

Career Entry for International Students in Germany

UNIVERSITÄT BONN



Kristina Khrul
iStart Career Program for International Students
International Office
University of Bonn

Telefon: 0228 73-2419
E-Mail: start@uni-bonn.de
www.uni-bonn.de/istart



Career Service
University of Bonn

Telefon: 0228 73-4811
E-Mail: careerservice@uni-bonn.de
www.uni-bonn.de/careerservice

Agenda

UNIVERSITÄT BONN

- Current Trends on the German Job Market
- Legal Framework (incl. Wage Taxes and Social Insurance)
- Entrance Strategy & Profile Analysis
- Job Search & Networking
- Applications & Interviews

Current Trends on the German Job Market

UNIVERSITÄT BONN

- **Labor market remains under pressure in 2025:** weak economic performance, global crises, and a persistent shortage of skilled workers.
- **Slight decline in total employment**
- **Strong sectoral and regional differences:** Manufacturing is expected to lose around 90,000 jobs, while public services, education, and health will create roughly 180,000 new jobs.
- **Significant increase in unemployment**
- **Outlook for 2026 depends on investment measures**
- **AI might have both positive and negative impact on the job market**


Legal Frames


During your study (§16b)	After your graduation (§20)	After job search
Until 140 full days or 280 part days in a year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • „full day“: more than 4 h • Weekends, holidays, vacations and days with sickness leave are NOT counted • Different ways of counting 	Max. 18 months for job search <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time „runs“ from the first day after receiving your final grade • All types of employments are permitted without limits 	Working Visa (§18b) / Blue Card EU <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Card 2025: €43.759,80 (new entrants and shortage occupations); €48.300 (others)
Student jobs (student/research assistant) or mandatory internship are EXCLUDED from this rule: no day counting is necessary		Self-Employment / Freelancer Visa
NOT allowed to work self-employed		Researcher/ Student Visa (PhD)
		Visa for Vocational Training (Ausbildung)


Wage Taxes and Social Insurance

UNIVERSITÄT BONN

Tax Category	Condition
1	Single; Widowed; Divorced
2	Single parent
3	Married (a higher income); recipient of child-care allowance
4	Married (equal income)
5	Married (a lower income)
6	Second employment

 health insurance (14,6% + individual add. contribution)

 pension insurance (18,6%)

 nursing care (3,6%)

 unemployment insurance (2,6%)

Basic tax-free allowance:

-> €12.348 per year (2026)

Privilege of working student (Werkstudentenprivileg):

-> 20 h/week-limit

Source: TK, Wie sind die aktuellen Beitragssätze in der Sozialversicherung? <https://www.tk.de/firmenkunden/versicherung/beitraege-faq/beitragssaetze/aktuelle-beitragssaetze-in-der-sozialversicherung-2031554?tkcm=ab>; Bundesgesetzblatt: <https://www.recht.bund.de/bgbl/1/2024/449/VO.html>

Entry Positions

UNIVERSITÄT BONN

Graduates of ...		
Bachelor	...do the job...	-implement -organize -perform
Master	...create the job...	-conception -plan -evaluation
PhD	...represent the job...	-govern -represent -interdisciplinary

Entry Strategy	Bachelor	Master	PhD
Internship during study	👍	👍	
Internship after study	🙄	🙄	
Trainee	👍	👍	🙄
Student/Research Assistance	👍	👍	👍
Working Student	👍	👍	
Thesis	👍	👍	🙄
Part-time jobs /Minijob	👍	👍	🙄
Volunteership	👍	👍	👍

Profile Analysis

UNIVERSITÄT BONN

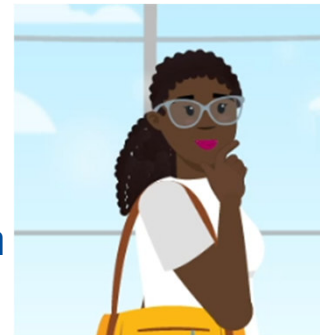
1. Assessment on your own
(or together with the AI)
2. Getting guidance from the
coach (iStart, Career Service)
3. Joining career trainings
(iStart Intensive Career
Program)

Who am I?

What are my goals?

**What positions am
I looking for?**

**What can I do? What can I offer
to the job market?**



What do I want?

**What are my interests,
values?**

What do I expect from the job?

Job Search Strategy: Where to Search?

UNIVERSITÄT BONN

- Own Professional and Personal Networks
- Networks like LinkedIn
- Job Portals, like Indeed, StepStone etc.
(incl. Specialized Job Portals)
- (Career and Area) Fairs
- Through the University Career Services
- Professional Newsletters & Journals
- Area Specific Associations
(List of Company-Members)
- Official Sources: Job Agency, Corresponding
Ministries and Chambers of Commerce and
Industry
- AI-Based Search

Networking: Why? How? Where?

UNIVERSITÄT BONN

Why is it relevant?

Hidden job market

Career development

Visibility

Support system

How to network?

Stay focused and practice
your „why“

Analyze what you already
have

Be curious, not
transactional and ask smart
questions

Follow Up

Where to network?

Associations, Study,
Employment, Volunteering

Offline events

Online networks

Informal meetings

Application Documents: CV Basics

UNIVERSITÄT BONN

Many factors by writing an application depend on
the context:

**Template
(like Europass)**

CV Picture

Sections' Order

(Partly) Content

Font and use of symbols

Number of pages

Your hobby and interests

Summary

Language

Quantification

Application Documents: CV Basics in Germany



- Reverse chronological order
- 3-5 bullet points for tasks during your employments
- Include 3-5 soft skills and languages
- Max. 2 pages (better 1)
- Signature and date, your address

UNIVERSITÄT BONN



- Don't write the names and contacts of your references
- Don't lie or exaggerate
- Don't include irrelevant information
- Don't send your documents without proofreading

Application Documents: Cover Letter in Germany

UNIVERSITÄT BONN

Yes, you usually need to write it...



Pic: imgflip



[Datum]

Bewerbung als Designer, Referenznummer: 12345678

Sehr geehrte Frau Musterfrau,

wie ich im XING Stellenmarkt gesehen habe, suchen Sie einen Kommunikationsdesigner für Ihr XY-Team. Daher möchte ich mich Ihnen als engagierter und motivierter Designer vorstellen. Im Umgang mit Sketch und Adobe CC bin ich geübt und kann meine persönliche Kreativität mit der des Produktes verbinden um gute Ergebnisse zu erzielen.

Mit meinem Abschluss als Kommunikationsdesigner an der HAW Hamburg habe ich bereits einige praxisnahe Projekte vorzuweisen, wie zum Beispiel XY. Außerdem durfte ich bereits Erfahrung sowohl im Umgang mit Printmedien sowie auch mit Websites (UX/UI Design) sammeln. In meiner derzeitigen Werkstudententätigkeit als Grafik-Designer bei der Werbeagentur XXXX verantworte ich die unterschiedlichen Design-Projekte namhafter Kunden, wie zum Beispiel XY. Einen visuellen Eindruck über meine bisherige Arbeit erhalten Sie auf meiner persönlichen Homepage: www.meinewebsite.de.

Mit mir gewinnen Sie einen zuverlässigen Mitarbeiter, der ein besonderes Augenmerk auf Kundenwünsche und ihre Ziele legt und für den die Kundenbetreuung einen hohen Stellenwert hat. Jetzt bin ich auf der Suche nach einem spannenden Arbeitgeber in der Online-Branche, mit dem ich mich fachlich und persönlich weiterentwickeln kann. Diese Chance sehe ich bei Ihnen gegeben. Ich freue mich auf eine Einladung zu einem persönlichen Gespräch.

Mein frühestmöglicher Eintrittstermin ist der [Datum]. Meine Gehaltsvorstellung liegt bei XX.XXX Euro pro anno.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Max Muster

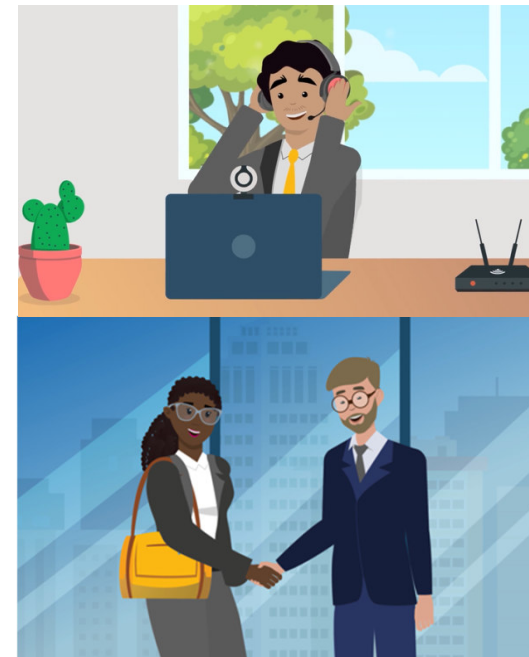
Why are you applying?

*How is your profile
suitable for this job?*

*Your current situation,
possible starting date
and salary expectations*

Interviews

- Good research in advance is necessary
- Remind yourself, what was this application about
- Prepare examples & questions
- Online: connection, camera, light, background
- Offline: dresscode, hand shaking, smiling



Additional Sources

UNIVERSITÄT BONN

Job Application Training

Dec 4th, 12-3.30 pm, OFFLINE



Job Interview Coaching

Jan 10th, 11 am - 3 pm, OFFLINE



iStart Intensive, CV (Grammar) Check,
Personal Consultations, Videos, Podcasts



Summarizing Take Aways

- ✓ Finding a job during the study is recommended
- ✓ Learning German gives MUCH more career opportunities
- ✓ Before searching -> analyse your profile and the market offer
- ✓ Work on your local networks
- ✓ Tailor your CV and cover letter
- ✓ Prepare yourself for interviews
- ✓ Get support, if your applications are not successful or/and you have questions/doubts
- ✓ Don't take rejections personally
- ✓ Don't give up!

Career Entry for International Students in Germany

UNIVERSITÄT BONN



Kristina Khrul
iStart Career Program for International Students
International Office
University of Bonn

Telefon: 0228 73-2419
E-Mail: start@uni-bonn.de
www.uni-bonn.de/istart



Career Service
University of Bonn

Telefon: 0228 73-4811
E-Mail: careerservice@uni-bonn.de
www.uni-bonn.de/careerservice