# Blue Card

**Blue Card**

**Germany**

## 1 DESCRIPTION

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| **Timespan** | Since 2012 |

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| **Stage** | **FULLY OPERATIONAL** |

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| **Focus area** | **MATCHING SKILLS FOR TODAY'S JOB MARKET** |

## 2 FOUNDATIONS

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| **Policy Area** | **SOCIAL AND INTEGRATION POLICIES** |
| | Promotion of highly skilled migrants from outside of the EU. |

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| **Policy Goal** | The "Blue Card" wants to achieve the goal of attracting a highly skilled workforce from abroad in order to tackle specific mismatches in certain sectors of the German economy. Highly skilled is defined by a high level of education. The Blue Card contributes to this goal by enabling and facilitating the access to the German labour market. It is the basic way of access for foreign employees following the definition of highly qualified. The Blue Card is supplemented by a large number of initiatives under the roof of the "Fachkräfteinitiative". |

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| **Mismatch** | **EXPLICITLY DESIGNED TO ADDRESS SKILL MISMATCH** |
| | Immigration is only possible into jobs that are defined beforehand (Positivliste). |

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| **Aim of policy instrument** | **ADDRESS SKILL SHORTAGES** |

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| **Legal basis** | **LAW** |

| Administrative level | NATIONAL |

| Main responsible body | Federal Office for Migration and Refugees |

| Stakeholders | |

🏛 **GOVERNMENT (CENTRAL & REGIONAL)**

Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - provision of information on the Blue Card Immigration authorities - application processing

| Funding | No information |

| Intended beneficiaries | The Blue Card is aimed at attracting highly-qualified specialists to the European labour market from third countries. |

## ③ PROCESSES

| Use of labour market intelligence | |

●●● **OTHER**

For specific sectors, certain occupations that are defined show a shortage of skills. In practice, this is elaborated by gross salary borders for future jobs in Germany (in 2017: university graduates: €50,800/year; shortage sectors occupations: €39,624/year).

| Financial schemes | None |

| Frequency of updates | The income thresholds are adapted annually. Statistics on Blue Card holders are published regularly by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. |

| Development | Income thresholds are redefined each year. This can be seen as an indirect way to steer migration via the Blue Card. Experience showed that many applicants were already resident in Germany (e.g. because they came to Germany to study at a university). It was therefore debated to decrease the income threshold. However, unions fear wage dumping, which is a strong argument for increasing the threshold. From 2016 to 2017, the income threshold was increased slightly. |

| Barriers | The Blue Card was criticised for the high bureaucratic burden that have to be overcome to apply. |

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| **Success factors** | The high demand for skilled labour in Germany made the implementation of the instrument easier. |
| **Monitoring** | The number of immigrants holding Blue Cards is measured regularly. Information is published by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. |
| **Innovativeness** | **SLIGHTLY INNOVATIVE**<br>It is an initial step to the implementation of a controlled immigration scheme from non-EU countries to Germany. |

## ④ SUSTAINABILITY

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| **Evidence of effectiveness** | More than 50,000 Blue Cards were issued to the end of 2016. 90% of Blue Card holders worked in occupations characterised by skilled workers shortage. In this regard, the Blue Card seemed to be effective. According to some applicants, family reunion regulations could be eased. |
| **Engagement of stakeholders** | For applicants and employers, several channels can be used to gather information on the Blue Card. |
| **Transferability** | **EASILY TRANSFERABLE**<br>Creating and updating a list of occupations in demand (the process to identify occupations with skilled worker shortage) is easily transferable, though reliable labour market information is necessary. |
| **Sustainability** | The Blue Card regulation is still very relevant, as skilled workers shortage is still prevalent in Germany. |