

International Students
and Labour – What are
my rights and where
do I claim them?



What are my rights and where do I claim them?

Hello, hola, Marhaba, 你好, Cześć

We welcome you and wish you good luck with your studies. We – the DGB-Jugend – are the youth of the Confederation of German Trade Unions (DGB) and we have the aim to support young people and their interests. The DGB is the umbrella association of 8 trade unions. So we are experts for all questions regarding labour. Students often work part-time or as student apprentices. This leaflet tells you what to bear in mind and where to find advice.

Working in Germany without a German passport

The regulations differ depending on your country of origin. Students from EU countries do not need work documents and can work just like German students. If you're here with a student visa you can work 120 full days / 240 half days per year without applying for a separate work permit. Please note, though, that this does not include self-employment or freelancing.

The most important exception from the 120 day rule is employment in a German university or public research institute where you are allowed to work more. Otherwise, if you need or wish to work more, you will have to require permission from the Agency for Employment. The Agency's approval is deemed to be given if it takes more than 14 days to make the decision. Even after completing your course, you are entitled to look for work in Germany with your qualification for a period not exceeding 18 months.

Know your rights

When working as a student, you are obviously not at the mercy of your employer's wishes. German employment law applies for you, even if you are »only« a student worker. You are entitled to regular breaks and sick pay if you are ill. If you only work particular days, you are still fully entitled to paid holidays on a pro rata basis.

If you are temporarily employed, it has to be written down in your employment contract. Otherwise your contract is permanent, because the time-limit has to be set out in writing.

A oral contract counts as a permanent contract, too. You enjoy the same protection against dismissal that applies to all sectors. You are also covered by various social security insurance arrangements regarding, for example, gross and net pay and your social benefits.

The details are provided on our website or in the students at work counseling offices. Information are mainly in German. It is possible to use our online counseling service in English.

Information regarding studying, internships and work:
www.jugend.dgb.de/studium

Online counseling service:
<http://jugend.dgb.de/studium/beratung/students-at-work>

Why trade unions?

Trade unions advocate the rights of all employees, including yours.

We work actively in many different areas of social policy and are independent of all the political parties. We call for equal opportunities in education, fair pay and minimum standards

for internships and secure public funding for universities. We fight discrimination of any kind at workplaces and in all areas of society.

Many entitlements, such as paid holidays, maternity regulations or limits on working hours had to be won by very determined struggles of trade unions.

Trade unions fight to maintain and extend employees' rights, but they are only as strong as their grass roots members. Anyone who tries to struggle alone may end up getting the sack. If we work together for a common cause, we have much better chances of achieving what we want – that's what unions are about! Trade agreements for example apply for union members, independent of citizenship. You can't claim your rights, if you don't know them. Get informed! If you have questions about labour rights there is always a contact person in your company. At best there is a staff association or employee committee. Furthermore, you can always contact your local trade union.

<http://jugend.dgb.de>



What is students at work?

Students at work is a peer to peer project of DGB youth – for students by students.

One offer of ours is the online advisory service concerning all questions about employment and social security regulations. Locally there are university and campus offices (HiB or CO respectively) available. Specially qualified students will provide you with appropriate advices. The service is anonymous and free of charge. You are welcome seeking advice regardless if you are a union member already or not. The counseling usually takes place in German, please ask locally which other languages are available.

Go to our website for information on ways of financial support for students as well as on important regulations of labour and internships. You can also find our (academic-) political agenda, our seminar-program and dates. We are part of the DGB youth organisation and are represented at many universities across the country with activities at many campuses.

We are happy about new fellow campaigners. If you would like to get involved, you can take out membership of your union or join the university group locally. Our website will tell you where there are groups and activities.

<http://jugend.dgb.de/studium/beratung/vor-ort>

DGB english:

<http://en.dgb.de/>

<https://de-de.facebook.com/dgb.studentsatwork>

students at work

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