country legally are also allowed to stay. To register your residence, you will need to contact your local citizens' authority (*Bürgeramt*) for an *Anmeldung*, also called an *Anmeldebestätigung*.

Transition period

If the draft Withdrawal Agreement is signed and ratified before the end of March 2019, a transition period will last until 31 December 2020, during which time almost all our rights will remain unchanged. Anyone who arrives during this period will be covered by the protections of the Withdrawal Agreement on the same terms as those currently in force.