

Some information on applying for the unlimited work permit in Germany

Some non-EU students have to prolong their residence permit after the 3-year-PhD if they need more time to finish the work or to find new work. In this case, you usually receive a short-term residence permit and have increased pressure during the last stage of the PhD. But there is also another way to get the residence permit prolonged for a longer time (like 2 years).

If you have payed the pension insurance (Rentenversicherung) in Germany for over 2 years, you can apply for an unlimited work permit (unbeschraenkte und unbefristete Arbeitserlaubnis). That means that you are always allowed to work in Germany, and if you are jobless, you will get the unemployment pay (Arbeitslosengeld) like any German or EU citizens. With this work permit, you can get your residence permit prolonged for 2 years.

What you need for the application is only a confirmation from the German statutory pension insurance scheme (Deutsche Rentenversicherung Bund) for how long you have payed the insurance. This confirmation is free and can be requested by e-mail (just visit the english version of their homepage: http://www.deutsche-rentenversicherung-bund.de/nm_20278/SharedDocs/en/Navigation/_home_node.html_nnn=true).

To apply for an unlimited work permit, you should go to the office for foreign affairs in Bremen (Auslaenderbehoerde, Stresemannstr. 48) or in Bremerhaven (Hinrich-Schmalfeldt-St. 30), NOT to the international office in the Bremen University (BSU). If your documents are by BSU, maybe you should ask them at first (I am not sure if they will send your application to their central office). Before you go there, it is better to make an appointment with them (0421 361-15013 und 361-15179, or office-auslaenderbehoerde@stadtamt.bremen.de). The office for foreign affairs will tell you if you fulfill the conditions for an unlimited work permit, and if so, they will send an application to the government employment office (Agentur fuer Arbeit Bremen or Bremerhaven). Then you can just wait for their reply or, if it takes too long (like in my case: 4 months), you should call the government employment office or write an e-mail. They answered my e-mail quite fast.

So, good luck!