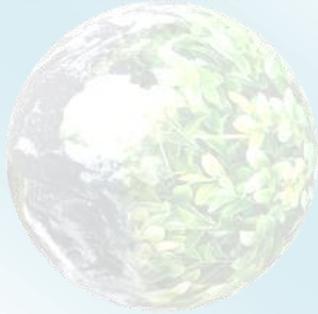

OMIKRON PROCEDURE GUIDE



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Volunteering
MIKRON



1. BFD or FSJ

The BFD and the FSJ correspond respectively to the Bundesfreiwilligendienst and the Freiwilligen Sozialen Jahr. These are voluntary services organized by the German Federal Government on its territory. In general, they are organised for a period of 6 to 18 months, renewable in some cases. The voluntary service is organised with the aim of enabling its participants to work in a particular field of activity in order to gain work experience or to be able to decide on the choice of career and the appropriate training to be followed afterwards. The BFD and the FSJ are international programmes and therefore open to anyone regardless of their country of origin. It is a unique opportunity for participants from other countries to immerse themselves in German culture, to learn the language more deeply, to discover the opportunities that the country offers for work, study, vocational training or business at the end of the programme.

Accommodation and Salary

In the case of FSJ or BFD, the salary paid is determined by the organisation coordinating the voluntary service or by the place of work¹. In addition to this, there is in principle a right to accommodation. Some workplaces also offer work clothes. The details of the accommodation costs are mentioned in the employment contract. The net salary already includes a deduction for accommodation costs.

Right to holidays and educational support

Under the Employment Protection Act, FSJ/BFDs are entitled to at least 24 days leave in 12 months of service. The FSJ volunteer has a legal right to educational support and advice. This is the duty of the receiving institution. The central office of the organisation in charge of the volunteer must organise at least 25 days of seminars. However, this may vary from one organisation to another.

¹ Check the programmes section on our web page for more information on salaries.

Volunteer card and health insurance

As soon as volunteers start their service, they can apply for a volunteer card. This card entitles them to many benefits such as discounts on public transport passes or discounts on tickets for specific events. Each volunteer also has a health insurance while serving in Germany.

But what is the advantage of participating in a FSJ or BFD in Germany?

The BFD and the FSJ are the only programmes offered by the Federal Republic of Germany for which applicants from abroad can obtain all the documents required for a visa application: an employment contract, a rental agreement for an apartment and documents proving that they have taken out health insurance. On the other hand, the Federal Republic of Germany offers enormous opportunities for employment and study. Beginning your stay in Germany with a BFD or FSJ allows you to better understand the culture, to integrate socially and to take the necessary administrative steps for the rest of your stay.

What is the advantage of applying for a BFD/FSJ through the OMIKRON procedure?

It is not uncommon to meet people who meet the conditions for participation but are not aware of the existence of such programmes or applicants who fail to complete their personal application due to lack of knowledge about the right time to apply, the areas of interest for the issuance of visas, the institutions to apply to and the pitfalls to be avoided during the various interviews throughout the procedure. Omikron, through its procedure, makes everyone aware of the existence of the BFD/FSJ programs and takes care of the personal and individual follow-up of the application files in order to ensure an unconditional success at the end of the procedure. The Omikron procedure is based on a body of experience accumulated over the years with regard to applications for a BFD/FSJ. Our team prepares candidates to meet the requirements of the various German institutions and to pass the visa application stage with flying colours. For example, a subscription to the Counselling Interview Program entitles you to personal support once in the Federal Republic of Germany with regard to arrival formalities, translation and applications for equivalence of diplomas, timely submission of applications for vocational training or studies etc.

Finally, Omikron reimburses its clients if its procedure was unsuccessful. It is important to mention that Omikron is the only company in its field that applies the "Satisfied or reimbursed"



policy.

Who is the Omikron procedure for?

The Omikron procedure is essentially done online. It is therefore possible for everyone to participate in the program without geographical barriers. The programme is open to all nationals of African countries without exceptions. Participants in the programme remain in permanent contact with the counsellors by e-mail and through numerous video-conferences. This possibility of remote participation is intended to allow the greatest number of people to join the programme and to enjoy the best follow-up throughout the procedure, both from Omikron advisers based in Africa and those based in Europe. As an advantage, this allows the candidates to be informed in real time of the evolution of their file, of the news in Germany having a direct interest with the procedure in progress but also to benefit, within the framework of the language exchange sessions which will be organised, from the linguistic potential of the european counsellors whose mother tongue is German.



2. WHAT ARE THE PROPOSED AREAS OF WORK?



ASSISTANCE TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

An FSJ or BFD in this field is possible in schools, workshops or daily groups. During a voluntary work in an institution for disabled people, there are many job opportunities. Indeed, the different types of "special abilities" of disabled people bring their own specific requirements. They affect children, teenagers, adults or even elderly people. That is why you have the possibility to do a FSJ in a school or to support adults at their workplace, at home or in their leisure time. If people need a lot of support because of their disability, they often live in an institution. Your tasks at the FSJ or BFD are then to help the residents in their daily life: for example, getting dressed, eating, walking, playing, telling stories and having fun. In a daily group, people are brought in the morning and go home or back to their institution in the evening. You help organize the day and provide support in terms of care and supervision. The guests of the day receive different offers, depending on their needs. You can often make individual offers from yourself in your FSJ. The Disability Support Service offers many activities for volunteers. Working hours are often regulated by a duty roster. You can also work sooner or later, or even at weekends. In return, you get additional days off.





MEDICAL CARES

A social year at the hospital consists of caring for and supporting the sick. Your assignment is possible in different sections. Depending on the structure of the clinic, FSJ and BFD are employed in cardiology, oncology, and outpatient clinics or in a department of internal medicine. A year in nursing provides you various opportunities to support health care professionals and to provide additional help in the daily routine of the clinic. In general, you will perform so-called regular tasks in the hospital, such as assisting in patient care. Your activities with patients include, for example, distributing meals, if necessary helping them with feeding, assisting with personal hygiene and accompanying them during examinations. You learn how to measure blood pressure and how to document it. You will also help the medical staff to mobilize patients. Depending on the department in which you spend your social year, you will also have different special tasks. In addition, you will also carry out household tasks during your FSJ/BFD in hospital, such as preparing beds and filling care boxes. Of course, you will also take care of cleanliness and hygiene in the wards and patient rooms.

Sick care operates 24 hours a day. This is why morning and evening shifts as well as weekend work are part of everyday life during a year of volunteering in a clinic. For you, this means that a Saturday or Sunday shift is possible up to every other weekend. In return, you will be free on the other days. Night work is not permitted as part of the voluntary service. During this year you will get an insight into the varied daily routine of a clinic or nursing home and you will learn the procedures and tasks of nursing care. You will have an idea of what a sick person needs. You will learn how to manage difficult situations and strengthen your ability to work under pressure. A year in this sector requires patience, team spirit and, of course, an interest in medical issues.



SCHOOLS AND NURSERY

Playing, consoling, mediating and organizing are just a few of the tasks you will perform during a social year at a children's institution. Volunteers in a nursery or school helps shape the educational offer, help with household activities and parents during parties or projects. In nurseries, children are cared for and supported from the first year of life until they start primary school. Thanks to an FSJ/BFD with children, you will get an insight into the development of the child and how it can be supported. You will experience the processes in the nurseries and the teamwork with the children and their guardians. In children's institutions there are offers to specifically promote children's development. Within the FSJ, you will have the opportunity to plan and carry out such activities by yourself. You can be creative and contribute with your own ideas. Play together, do crafts, read, dance and sing. There are many activities that you can enrich in a nursery. The activities are based on the children's interests and abilities so that they can have different learning experiences. If you like to work creatively and are full of ideas, you can put many of your ideas into practice in a nursery or a school. Your commitment is directly rewarded with a child's smile. An important part of the work in a school or nursery is the so-called preparation time. Educators observe the children and document developments. You can support them by monitoring everything they do and their relationships with other children. During your year, you help the educators organize activities and parties and participate in events for the children's parents.

So a FSJ is a way to help you start your training as a school teacher or early childhood education student, if you have the vision. Sometimes teacher training is integrated into practice. A year in kindergarten gives you the opportunity to get a practical position for your graduate studies.





WORK WITH THE ELDERLY

During a volunteering with elderly people, you have the opportunity to familiarise yourself with the different processes and tasks of caring for the elderly. Many volunteers consider older people to be very loving and grateful for the help they receive. Many elderly people live in a nursing home. You can work on different tasks. Some of the tasks may involve helping professionals care for the residents of the home. You may help older people with their meals or design leisure activities for them, such as doing crafts and going for walks in the woods. If seniors live at home and need support, you can help them in cooperation with a local social centre. Social centres also offer mobile assistance for driving services. Your driving licence may therefore be of great help. For elderly people who only need care during the day, there are daily groups. Elderly taking part in daily groups come in the morning and return home in the evening. You participate in the organisation of the day and provide support in terms of care and physical assistance. The possibilities for volunteers are great here. Guests of the day receive various offers of physical exercise, mental exercise or even crafts. Sometimes you may be allowed to design and carry out individual activities by yourself during your FSJ/BFD. The activities of volunteers in retirement homes are varied, often involving roster-regulated working hours as in the other areas mentioned above.



SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

A social year in the field of social work and social assistance involves very different institutions. Possible places of work are counselling centres, service-residences, food shops, railway stations and day-care centres. These facilities are usually intended for a specific target group. They care for and accompany families and women in need of help, people with low incomes, the long-term unemployed, the homeless, people suffering from drug addiction or mental illness - and their relatives. During your traineeship in social work, you directly and indirectly support the professional staff. Depending on the place of employment, you will help with office works, telephone services and event organisation. People in care of the institutions find themselves in difficult social situations. They need your support in everyday matters. You will accompany them to the authorities for administrative formalities and to doctors or help them organise leisure activities.

Voluntary service in the field of social work is very demanding. You will encounter tragic human destinies, some of which may leave their mark on you. Even if you are accompanied during your social year by a local guide, you must be personally stable. It is also important that you have a positive attitude towards the target group. In rare cases you will need a driving licence in order to take over occasional driving duties. During the social work volunteer year you will get an insight into the field of social work and the regional support system. You get to know the diversity of German society, gain valuable experience and develop new perspectives.





YOUTH CENTER

A social year with young people is possible in youth centres and youth education centres; youth care institutions, district centres, schools and parent-child centres. The institutions support young people in their daily activities, provide them with daily care and offer them individual support. Your work in this context consists of pedagogical and educational activities as well as office and administrative tasks. A year in youth care institutions consists of caring for young people with difficulties and helping them in their daily lives. In the field of youth work, the emphasis is on administrative and educational work. During your FSJ, the office provides administrative support and helps to prepare and organise events and leisure activities. Support for youth groups and committee work can also be part of your voluntary service. Depending on your interests and skills, you can (co-)design activities in the fields of creative work, environmental education, culture and sport. Dealing with young people requires a lot of flexibility, composure, a sense of responsibility and the willingness to interact with them despite differences in culture and mentality. You have the opportunity to contribute your own ideas and broaden your own cultural skills. You can also use your organizational skills and creativity in the field.





RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

During a voluntary social year in a religious community, you will be asked to help the parish team. This includes the pastor or priest, pastoral agents, church musicians and administrative staff. The parishioners are your main target group. In addition to church activities, churches offer programs and support to children and youth, but also to the elderly and people in need. In this way, your FSJ puts you in contact with people from different social strata. One of your tasks is to support the parish office in organising its activities. You participate in the planning and organisation of parties and camps, and in various projects and activities. Since each parish is a little different, the focus of your activities may be different. You can be used to support staff in the following areas:

- Participation in activities for children and young people, such as nurseries, summer camps, group courses for young people, training of youth group leaders or homework supervision.
- Home visits and assistance in the neighbourhood, especially to support and accompany people in need.
- Help to other collectives, such as world shops, homeless shelters, day-care centres or libraries.

You can do a lot of community volunteering and use your own strengths and skills. For a FSJ/BFD in this area, you need to be open-minded and interested in the religious community and parishioners. Some appointments may be in the evenings and on weekends. You will have an extra day off for this. As a volunteer in this area, Omikron works in cooperation with several churches all over Germany. For an FSJ/BFD in this area, you will have two additional training days, during which you will get to know the religious environment better.





CULTURE

A social year in the field of culture is possible in different workplaces. Cultural institutions include above all educational institutions such as adult education centres or cultural associations. The areas of responsibility of an FSJ/BFD in the field of culture and education depend on the work place. In most cases, you will organise and prepare educational offers and help professional staff to implement them. You will work with different age groups, children, young people and elderly. For example, you will participate in leisure activities or take charge of a workshop in a nursery or primary school. You can also bring your own ideas and develop your own activities. During your traineeship in cultural institutions, you will support office work and help with the creation of materials or the administration of participant data. You will help with event's organisation and public relations. This includes, for example, website maintenance or the creation of advertising material. A good command of the language is therefore important. During your FSJ/BFD you will also be involved in other public institutions, such as schools. In cultural institutions you will have a lot of contact with other people. You are often the resource person for all participants who benefit from what the institution offers. Thanks to your varied field of activity, you will also be able to follow different and varied topics. The range of tasks in cultural institutions is very diverse - offers and events change at short notice. You should therefore be able to act spontaneously and flexibly. You will get to know the extracurricular educational work and get an insight into administrative procedures. In some places you will also participate in further training courses. As the field is very diverse, you will learn how to organise yourself and become more independent. In addition to the administrative tasks, you will also learn a lot about the educational field. Any skills you have will be useful for your work in this field (music, theatre, drawing, dance, etc.).





REFUGEE **ASSISTANCE**

Do you want to get to know other cultures and improve your language skills? With a voluntary social year as part of refugee aid, you can further develop intercultural understanding. An FSJ/BFD in the field of refugee aid offers you different possibilities to get involved, depending on the work you do. At the beginning, refugees usually live in initial reception centres or in follow-up accommodation. If you are a volunteer in this area, you can support the settlement experts directly on the spot. Another possibility is to work in a refugee counselling centre. You will get a first insight into the tasks and activities of migration and social work. Refugees who have just arrived in Germany should orient themselves. As a volunteer, you can help them by accompanying clients, for example to government offices or doctor's appointments. You can also help with childcare or voluntarily give German lessons (depending on your level of German). Together with the professional staff, you can organize offers or events. Depending on the institution, you can offer your own leisure activities, such as doing crafts or playing football. In the field of refugee aid, you will discover what it is like to encounter different cultures and mentalities. You can broaden your cultural skills. You can also improve your foreign language skills. But you will also discover how well you can communicate in a few words. Volunteering at the Refugee Service will help you to broaden your horizons and develop new perspectives.





TECHNICAL, CRAFTSMANSHIP AND HOUSEHOLD ORGANIZATION

Do you want to get socially involved and see your strength in the craft, technical or organizational field and less in support and care? Then do a year of volunteering in the field of technology, housekeeping and crafts. Various social institutions offer such FSJ/BFD positions. You can find them in religious congregations, schools, hospitals and institutions for the disabled and elderly. Depending on the position, there are different tasks to be performed. Often, domestic technology/housekeeping cooperates with other areas such as care or educational offers. In a FSJ/BFD in the domestic environment, you help the staff to prepare and distribute meals, clean and do the shopping. You come into contact with the people who are cared for by the institution and support them in their domestic tasks. As part of housekeeping, you take part in minor repairs, renovations and maintenance work and keep the living and working environment tidy. In addition, gardening work requires physical effort.

During a YSF in the domestic setting, you will become familiar with a variety of processes and tasks. On the one hand, independent work is necessary and, on the other hand, you are in contact with the people who are cared for and supported in the institution where you work. You will bring your creativity and manual skills to this work. Some tasks are physically a little more strenuous than others. For a FSJ in this area, flexibility is necessary because your working hours are governed by a roster. From time to time, you work on weekends or at evening appointments. However, you will have free time on the other days as compensation.





ECOLOGY, ANIMAL AND CLIMATE PROTECTION

A voluntary ecological year on a popular farm is possible. If you want to work with animals, be in contact with the land and nature during your social service, you will certainly find a place in this field. But before you apply for a service in organic farming, you should ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you like to work physically?
- Do you want to work for sustainable agriculture?

If the answer to these questions is yes, then you've come to the right place on a German farm. The activities offered on farms as part of an ecology volunteer program are very different and varied. They range from farm management to vegetable growing and animal husbandry. During a voluntary service in organic farming you will experience the seasons up close. For example, you will be involved in growing vegetables, working in the barn and helping with feeding, smoking and haymaking. You may also be called upon to work in the farm store, cheese factory or bakery. Some organic farms are certified as apprentice farms.



3. The conditions

Age: The minimum age for participation in the programme is 18 years. Applications from participants under the age of 18 will simply not be considered.

Duration: The Omikron procedure is based on a twelve (12) month contract. Each candidate for the program must be willing to sign a contract of employment in Germany as part of his or her volunteer work for a minimum of 6 months. However, the duration of the contract may be extended up to 12 months or 18 months thereafter.

Languages skills: When submitting your application, you must provide proof of your knowledge of German or proof of enrolment on a German language course. A minimum level of A2 is required. Candidates who cannot provide proof of an A2 level at the time of registration with Omikron must be prepared to undertake language courses and pass the A2 language test. Omikron provides personal support to all candidates attending the language courses by organising training sessions in spoken German and simulated examination conditions with native German-speaking counsellors and German language professionals. It should be noted that obtaining an A2 diploma later facilitates the visa procedure.

However, interested persons who have no knowledge of the German language but would like to find out more about the procedure can fill in the contact form and take part in the first interview without this being regarded as a *fancy application*.

Working hours: Participating in volunteer work requires full-time work: 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week. Depending on the recruiting organization, the hours can vary up to 8.5 hours of work per day.

Financial conditions: The expenses related to the passport, language courses if necessary, visa application, preparation of the trip and the air ticket² are all at the expenses of the candidate. The fees for the Omikron procedure are payable in one lump sum.

² Consult the section "Financing the trip" of this document for more information about the possibility to get your trip financed at the end of the procedure.

4. THE OMIKRON PROCEDURE

The Omikron procedure consists of three (3) steps.

First step: First contact

- **THE CONTACT FORM**

The first step in the Omikron procedure is to fill out the contact form on the [Omikron](http://www.omikron.volunteering.com) website www.omikron.volunteering.com. The prerequisite for filling in the contact form is to read the present document: the "**Omikron Procedure Guide**". Filling in the contact form allows the Omikron group of advisors to establish an application profile. The Informations given in the form help to determine in general if it is advisable to initiate the procedure and identify the deficiencies in the profile in order to correct them or not. At this stage, we ask each candidate to fill the form with accurate informations. The completion of the contact form does not commit the candidate in any way, legally or financially. The analysis of the information from the form takes 14 working days. At the end of this period, the candidate will receive an e-mail inviting him/her to take part in a video interview with one of our consultants.

- **FIRST INTERVIEW**

The video interviews with Omikron's consultants are all done via Skype and are all recorded. The advisor in charge of the first interview is usually assigned to the candidate for the rest of the procedure. The candidate receives an email 6 days in advance with all the necessary informations for the video call. Candidates are advised to test the quality of their internet connection before the interview to avoid any inconvenience at the day of the interview and to bring a personal identification document with them.

The purpose of this first interview is to allow the candidate to personally discuss with an Omikron consultant. During the interview, the adviser explains in more detail to the candidate what a FSJ and a BFD are and the whole Omikron procedure. The candidate is given the opportunity to ask questions about the procedure in order to clarify any uncertainty. The conditions for participation in the programme will then be discussed with the candidate. In the case that the candidate does not meet the participation's criteria, the candidate will be notified



and the advisor will inform the candidate of the steps to be taken to ensure successful participation in the program in the future. The details of the recommendations will be notified to the applicant by e-mail, who will be able to resume the procedure once he or she has met all the requirements. In the case of a favourable application, an application profile will be defined together with the applicant. The application profile consists of determining :

- If the candidate has to take language courses
- Take part in a language test
- Determine what documents are missing for the procedure (passport, vaccination booklet)
- In which areas of work it make sense to apply
- In which regions of Germany the application will be sent
- Which organizations to apply for

- **FIRST LANGUAGE'S CHECK**

The language's check is valid for candidates who already have a certain level of German or who are enrolled in a language course at the time of registration with Omikron. It allows Omikron to get an idea of the language's level of the applicant in order to better adapt the procedure. If a language check is required, the candidate will be informed during the first interview. A new date is then set for the language's check interview. The interview usually takes place within 14 days after the first interview. The candidate is informed by e-mail of the date of the interview and the topics.

The language's check usually takes 30 minutes. The interview is done by video conference with one of our German consultants. The language's check is not a language test but in case of insufficient results, Omikron reserves the right to reject an application with mentioning to the applicant the reasons for rejection.

Once this is done, the candidate receives a copy of the application profile by e-mail and has a 28-days reflection period to decide whether or not to participate in the procedure. The candidate's final decision must be notified to Omikron by email within this period.



It is important to mention here that, in case a candidate decides no longer to take part in the procedure without a valid justification or in case of absence of Feedback, it will only be possible for the candidate to take part in the procedure again after a period of 3 months, i.e. 84 days after the reflection period has elapsed. A second participation in the contact stage without Feedback or with an unjustified negative response will definitively exclude the candidate from the Omikron procedure. This measure is taken in order to avoid *fictitious applications*. Omikron therefore urges all interested parties to obtain all necessary information about the procedure before taking contact.

- **SIGNATURE OF THE CONTRACT AND PAYMENT OF THE PROCEDURAL FEES**

Once the candidate confirms his willingness to participate in the programme, the procedural contract and the application profile are sent to the candidate. The candidate receives one copy of each document in digital version per e-mail and two copies by post, all of them signed by Omikron. The sending of documents per post within the framework of the Omikron procedure is done by DHL. The candidate must sign the digital document to be sent to Omikron by e-mail as well as the copies received by post, one of which must be returned to Omikron by the same means.

The payment of the procedure fees is made by transfer to Omikron's bank account. Payments for candidates living outside Benin³ can sometimes take a few working days. Details regarding the payment of fees and account numbers are mentioned in the procedure contract. An authenticated copy of the receipt of payment is also to be returned to Omikron with the signed contract.

- **ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS**

Once the contract has been signed, the candidate will have to send Omikron, in electronic version, a copy of his/her identity document⁴ and an updated version of his curriculum vitae. The

³ The payment of the procedural fees is done exclusively per money transfer on the bank accounts of Omikron. Considering that all Banks don't take in charge money transfer to abroad, applicants from other countries from Benin will receive more detailed Informations on that topic during the procedure.

⁴ Only a Passport or a national ID with a period of validity of minimum 1 month and 6 months is accepted. In other cases the applicant has to inform Omikron the early as possible.

applicant is willing to send any other documents necessary to continue the procedure if required.

Second step: Application files⁵

THE MOTIVATION LETTER

The details of the curriculum vitae and the content of the cover letter for the application are discussed and conceived with the candidate in a video interview. These are the most important documents in the application files. They require a lot of care and precision in their redaction. Once this has been done, the candidate receives a digital copy of the letter, which he must sign and return to Omikron by e-mail.

SENDING OUT APPLICATIONS

Applicants' applications are usually sent to 10 - 15 organisations in Germany to increase the chances of a positive response. Applications are sent according to the criteria mentioned in the application profile. Once the application has been sent, the applicant is informed by e-mail of the list of institutions to which the application has been sent. If at least 7 of the institutions reject the application within 6 months, the application is sent back to 7 other organisations in Germany⁶. This is the longest step in the procedure. Once applications are sent, it can take up to 6 months to get a response, but the applicant is informed as the organisations follow up on the application. In some special cases, the application is sent to only one Omikron partner organization. This is only possible when the applicant fulfils absolutely all the conditions required by this organisation. In these cases a positive response is guaranteed from the outset.

LINGUISTIC EVALUATIONS AND LANGUAGE TESTS

During the procedure, the candidate will be invited to several interviews to assess the improvement of his/her language level. The language assessments take place once a month. After each check, the candidate receives a feedback from his advisor who will inform the candidate of

⁵ This stage of the procedure lasts 12 months, but may be completed before the deadline expires when the applicant receives a positive reply and the documents necessary for his visa application.

⁶ Omikron reserves the right to change in this case some application criteria in order to increase the chances to get a positive answer before the end of the procedure. Any change in the application's criteria has to be notified to the applicant.

areas where his knowledge is insufficient. This helps the candidate to better adapt the acquisition of his language skills to the needs of the procedure.

The linguistic evaluations' sessions are also an opportunity for applicants with language tests to prepare during the procedure to practise the oral tests, as each assessment is carried out taking into account the actual conditions and examination criteria.

The candidate undertakes to send to Omikron, in digital version, any language test diploma passed during the procedure.

- **PREPARATION FOR THE RECRUITMENT'S INTERVIEW**

According to the organisations in Germany, the recruitment process sometimes ends with a recruitment's interview. The recruitment's interview is an opportunity for the organization that receives the candidate:

- to get an idea of his profile
- to already have a first contact
- to gauge the motivation of the applicant
- to get an idea of his level in German language
- and for the candidate to have additional information about the organisation, the stay and the activity of the organisation.

The recruitment's interview, if it takes place, is central to the procedure. It is an opportunity for the applicants to already virtually meet his recruiter and demonstrate their willingness to participate in the program. A successful recruitment's interview within the framework of the procedure requires from the applicant to be able to clearly understand his correspondent during the interview, to be able to express himself as well as possible and, above all, to be able to demonstrate that he has mastered the subject within the framework of the procedure. Language skills are tested during the linguistic evaluation in order to prepare the candidate for the recruitment's interview. However, once the date of the interview has been set with the recruiting organization, Omikron organizes a preparatory interview for the candidate for the recruitment's interview. During this interview, the applicant practices with his advisor on the questions frequently asked during a that interview, as part of the procedure.

- **VISA APPLICATION DOCUMENTS**

The recruiting organization in Germany generally follows up on the application one (1) month



after the recruitment's interview. If the interview is positive, the candidate receives the necessary documents for a visa application. These documents are :

- the employment's contract
- the apartment rental contract
- health insurance documents
- a letter from the recruiting organization with details on the trip

The applicant receives from Omikron, as in the case of the signature of the Omikron procedure contract, two (2) copies of each contract, signed by the recruiting organization. The candidate must sign and return one copy to Omikron, which will then be returned to the recruiting organization.

Step 3: Preparing the visa application

First of all it is important to mention here that Omikron does not offer visas. As in any travel procedure, a visa is only offered by the consulate of the country you are visiting. The same applies to the Omikron procedure. The purpose of the Omikron procedure is to help applicants to apply in Germany for the program of their choice and to obtain the necessary travel documents. The visa application is therefore absolutely at the expenses of each applicant.

Nevertheless, at this third stage of the procedure, the applicant is prepared for a successful visa application. The success of a visa application depends on certain factors such as :

- the timing of the request in relation to the planned travel date
- the motivation letter
- the visa interview

Two video interviews with a counsellor constitute this third stage of the procedure. The first interview is organized to discuss the details of the documents received for the visa application, discuss the progress of a visa application and write the motivation letter. It is an opportunity for the candidate to better understand the visa application procedure, to know the pitfalls to be avoided during the application and to know when it is advisable to buy the flight ticket. The second interview is organized as a simulation of the visa application interview. This interview reconstitutes the conditions for a visa application interview. It is conducted by a German advisor in order to test also the applicant's language skills and ability to express himself on the important topics of the interview.

In case of satisfactory results following the simulated interview, the candidate is contacted by e-mail, informed of the assessment resulting from the interview and put in contact with the



recruiting organisation. **The Omikron procedure officially ends with this last step.** However, the simulation of the visa interview may be organised twice in case the results of the first simulation are insufficient.

At the end of the procedure the applicant is put in touch with the host organisation in Germany. Any further questions or queries should be addressed directly to the organisation concerned in Germany.

After this stage, all other expenses related to the visa application, the flight ticket and the travel arrangements are entirely at the applicant's expenses. However, the Omikron's team remains at the disposal of applicants for any other concerns. It is important to add that video interviews are no longer organized. Any contact should be made by email.



5. COUNSELLING

Once in Germany, the applicant has the opportunity to have a video interview with an Omikron consultant. This interview is not included in the original Omikron procedure, is voluntary and is a procedure in its own right. We strongly recommend this option because as a foreigner in Germany, certain information and procedures are important but not necessarily known to everyone, for example :

- The different customizable residence permits (important to know for the eventual rest of the stay in Germany)
- Renewing a visa: the deadlines (to avoid unexpected ejecting from the country)
- Diploma equivalencies for candidates wishing to study afterwards (How not to lose time for the professional life)
- Studying at the end of the program: options, where and when to apply? (Free universities, universities with low cost, possibilities of financing from the government)
- Accommodation's issues: in which states to have financially adequate housing
- Declarations of domicile: Why do it?
- Bank accounts (which banks for which advantages or disadvantages)
- Limits of international money transfert
- Tax returns: Why? And how to recover your money?
- Legislation on certain issues depending on the state (difference between Baden-Württemberg and Bayern for example)
- Social assistance: (Who offer it? What are the benefits and the inconvenient?)

Living in Europe means living according to the principle "no one is supposed to ignore the law". Having an interview with a counsellor is very important in order to learn about life in Europe, to be aware of some of the pitfalls that can easily cost a lot of money and to build a solid foundation for a successful stay. It is also not uncommon that some candidates, during their volunteering, decide, for one reason or another, to change their field of work. It is indeed possible to change field of work⁷ but this decision is nevertheless left to the candidate on the spot. This change of field of work is generally only a routine formality, but any change of activity also implies changes in the nature of the visa or residence permit. If the necessary

⁷ This topic is also discussed with the applicant during the procedure.

formalities are not carried out or are incomplete, this may lead to the outright cancellation of the residence permit, which implies a return to home. Taking part in a counselling interview under these conditions, for example, may therefore be advisable.

In order to participate in a counselling interview, you must fill in the *Counselling Interview Form*⁸ on the Omikron website. The form allows the Omikron consultant to have an overview of the topics to be discussed during the interview. The applicant has the possibility to define the topics to be discussed during the interview. If the applicant does not define any subject, the standard topics of discussion listed in the form will be used. This is followed by the payment of the counselling's fees, which will lead to an e-mail being sent to fix the date of the interview. After the interview, the candidate receives from Omikron a document summarizing the themes discussed during the interview, a document that will serve as a reference for the applicant for the major decisions he will have to take during his stay.



⁸ Make sure to fill the right Form on the Omikron Website in order to be conducted in the right procedure. It's not possible to fill both Forms.



6. FINANCING OF THE TRIP

Omikron offers its applicants the possibility to finance their travel. Here, the financing is for the purchase of the flight ticket. Omikron offers to finance the applicant up to the cost of the flight ticket before the trip. Reimbursement will be made by direct deduction from the salary of the financed applicant, during the execution of his employment's contract with the host organisation in Germany. All applicants who have obtained their employment's contract are therefore eligible to receive funding for the travel. The possibility of funding depends largely on the partnership between Omikron and the host organisation in Germany, and the willingness of the host organisation to strictly monitor the deductions for the reimbursement of the funding.

It is important to mention here that the advisory interview is not only for persons who have gone to Germany through the Omikron procedure. It is open to all other persons living in Germany, whether as workers, volunteers or students or persons already preparing their travel to Germany and who need advices on specific topics concerning their stay in the Republic of Germany.

We will complete more information in this section over time as several aspects of travel financing are currently being analysed by our team.



7. OUR FEES

<u>OMIKRON PROCEDURE</u>	800.000F CFA⁹	Including CFA 300,000F CFA for application fees and CFA 500,000F CFA for procedural costs. In the case of failure to complete the procedure, only the procedural costs are reimbursable.
<u>COUNSELLING</u>	100.000F CFA	
<u>FINANCING THE TRIP</u>	Up to the cost of the flight ticket¹⁰	Reimbursable, at an interest rate of 30% of the purchase price of the flight ticket, over a period of 6 months from the date of beginning of the employment contract in Germany.

⁹ Prices are expressed in CFA in this document. We recommend applicants who are not living in the CFA zone to use the currency converter on our website to get an estimation of the fees in their national currencies. The fact that prices are expressed in CFA does not mean that the procedure is open only to people living in the CFA zone. For participants living outside the CFA zone, their national currencies will be taken into account when drawing up contracts for the procedure.

¹⁰ As a standard, a second class air ticket with as few stopovers as possible will be financed. But the candidate is free to decide on the airline he wishes to travel on. However, Omikron reserves the right to make the final decision on the airline on which the trip will be made. It should be mentioned here that the cost of the flight ticket also varies according to several criteria, for example the period of the ticket's (summer or winter), the expected date of travel and the number of stopovers on the route.



8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

a) List of countries which the Omikron procedure is open to.

 South Africa	 Madagascar
 Algeria	 Malawi
 Angola	 Mali
 Benin	 Morocco
 Botswana	 Mauritius
 Burkina Faso	 Mauritania
 Burundi	 Mozambique
 Cameroon	 Namibia
 Cape Verde	 Niger
 Central African Republic	 Nigeria
 Comoros	 Uganda
 Congo Republic	 Rwanda
 DRC	 São Tomé and Príncipe
 Ivory Coast	 Senegal
 Djibouti	 Seychelles
 Egypt	 Sierra Leone
 Eritrea	 Somalia
 Ethiopia	 Sudan
 Gabon	 South Sudan
 The Gambia	 Eswatini
 Ghana	 Tanzania
 Guinea	 Tchad
 Guinea-Bissau	 Togo
 Equatorial Guinea	 Tunisia
 Kenya	 Zambia
 Lesotho	 Zimbabwe
 Liberia	
 Libya	

b) Omikron offers the possibility to register free of charge for its procedure to anyone who has managed to convince 10 others to register for the Omikron procedure. To do so, any new candidate will have to mention in the contact form, the name and email address of the person from whom he learned about the Omikron procedure. Once the same name appears in the contact forms of 10 candidates actually registered for the procedure, the Omikron team will contact the concerned person.