

Welcome to **Heidenheim** an der Brenz!



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Welcome to Heidenheim!

"Heidenheim attracts people of all ages because it's a great place to live and work!" That's our vision which guides the district council and town council and forms the basis of all our decisions.

You too should find Heidenheim a great place to live and work. To help you settle in more easily and quickly, this guide provides you with answers to important questions that you may have about particular aspects of Heidenheim or the state of Baden-Württemberg and the Federal Republic of Germany. My colleagues in the citizen's advice department will be happy to answer any other questions that you may have.

Once a year I invite everyone to come and watch an audio-visual tour of the town followed by a walking tour around it.

I hope that you soon feel completely at home in Heidenheim!

With best wishes,

Bernhard Ilg, Mayor

Residence in Germany

Source: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees www.bamf.de

If you would like to make Germany your new home or if you have already moved to Germany, the provisions contained in the German Residence Act are particularly important.

The **basic conditions** governing your right of residence in Germany depend on whether you are a **citizen of the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland**, whether you come from another **country**, or whether you are immigrating as an **ethnic German repatriate**.

If you are not a citizen of a Member State of the EU, the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland and you would like to stay in Germany permanently, you will need a residence title. This is called an Aufenthaltstitel in German. In addition to your visa for entry and subsequent residence, there are three different residence titles for long-term residence in Germany:

- a residence permit
- a settlement permit
- a permanent EU residence permit

What is a residence permit?

A residence permit is issued for a limited period of time. It is granted to individuals who:

- would like to do vocational training in Germany
- would like to work in Germany
- are entitled to stay in Germany under international law or for humanitarian/political reasons
- have immigrated to Germany for family reasons
- are foreign nationals and former Germans who want to return to Germany
- hold a permanent right of residence from another Member State of the European Union

A residence permit can also be extended. Account will generally be taken of whether the individual concerned has taken part in an integration course in accordance with regulations.

In principle, **foreign nationals from third countries** (countries outside the EU, the EEA and Switzerland) are only allowed to **work** in Germany if this is explicitly stated in their residence permit. The free movement of workers generally applies to EU citizens and citizens from EEA states, as well as Switzerland.

What is an EU Blue Card?

The EU Blue Card is a residence permit, initially generally given for a four-year period and available to citizens of third countries who have a university degree or equivalent qualifications. This enables them to take on employment on the basis of their qualifications. A further prerequisite is that the individual can supply proof of employment through which a minimum annual salary of two-thirds of the annual contribution assessment ceiling for general pension insurance (EUR 47,600 in 2014) will be earned. For professions which are particularly in demand in Germany, the salary limit has been lowered to 52 percent of the contribution assessment ceiling (EUR 37,128 in 2014).

Individuals who hold an EU Blue Card and who can prove that they have been in suitable qualifying employment over a period of 33 months and that they have paid (compulsory) contributions to the statutory pension insurance scheme or comparable benefits are granted a permanent settlement permit. Provided that the individual concerned can demonstrate that his/her language skills are at level B1, the settlement permit is granted after a period of 21 months. You can find out how language proficiency is graded at: www.europaescher-referenzrahmen.de.

Husbands or wives who accompany you or who move to Germany after you are not required to show proof of German language skills. Married partners of EU Blue Card holders immediately have the right to seek employment.

What is a settlement permit?

A settlement permit is a permanent residence permit. It also allows you to work in Germany.

As a rule, you must have had a residence permit for five years and also fulfil further conditions in order to obtain a settlement permit. For example, anyone wishing to apply for a settlement permit must make their own living and secure the financial independence of their family members, have sufficient German skills, and not have a criminal record. In certain circumstances, a settlement permit can be granted without the time-related conditions. This applies to highly qualified immigrants, for instance.

What is a permanent EU residence permit?

A permanent EU resident permit is also an unlimited residence title. Holders of this permit have the right to seek employment.

The issuing conditions are largely based on those of the settlement permit. Unlike the settlement permit, the permanent EU residence permit allows the holder to travel within the European Union, by granting the holder the right to a limited residence title in other Member States. It is not allowed to grant both of these unlimited residence titles to one person. Foreign nationals with a specific legal status in Germany, for example those who have been granted refugee status, cannot obtain a permanent EU residence permit.

You will need to prove that you have sufficient German skills to get a settlement permit or a permanent EU residence permit. You can get these documents by completing an integration course and passing the final exam.

If you are not sure of the type of residence permit which applies to you or the type of residence and work permit that you have, please contact the immigration office:

Immigration Office

Heidenheim town hall - citizens' advice
Grabenstraße 15
89522 Heidenheim
Telephone 07321 327-3320

Advice and support:

Migration advice:

Caritas Ostwürttemberg
Kurt-Bittel-Straße 8
89518 Heidenheim
Telephone 07321 3590-66

AWO (workers' welfare association) Kreisverband Heidenheim e.V.
Talstraße 90
89518 Heidenheim
Telephone 07321 983624

Language and integration courses

One important requirement to feel at home in a new environment is the ability to make yourself understood. For this reason, all immigrants can/must take enrol on an integration course.

Language courses for adults

The integration course is a language course which deals with important topics of everyday life, and also an orientation course which will help you familiarize yourself with the history, culture and system of values of German society.

You will also find valuable information on the Federal Office for Migration and Refugee's home page (www.bamf.de/DE/Willkommen/willkommen-node.html). On this website, you will also find detailed information about integration courses.

If you decide to enrol on an integration course, you will be charged a reduced fee of €1.20 per teaching module. Participants who receive unemployment benefits II (Arbeitslosengeld II) can apply for exemption from payment.

As a more extensive form of support, another language course called "**German for professional purposes**" is also offered. In this course, you can learn German for professional purposes and gain an initial insight into the working world by completing a work placement which lasts several weeks. You will need a good grade at the final exam of your integration course in order to apply for this course.

This course is **free**.

You can find information about integration courses here:

www.vhs-heidenheim.de

In addition, there are also many **refresher and intensive language courses**, which you generally **have to pay for**.

You can also find **self-study courses** on the internet. Some of them are free, for example at:

www.dw.de/deutsch-lernen/s-2055

Language courses for children and teenagers

Children from 3 to 6 years old are given language classes in every kindergarten in Heidenheim.

School-age children and teenagers should go to a preparatory class first.

Living in Heidenheim

Looking for accommodation

The central location of Heidenheim is ideal for work, shopping and education, and this together with its scenic setting and the wide range of things to do in your free time ensure a good quality of life. You can easily reach Ulm in about 30 minutes. Stuttgart and Munich are about an hour and a half away.

If you are looking for a flat or a house in Heidenheim, there are several possibilities to find the right place to rent or buy.

Looking in the newspaper

Both daily newspapers in Heidenheim – the "Heidenheimer Zeitung" and the "Heidenheimer Neue Presse" – publish advertisements for properties to rent or buy on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

You can also find advertisements in the free weekly newspapers, which are the "Wochenzeitung" (comes out on Saturdays) and "Neue Woche" (comes out on Wednesdays).

If you've found a flat or a house that you are interested in, you need to contact the landlord or seller. Telephone numbers or email addresses are often indicated in the advertisements ("ads") so that you can contact them directly. Sometimes box numbers or code letters are indicated in these ads. In this case, you must send a letter to the newspaper, which will be forwarded to the landlord or seller. Do not forget to mention the relevant box number in your letter.

Looking for accommodation on the internet

Nowadays, many flats and houses are advertised on the Internet. If you've found accommodation which has been advertised by a professional estate agency, they may charge you a fee if you sign an agreement with them. However, appointments, advice and flat viewings must be free of charge.

Using an estate agent

You can also use the services of professional estate agents to look for accommodation. However, they will charge you a fee if you sign a tenancy agreement or a contract of sale. This generally amounts to two months' rent plus value-added tax (19%) for tenancy agreements. For example, if you've signed a tenancy agreement and the monthly rent without utility bills is € 500, your agent can charge you up to € 1,190 for their commission. When buying property, the commission generally amounts to three to six percent of the purchase price plus value-added tax.

You can find the addresses of professional estate agents in the yellow pages or on the internet.

Using Vonovia and Immovation AG

Our local housing associations, Vonovia und Immovation AG, which manage large stocks of housing in Heidenheim, can also provide you with information about accommodation.

www.vonovia.de, www.immoovation-ag.de

Tenancy agreements

A tenancy agreement regulates all the details of the tenancy and is legally binding for both you and your landlord. This is why you should always read the tenancy agreement very carefully before signing it. The following information in particular must be clearly stated:

1. how much the rent is
2. additional/utility costs
3. how much the security deposit is

and also, if applicable:

the amount of the commission if you have concluded the tenancy agreement with an agency

- whether tiered rent (also known as Staffelmiete in German) is charged. Staffelmiete is rent which is automatically increased on a regular basis
- the length of the tenancy (for a fixed term or an unlimited period)
- any obligations on the tenant to refurbish the accommodation

1. How much should my rent be?

There is no reference table of guide rent levels for Heidenheim. The level depends on the location (central, view) and the basic facilities in the house or flat (furnishings / kitchen) and how good/modern they are (bath, heating, windows, heat insulation, and certified energy efficiency rating).

2. What are additional costs/utility bills?

In addition to rent (known as Kaltmiete in German), you must also pay for water, heating and sewage disposal. As a rule, you have to pay a fixed amount for additional costs every month and pay them in advance. At the end of the year, you will receive an invoice with which you will be reimbursed or have to pay the difference, depending on what you have consumed. To get electricity, you will generally have to sign a contract directly with a local electricity supplier. The

Heidenheim utility services provide an advice service here: <https://www.stadtwerke-heidenheim.de/info-service/kundencentrum.html>.

In addition to utility bills for water, heating and sewage disposal, landlords can charge their tenants additional costs such as for council tax, the use of the lift, a caretaker, insurance and communal lighting. However, these costs must be stated in the tenancy agreement. If you want to check which costs your landlord is allowed to charge you as a tenant, we recommend having a look at the website of "Stiftung Warentest", a German consumer organisation involved in investigating and comparing services and goods in an unbiased way: www.test.de/Betriebskostenabrechnung-So-finden-Sie-die-Fehler-4234442-0

3. What is a security deposit?

In Germany, a security deposit must be paid when you sign a tenancy agreement. It provides security to your landlord if he/she needs to pay for any repairs if you leave the accommodation in a bad condition when you move out. Your landlord must invest the security deposit in an interest-bearing account. If no damage has been caused to the accommodation or if there are no outstanding payments at the end of your agreement, your landlord must pay the deposit back to you, with interest.

The security deposit may amount to a maximum of three months' rent without utility bills (also known as Kaltmiete in German) and it must be mentioned in the tenancy agreement. The deposit may be paid in three instalments. The first instalment must be paid at the beginning of your tenancy agreement and the other instalments must be paid in the following months.

What is a handover certificate?

You may sometimes have to sign a handover certificate in addition to your tenancy agreement. This is known as an Übergabeprotokoll in German. It confirms the condition of the accommodation when you moved in. Read the handover certificate carefully and check the details yourself before signing such a certificate. Otherwise, your landlord could later make you responsible for defects that you did not take note of.

Waste disposal in Germany

District administrations usually regulate waste disposal matters in Germany. If your landlord doesn't register for you, you must arrange to register with the waste management company in Heidenheim as soon as possible. You will get more detailed information as well as a "Welcome pack" when you register at the registration office. It is forbidden to dispose of your waste unofficially.

In Germany, waste is recycled in order to avoid large amounts of unrecycled waste. In Heidenheim paper and cardboard are disposed of in a blue skip (which is made available by the waste disposal company free of charge), and there are brown skips for the disposal of organic waste (e.g. fruit and vegetable left-overs). Other recyclable materials such as drinks cartons and aluminium and plastic packaging go into the yellow sacks. Glass should be put into the glass containers which are distributed throughout the town. Hazardous waste such as paints or medicines must be disposed of at the local recycling centres. You can find more detailed information about waste collection dates and recycling when you register with the registration office and at www.abfallwirtschaft-heidenheim.de (in various languages)

Being a good neighbour

In Germany, there are statutory provisions which stipulate that there should be no disturbing noise from 10 pm to 6 am. This is known as Nachtruhe in German. House rules are very common and this will be indicated in your tenancy agreement.

Health/Doctors

Medical checks for children

In Germany, every child is entitled to eleven medical check-ups, which are covered by health insurance. These check-ups, known as the “U1 to J1 check-ups”, are **compulsory** in Baden-Württemberg. They help diagnose disorders and diseases from an early age, which could affect the normal, physical, mental, emotional and social development of your child. This means that a doctor will check whether your child is developing normally.

You can find all of the “U check-ups” in the following table.

Compulsory check-up	Age of child	Costs
U1 -	Immediately after birth (newborn's first check-up)	Covered by your health insurance scheme
U2	3 - 10 days old	Covered by your health insurance scheme
U3	4 - 6 weeks old	Covered by your health insurance scheme
U4	3 - 4 months old	Covered by your health insurance scheme
U5	6 - 7 months old	Covered by your health insurance scheme
U6	10 - 12 months old	Covered by your health insurance scheme
U7	21-24 months old	Covered by your health insurance scheme
U7a	34 - 36 months old	Covered by your health insurance scheme
U8	46 - 48 months old	Covered by your health insurance scheme
U9	60 - 64 months old	Covered by your health insurance scheme
J1	12 -14 years old	Covered by your health insurance scheme
Recommended check-up	Age of child	
U10		7 - 8 years old
U11	9 - 10 years old	Not covered
J2	16 -17 years old	Not covered

Doctors in Heidenheim

You can find doctors for various specialist medical fields at www.gelbeseiten.de/aerzte/heidenheim or at <http://www.dasoertliche.de/Themen/Aerzte/Heidenheim-an-der-Brenz.html>

Children and family

Early childhood education in Germany

All the studies show how important interacting with other children is for children's development. Early childhood education in daycare centres particularly helps young children to improve their language skills, as language and educational achievement are closely linked. This is why pre-school childcare programmes in childcare facilities are a good first step towards being successful at school.

There are a total of **36 daycare centres/kindergartens (known as Kitas in German)** which are operated either by the town authorities or independently. These include daycare programmes with various educational orientations (e.g. forest kindergarten (known as Waldkindergarten in German), Waldorf and Montessori kindergartens etc.), full-day childcare, and facilities offering childcare in several municipalities. In addition, a wide range of child daycare services are provided by a daycare centre association, also known as Kindertagespflegeverein (PATE e.V.) in German.

There are differences between the following **daycare options**:

1. Learning groups: children from the age of 3 up until school age, open every morning and on at least two afternoons each week
2. Extended opening hours: children from the age of 3 up until school age, continuous care provided for 6 hours a day
3. Full-day childcare: children from the age of 3 up until school age, open for more than seven hours, including lunch
4. Mixed age groups: generally children from the age of 2 up until school age, may offer different options/types of daycare/opening hours (see point 1-3):
5. In a crèche: children under 3, may offer different options/types of daycare/opening hours (see point 1-3)
6. In a daycare centre: children aged 0 to 14, looked after by trained childminders at home or in small groups.

In addition, there are facilities such as a **special kindergarten** for deaf children and a special kindergarten for mentally and/or physically disabled children.

Pre-school childcare **must be paid** for by you. However, families with a low income may receive **financial support**.

You can register your child for a kindergarten place online (www.heidenheim.de/kitaanmeldung).

Language courses based on the "Heidenheim" model

Language is the key to education and it opens up social opportunities and contacts. That is why nursery school facilities in Heidenheim that are run both by the church and the municipality play a leading role in this field, as well as in developing and improving language skills within families. The Heidenheimer model's holistic approach to improving language skills is tailored to suit the needs of all the children involved based on their age and stage of development. Learning which involves all the senses: dancing, painting, playing, singing, and searching for and arranging items in activities which involve their emotions as well as their senses and which are specifically based on each individual child's stage of language development.

In the Heidenheimer model trained specialists provide the children with targeted language teaching from the day they first start nursery school until they start primary school. The teaching is geared to practical everyday life and it is provided in large groups as well as on a one-to-one basis in small groups. The language teaching takes account of the homework and language teaching rules in "HSL" guidelines for schools and all day care facilities for children with additional needs (SPATZ guidelines).

Information on the various daycare centres/kindergartens:

Stadt Heidenheim

Fachbereich Familie, Bildung und Sport

Telephone: 07321 327 5300

www.heidenheim.de > Leben > Kinder und Familie

Parents

Parents are the most important partners of early childhood and educational institutions. Their participation and collaboration is indispensable.

Parents are expected to:

- attend school events and to participate in parents' evenings or theme nights, for instance,
- to take an active part in school festivals and events,
- to take the initiative in asking teachers and staff members who are involved in their child's education about their child's development.

Every class and every childcare group elects a parent representative. Every establishment has a representative for all parents. You can also contact this person if you have any questions, suggestions and/or worries.

You can find information about parent representatives at your child's school or pre-school. The collective parent representation body for the kindergartens in Heidenheim can be contacted at: <http://www.geb-kiga-hdh.de>.

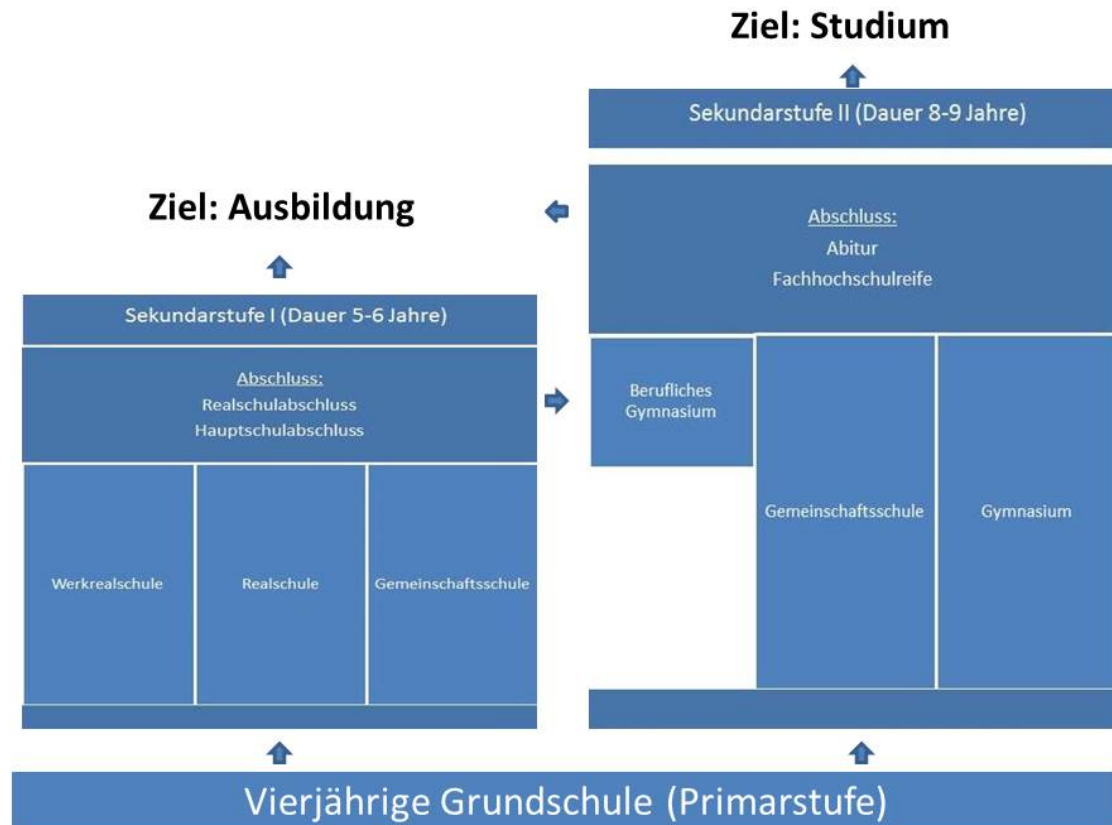
You can contact the collective parent representation body for state schools through your child's respective school. The regional parent representation body in Baden-Württemberg is the official parent committee that advises the Ministry of Education and represents the interests of parents in the region. Further information is available at: www.leb-bw.de

Education in Germany

The school system in Germany

All children living in Germany from the age of around 6 to 18 **must go to school**. This is called compulsory schooling or 'Schulpflicht' in German.

In Germany the **school system** varies from one Federal state to the other. In Baden-Württemberg, children attend primary school (Grundschule) for four years. Then, they can either go to secondary school for six years at secondary level I (Realschule, Werkrealschule or Gemeinschaftsschule) or for 8 to 9 years at secondary level II (Gymnasium or Realschule + 3 years of study at Gymnasium).



The German school system is designed to enable pupils to change from one type of school to another. It also enables pupils to continue their education after completing each stage if grades are good enough. This means that pupils who have attended school at secondary level I for 6 years can continue their schooling and obtain their Abitur in order to study in higher education.

Children with disabilities or special needs must also go to school (Schulpflicht). They can either go to one of the schools mentioned above or they can go to a school which specialises in teaching children with special educational needs. If you have any related questions, you can contact the state education authorities by email at: poststelle@ssa-gp.kv.bwl.de

Childcare from school age

In principle, any type of school may offer **full-day school services**. However, not every school provides such services for registered pupils.

Some primary schools have a nursery before and after lessons. All primary school pupils can take part in these activities from 7 am to 2 pm at the latest.

Pupils who come to Germany and who cannot speak German should attend preparatory classes. These intensive classes will help them learn German.

You can obtain more information from:
 Werner Schölzel
 Coordinating headteacher / schools administrator
 Telephone 07321 2577 211
 Email: werkgynasium@t-online.de

As a rule, **adolescents who have already obtained a school certificate** in their home country, but who are not 18 yet and want to begin a vocational training course must attend a vocational

preparatory class in a vocational training school. Information is available at:
<https://www.anererkennung-in-deutschland.de>

State schools and private schools

The vast majority of children in Germany go to a state school. These schools are free of charge. There are also private schools, which generally charge tuition fees.

You can find detailed information about the school system in Heidenheim at: www.heidenheim.de
> Bildung > Schulen
Telephone: 07321 327 5110
Email: bildung.sport@heidenheim.de

Vocational training in Germany

A lower secondary school (secondary level I) certificate is a minimum requirement for most vocational training jobs. The majority of all vocational training courses are organised within the German "**dual system**". This means that those who attend these courses apply to companies for on-the-job training. The course mainly involves practical work in a company as well as theoretical elements which are taught in a vocational training school. At the end of the course, apprentices take an exam at the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (see: www.ihk.de) or the Chamber of Crafts (see: www.hk.de). There is also a range of other training courses, particularly in the health sector.

Studying in Germany

If you want to study in Germany, you will need to have a qualification which entitles you to study at the institution of your choice. This certificate will generally be an **Abitur** certificate or a **Fachhochschulreife** certificate, which you can get after graduating from secondary school at secondary level II by passing an exam.

An Abitur certificate allows you to study at university, at a cooperative state university, or at a university of applied sciences.

A Fachhochschulreife certificate allows you to study at any institution of higher education apart from universities.

You can find the particular requirements for each degree, how to apply to university, and the subjects that are offered on the following website <http://www.studis-online.de> or on other platforms. Universities and technical colleges also offer individual advice to first-year students.

International offices at higher education institutions are provided for students from abroad. Passing a C1 level German test is an important requirement (see EU Framework of Reference for Languages: <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/de/resources/european-language-levels-cefr>).

In Heidenheim there is a campus of the Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University (<http://dhw-heidenheim.de>).

Work and career

Work permits

EU citizens

Citizens of EU Member States have free access to the German labour market. This is known as the "free movement of workers". This does not apply to citizens from Croatia, as it is a new EU Member State: they need an EU work permit to gain access to the labour market until July 2015. They are only allowed to work after they have received this permit.

EU work permits are given for a period of one year, unless you are working for a shorter period of time. The permit becomes invalid as soon as your contract of employment is terminated.

Special cases

The free movement of workers also applies to citizens from other European countries which have made a special agreement with the EU. This includes citizens from Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

Non-EU citizens

Citizens from countries that do not belong to the European Union (EU) need a residence permit Aufenthaltserlaubnis in order to obtain a work permit. The immigration office and the employment agency grant these citizens the right to work in Germany. The granting of a work permit depends on the current situation and trends in the German labour market as well as the assessment of your case.

Recognition of foreign professional and educational qualifications

You have the right to have your professional and educational qualifications evaluated in order to assess their equivalence with a comparable German qualification, regardless of your nationality. This is known as the Anerkennungsgesetz in German.

Regulated and non-regulated professions in Germany

There is a difference between regulated and unregulated professions in Germany. **Regulated professions** are professions that **cannot be practised without a state approval of your professional qualifications**. These include professions in the health sector (doctors, nurses) as well as professionals in the social and education sector (teachers, educators, psychologists etc.) (www.kmk.org/zab/zeugnisbewertungen)

More detailed information is available at: www.erkennung-in-deutschland.de.

In the case of **non-regulated** professions (for example, work in retail), having your qualifications assessed will help your employer here in Germany to have a better understanding of your professional qualifications.

If you have a **non-regulated** job, you can find out which office is in charge of recognizing your qualifications by consulting the following website: www.erkennung-in-deutschland.de.

Educational qualifications

The German Central Office for Foreign Education (also known as the **ZAB** in German) is in charge of applications for foreign qualification assessments which are necessary in order to gain access to the German labour market www.kmk.org/zab.html. It can give you detailed information about the documents that you will need to submit in order to have your qualifications assessed. Since there is a fee for this process, it is advisable to first check at <http://anabin.kmk.org> whether your institution of higher education in your home country is recognized as an institution of higher education in Germany, as this is a requirement for the assessment of your documents.

Particular information for EU citizens

If there are any differences between your professional qualifications and the equivalent German qualifications, you have the possibility to make up for these **differences by supplementing** your degree with any other qualifications or experience that could be taken into account.

Help to find a job or an apprenticeship

If you're looking for an apprenticeship or a job, the most important organisations to contact are the Agentur für Arbeit employment agency and the Jobcenter agency. You can contact them and make an appointment. Either the Agentur für Arbeit or the Jobcenter agency will be responsible, depending on your particular circumstances. You will be told which agency is responsible when you actually make the appointment.

Agentur für Arbeit (employment agency), Heidenheim office

Ploucquetstraße 30
89522 Heidenheim an der Brenz
Telephone: 0800 4555500
E-Mail: Heidenheim.Arbeitgeber@arbeitsagentur.de

Job Center Heidenheim

Theodor-Heuss-Straße 1
89518 Heidenheim
Telephone: 07321 345-0
Email: Jobcenter-Heidenheim@jobcenter-ge.de

In Germany, you are expected to show a lot of initiative if you're looking for an apprenticeship or a job. Jobs are advertised in newspapers and on the internet. Companies also advertise jobs and apprenticeships on their website. "Jobs" and "Karriere" (Careers).

Professional further education in Germany

Professional continuing and further education is very important in Germany. For many professions, it is necessary to get other qualifications after your degree. These qualifications can either be obtained in your company or externally in a further education and training institution. You can contact:

- Your employer
- Employment agencies
- Advanced/further training institutions (www.heidenheim.de >Bildung)

Entrepreneurs and self-employment in Germany

Self-employed individuals and entrepreneurs are important in Germany. If you want to work on a self-employed basis, you have to be well prepared and have sufficient funds.

Advice services

Industrie- und Handelskammer Ostwürttemberg

Ludwig-Erhard-Straße 1
D-89520 Heidenheim
Telephone: 07321 324-0
www.ostwuerttemberg.ihk.de (keyword: "Existenzgründung" (Business start-up))

Kontaktstelle Frau und Beruf Ostwürttemberg

Annette Rosenkranz
Heidenheim office
Felsenstraße 36, building A, room A241
89518 Heidenheim
Telephone: 07321 321-2558
Email: a.rosenkranz@landkreis-heidenheim.de
<http://www.frau-beruf.info>

Heidenheim municipality – promotion of economic development

Georg Würffel
Grabenstraße 15
89522 Heidenheim
Telephone: 07321 327 1080
Email: wirtschaftsfoerderung@heidenheim.de
www.heidenheim.de >wirtschaft

Caution: If you are a foreign national wishing to work on a self-employed basis, you must know that self-employment is regulated by the Residence Act and regulations on the free movement of workers. You should be fully aware of the regulations if you come from a country outside of the EU.

Working life and rights at work

As a general rule, a **full-time job** amounts to 40 hours of work per week. However, it is legal to work for up to 48 hours per week. Shift work is very common in many professions and areas, such as technical professions and craftsmanship, or even in healthcare, catering and retail. In some professions, you will be required to work at weekends.

It is also possible to work part-time.

Contract of employment

Employers conclude a contract of employment with their employees. Your area of work, working hours, the number of work days and holiday entitlement, your salary, overtime regulations, the length of your probationary period, the period of notice and what you should do if you are ill are all aspects which are regulated in this contract.

Contracts of employment are either **permanent or temporary**.

Social insurance contributions and tax in Germany

Employers and employees pay nearly the same amount of social insurance contributions. Half of the contributions for social insurance are paid by the employer and the other half is deducted from the employee's salary. Social insurance includes: **pension insurance, unemployment insurance, health insurance and a private nursing insurance**. Your income is also subject to taxation. The salary mentioned in your contract of employment is your gross salary (**Bruttoverdienst**). Your employer will take a certain amount from your gross salary which will be paid to the tax authorities. This will cover the costs of health insurance and pension insurance. The employee's net salary (**Nettoverdienst**) is then transferred to his/her bank account. You can calculate the difference between your gross salary and your net salary in detail with a salary calculator (www.nettolohn.de).

Protection against unfair dismissal

In Germany, the Protection Against Unfair Dismissal Act applies to companies with more than ten employees. Special protection against dismissal applies to pregnant women, mothers who are in employment for up to four months after the birth of their child, apprentices, severely disabled individuals and members of the works council. In principle, the longer you work for a company, the longer your statutory period of notice is if your employer wishes to terminate your contract of employment.

Will my salary continue to be paid if I'm ill?

If you are ill, your employer will pay your full salary for a period of six weeks. After that period, your health insurance fund will pay 70% of your salary if you are registered with a statutory health insurance scheme. Different rules apply if you have private health insurance. In that case, you should directly ask your insurance company for more information.

Unemployment in Germany

You must **immediately** notify the employment agency that you are unemployed if you have been working as a **permanent employee**. If you are working as a **temporary employee**, you must notify the agency that you will be unemployed no later than **three months before the end of your contract of employment**.

If you have worked for at least twelve months in the last two years and paid your insurance contributions, you are entitled to **unemployment benefits I** (also known as Arbeitslosengeld I in German). Unemployment benefits are proportionate to your previous salary and they amount to approximately 60% of your net salary. As a rule, these benefits are paid for twelve months.

Contact details:

Employment agencies

Agentur für Arbeit (employment agency), Heidenheim office

Ploucquetstraße 30

89522 Heidenheim an der Brenz

Telephone: 0800 4555500

Email: Heidenheim.Arbeitgeber@arbeitsagentur.de

If you are unemployed for more than twelve months, you are entitled to **basic unemployment insurance** or unemployment benefits II. These benefits are called **Arbeitslosengeld II** or **Hartz IV** in German.

Contact details:

Job Center Heidenheim

Theodor-Heuss-Straße 1

89518 Heidenheim

Telephone: 07321 345-0

Email: Jobcenter-Heidenheim@jobcenter-ge.de

Job centres are in charge of advising people who receive unemployment benefits II and helping them to get back into the jobs market. Job centres also help individuals on unemployment benefits II to find an appropriate job.

Mobility and transport

Mobility is a very important part of German society. We make a distinction between private transport (if you get around with your own vehicle) and local public transport.

Getting around in your own vehicle

In Germany, you must observe a few important rules when driving your (own) vehicle.

Is my driver's licence valid in Germany?

A valid driver's license issued by a Member State of the European Union (EU) or the European Economic Area (EEA) is one of the basic requirements for driving in Germany. Your licence can be used for six months after your arrival in Germany if it was issued by another country and you are residing at a valid address in Germany. You can obtain a six-month extension to your licence if you can provide reliable proof that you will stay no longer than a year in Germany. In other cases, you will need to exchange your driver's licence for a German one at the driver's licence registration office run by the local authority in Heidenheim. The specific requirements for exchanging your

licences vary depending on the issuing country. You can contact the driver's licence registration office for more detailed information.

Heidenheim driving licence agency
Felsenstraße 36
89518 Heidenheim

<https://www.landkreis-heidenheim.de/Landratsamt/Organisationseinheit/Strassenverkehr/Fuehrerscheine>

Vehicle registration in Germany

In Germany, all vehicles must be registered at the local motor vehicle registration office. In Heidenheim, the motor vehicle registration office of Heidenheim district council is responsible. (registration office next to the driver's licence office). You will need a vehicle registration document. This document is called a Fahrzeugbrief or Zulassungsbescheinigung Teil II in German. You will also need proof of insurance. You will need to pay to register your vehicle, so you should bring some cash with you. Once you've registered your vehicle, you will receive a registration document called a Zulassungsbescheinigung Teil I. When driving, you should always have this document with you along with your driver's licence. You must also mount an official number plate on your car.

Tip: You will need electronic proof of insurance (known as EVB in German) delivered by an insurance company in order to register your vehicle. You should also ask what documents you will need to bring from your home country in order to take into account the number of years you've been driving without having an accident. This can reduce the amount you will need to pay for your insurance coverage.

Compulsory insurance in Germany

In Germany, you must have proof of third party liability coverage for any damage or injury to another person, car or object if you want to register a car. This insurance coverage is called KfZ-Haftpflichtversicherung in German. This insurance covers damage caused to another vehicle if the policyholder has caused the damage. You are free to choose whether you decide to get other insurance policies, such as partially comprehensive insurance (Teilkasko) or fully comprehensive insurance (Vollkasko), which also insures any damage caused to your own vehicle.

More information

Germany is the only country that does not have a general speed limit on the motorway. The recommended speed limit is 130km/h and you may come across signs that indicate the speed limit in certain areas. The speed limit is 50km/h in built-up areas. Outside of these areas and on B-roads, the speed limit is 100km/h. If you go over the speed limit and are caught, you will have to pay a fine, which may amount to a lot of money. Penalty points can also be added to your licence, depending on the offence. These penalty points are registered in the central index of traffic offenders. Your driver's licence can be revoked if you get too many penalty points.

Getting around by train or bus

Train

Heidenheim is on the Ulm – Aalen - Crailsheim train line. The 'Brenzbahn' service to Aalen and Ulm runs every 30 minutes. Onward connections are available there for express services to Stuttgart and Munich. The journey time to Stuttgart is roughly 90 minutes, to Aalen about 30 minutes, and to Ulm roughly 40 minutes. Tickets can be bought at the ticket office in the station (opening hours: Mondays – Fridays 7:45 – 12:30 and 13:30 to 18:00, Saturdays 8:45 – 14:20, Sundays and public holidays: closed), or from ticket machines or online via Deutsche Bahn at: www.bahn.de.

Bus

You can travel by bus to get around in Heidenheim. Bus services in Heidenheim and surrounding areas are provided by Heidenheimer Tarifverbund (www.htv-heidenheim.de). Timetables and fares information are available online. As well as single journey tickets there are group, daily and monthly tickets, and special conditions for schoolchildren, apprentices and people aged 63 or over.

Banks and banking in Germany

In Germany, many financial transactions are made without the use of cash. As a general rule, wages and salaries as well as rent are paid by bank transfer to a (current) account. This is why you should set up a current account at a bank so that you can withdraw cash from your account at the cashier's desk in the bank or at a cash machine.

There are the following banks in Heidenheim (in alphabetical order):

Baden-Württembergische Bank BW-Bank
Grabenstraße 9, 89522 Heidenheim (www.bw-bank.de)

Commerzbank AG
Brenzstraße 19, 89518 Heidenheim (www.commerzbank.de)

Deutsche Bank
Schnaitheimer Straße 13, 89520 Heidenheim (www.deutsche-bank.de)

Heidenheimer Volksbank – main branch as well as many sub-branches in the town and surrounding areas
Karlstraße 3 – access by car via Schnaitheimer Straße, 89518 Heidenheim (www.hdh-voba.de)

Kreissparkasse Heidenheim – Hallamt advice centre
as well as many other branches in the town and surrounding areas
Olgastraße 2, 89518 Heidenheim (www.ksk-heidenheim.de)

Postbank
Bahnhofplatz 3, 89518 Heidenheim (www.postbank.de)

Targobank
Hauptstr. 43, 89522 Heidenheim (www.targobank.de)

There are also various online banks.

If you already have a bank account in Germany with one of these banks, you shouldn't have any problems switching to another branch office when you are here. When setting up a bank account, try to find out the exact costs and conditions involved, as these can vary a lot from bank to bank. Ask your bank to clarify what documents you will need to bring in order to open an account. You don't necessarily need to open a savings account at the same bank, and it is worthwhile comparing interest and investment conditions.

Loans

If you want to make a large purchase and you do not have sufficient funds to do so, you can apply for a loan from a bank. Banks have no obligation to grant you a loan and they carefully consider whether it is worthwhile granting you a loan. Your bank will charge you fees and interest for providing the loan, which are often very high. It is advisable to weigh up the pros and cons of taking out a loan, as it may be a burden for you for several years. You should also check carefully whether the offer is reliable beforehand. You can get more information from the German consumer advice centre (www.verbraucherzentrale.de).

Ask for professional help (e.g. from a debt counsellor) as soon as possible if you realise that you can no longer pay off a loan.

Debt advice centre – Heidenheim district administration

Felsenstraße 36
89518 Heidenheim
Telephone: 07321 321-0

Insurance

Statutory insurance schemes in Germany

What is social insurance?

Social insurance in Germany is a statutory insurance scheme, which offers effective, financial security. It supports you in the event of an accident, illness or unemployment. It also provides a pension and care needs. This insurance scheme aims to guarantee everyone stable living standards, and to provide support and a pension when people leave employment. The social insurance scheme is mandatory. The employer pays half of the contributions for the statutory social insurance scheme. The other half is paid by the employee and is automatically deducted from his/her salary or wages. There are two exceptions: employees pay slightly more than employers for their health insurance. On the other hand, employers pay the full contribution for their employee's accident insurance. Paying your contributions makes you entitled to receive benefits from the different areas of the statutory social insurance scheme. In principle, the amount that you will have to pay for social insurance depends on your income. This means that a certain percentage of your income will be deducted. However, if your income is above a specific limit, your contributions for health insurance and your pension will not increase. This is known as the "social security contribution ceiling" or *Beitragsbemessungsgrenze* in German.

The German pension insurance scheme

In principle, employees must be insured by the statutory pension insurance scheme. The pension insurance scheme ensures that you are financially secure in your old age. The pension age has gradually been raised to 67. In 2029, this age limit will apply to all those who were born in or after 1964. However, there will also be exceptions: for example, people who have paid into the pension scheme for a particularly long time. The pension insurance scheme will also support you if you are no longer able to work properly, for example, if you are unable to work or you cannot do your job properly because of an illness or a disability, or if you are widowed or an orphan.

Health insurance in Germany

The statutory health insurance scheme helps you and your family if you are ill. In addition, it pays for many healthcare costs and rehabilitation measures as well. It also pays for costs linked to childbirth. If you cannot work for a prolonged period of time because you are ill and therefore do not receive your salary from your employer, the statutory health insurance scheme pays you sick pay as compensation. This form of compensation is called *Krankengeld* in German. Payment towards the statutory health insurance scheme is mandatory for employees up to a specific income level (known as the annual earnings limit). If you earn more than this limit, you can decide whether you would like to be insured through the statutory health insurance scheme or through a private insurance scheme.

Long-term care insurance in Germany

Long-term care insurance will help you if you cannot look after yourself in old age or because you have a severe illness and depend on nursing care. In addition, long-term care insurance provides financial advice and support to those who take care of such people, and to their relatives. If you would like to claim benefits from the long-term care insurance scheme, you must submit an application. If you have statutory health insurance, you are automatically a member of the statutory long-term care insurance scheme. However, if you are insured with a private health insurance scheme, you must take out an additional private long-term care insurance policy.

Accident insurance in Germany

The statutory accident insurance scheme helps you and your family cope with health and financial problems that are the direct consequence of an accident at work or an occupational illness. Accidents at work also include accidents on the way to and from work or school.

Unemployment insurance in Germany

In Germany, if you are unemployed through no fault of your own, you will receive support from the government. This is not limited to financial support. You will also have the opportunity to consult the listings of vacancies that are made available to you by the Federal Employment Agency. If necessary, you can also take part in professional integration programmes (vocational training or further training, for example) and receive an allowance if necessary

Unemployment benefits

If you lose your job and if you have been employed for at least twelve months in a job which was subject to compulsory insurance, you can apply for unemployment benefits. The Federal Employment Agency will check if you fulfil the necessary conditions. You will receive unemployment benefits for a maximum period of twelve months. If you are over 50, you will receive these benefits for a maximum period of 15 months. If you are over 55, you will receive these benefits for a maximum period of 18 months and if you are over 58, you will receive these benefits for a maximum period of 24 months. You can find more detailed information at:

www.arbeitsagentur.de

Private insurance schemes in Germany

In addition to the statutory insurance schemes, there are also many private insurance schemes in Germany. These include:

Liability insurance

Home contents insurance

Occupational disability insurance

Life insurance

Vehicle insurance (this is mandatory if you have a car or a motorcycle. See getting around by car)

Legal insurance

If you go to court, you have to pay court fees as well as fees for the services of a lawyer. Legal insurance covers the costs, depending on the range of benefits it provides. Legal aid and/or financial aid for judicial proceedings are a special type of benefits in the field of the administration of justice. Individuals who cannot afford to pay for **court and/or legal fees may receive financial help** if they are considered to be eligible after evaluation.

Every type of insurance costs money. You should carefully consider what you really need before agreeing to an insurance contract. Liability insurance can also be very important. This insurance pays out damages if you or your underage children cause unintentional injury to another person or ruin/damage someone else's personal property. You can find more detailed information at:

www.verbraucherschutz.de.

Leisure

Leisure activities in Heidenheim

Do you want to take exercise / do sporting activities? Or are you interested in playing an instrument with other people? Are you more interested in history, culture and politics? Or would you like to meet up with other people from your country of origin?

No problem! Heidenheim has many different activities to offer. Whether you or your children want to be engaged in unions or volunteer work, enrol in courses or take part in other activities in your

free time: in Heidenheim there are over 600 clubs and organisations which have their contact details online:

www.heidenheim.de >Sport und Freizeit

Are clubs and associations typically German?

In Germany, many people volunteer in clubs and associations which they find interesting. In Heidenheim there are countless associations which are dedicated to social or charitable work. You can become a **member** of a club or association by **paying a membership fee** in order to participate in the association's activities. Clubs or associations are independently organised and funded. Club or association members elect a president who represents their interests and concerns outside of the association. This representative also manages the work within the club or association.

Volunteer work: a matter of honour

The idea of volunteering is to work for a few hours every week or every month for free to help other people. However, people who don't want to be part of an association can do things with others or for others if they want to. People volunteer to work with children, older people or animals, or to undertake environmental or urban development work, as well as many other things. Heidenheim is proud to have an above-average number of citizens who are involved in volunteer work.

Information about volunteer work

Municipality of Heidenheim

Coordination office for "Ich für uns" citizens' voluntary activities

Meeboldhaus – Grabenstraße 15, 89522 Heidenheim

Telephone: 07321 327 1060

Email: kontakt@ich-fuer-uns.de

www.ich-fuer-uns.de

Local music school

The local music school is an educational institution provided by the town of Heidenheim. Its qualified teaching staff provide a musical education for beginners as well as more advanced students. The municipal music school provides opportunities for all age groups from toddlers to pensioners to get involved in musical activities.

Municipal music school (near central bus stop)

Olgastraße 16

89518 Heidenheim

Telephone: 07321 327 4510

Email: musikschule@heidenheim.de

www.musikschule-heidenheim.de

Leisure activities for children and adolescents

Most clubs and associations offer special activities and courses for children and adolescents. You can find out more on the respective organisations' home pages.

Kinder und Kunst e.V. (KiKu) – art college for young people in Heidenheim

In KiKu children make art. Freelance artists, art teachers, professional advertising designers and actors expand students' creative horizons. Children and young people experience art independently of school syllabuses and their individual gifts. Every child is an artist. The association fosters young people's aesthetic education with a varied programme of courses. Its close

collaboration with the Heidenheim art museum means that students can go to the current exhibitions and deepen their understanding of art. Works produced in the courses which relate to the theme of an exhibition are displayed there. KiKu is open to all young people and pays special attention to the needs of educationally disadvantaged children and young people, irrespective of their ethnic or family background. Program and information

Kinder und Kunst in Heidenheim e.V.

Marienstraße 4

89518 Heidenheim

www.kinder-und-kunst.de

Email: kinderundkunst.heidenheim@googlemail.com

Costs The music school and the youth arts school and the associations will charge you membership fees, tuition fees or registration fees for their activities. Families with a low income are entitled to a reduced fee. You can ask for more information at the branch offices of these organisations or have a look at the “General Terms and Conditions – Reductions“ page of their website.

Zukunftsakademie Heidenheim e.V.

The Heidenheim Zukunftsakademie combines the Junior Academy (Juniorakademie in German) which fosters the talents of interested schoolchildren and the Hector Children's Academy (Hector-Kinderakademie in German) which fosters the talents of gifted children in primary schools and kindergartens.

The main focus is on making young people and children enthusiastic about the so-called MINT subjects –mathematics, IT, natural sciences and technology. Great importance is attached to hands-on, practical learning, as well as contact with the world of work and vocational relevance.

Courses are provided outside the school setting in the town of Heidenheim and the surrounding area, as well as courses for school classes (e.g. bionics, wind and solar energy) at the 'Gelbe Halle' research workshop (Schmelzofenvorstadt 33) and the "ZAK at school" all-day courses in schools.

The schoolchildren do things for themselves, they discover things and get busy and do experiments and research. This is intended to get them interested in careers in the field of natural science and technology, and to help meet the needs of the region's industry, small & medium-sized companies and skilled manufacturing trades for engineers, skilled and specialist staff, and technicians.

The courses are largely provided without charge so as to ensure equality of opportunity.

As well as the **Zukunftsakademie**, other organisations in Heidenheim and the surrounding area which foster talent outside of a school setting are the **Haus der kleinen Forscher** (pre-school age children), the **Junge VHS** (for any interested primary school children), and the **MINT-Akademie** run by Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University (schoolchildren who intend to study a MINT discipline).

Information:

Zukunftsakademie Heidenheim

Forscherwerkstatt Gelbe Halle

Schmelzofenvorstadt 33/4

89522 Heidenheim

www.zukunftsakademie-heidenheim.de

Email: zukunftsakademie@heidenheim.de

Heidenheim municipality

www.heidenheim.de >Sport und Freizeit

Institutions/ Contacts

Advice services

Advice for immigrants

Caritas Ostwürttemberg
Kurt-Bittel-Straße 8
89518 Heidenheim
Telephone 07321 3590-66

AWO (workers' welfare association) Kreisverband Heidenheim e.V.
Talstraße 90
89518 Heidenheim
Telephone 07321 983624

Advice and social assistance

If you have any problems or questions concerning personal, family or career-related matters, please contact the

Beratungsstelle für Eltern, Kinder und Jugendliche (advice centre for parents, children and young people)

Landratsamt Heidenheim
Bergstraße 8, 89518 Heidenheim
Telephone: 07321/92508-0
www.landkreis-heidenheim.de

They will be able to refer you to the best source of help for your specific issue.

Religion

There are protestant and catholic churches in Heidenheim, as well as various free churches. There is also a mosque. The addresses of all the churches and religious communities can be found on pages 46 and 47 of the Heidenheim local guide:

www.heidenheim.de > Rathaus und Verwaltung > Bürgerservice > Heidenheimer Wegweiser or as a "flip-book": http://www.total-lokal.de/city/heidenheim/data/89501_50_19_16/index.html