



FAQ – Processing of visa applications in times of COVID-19 (Visa Section Dekwaneh)

1. When will the visa section finally open again?

As soon as possible and step-by-step.

One of our big priorities at the moment is to re-open our visa sections to customers. For sure the process will be different from what it used to be as we have to adapt it to the new circumstances, but we will find solutions for us and for you and slowly try to get back to some kind of routine.

Our main concern regarding this topic is the health and safety of both our customers and our staff.

Another important puzzle piece in our assessment are the regulations that are in place regarding travelling from and to Lebanon, Syria and Germany.

NEW! Currently we are re-booking national visa appointments of Lebanese applicants that had to be cancelled during the closure since March. We will open appointment waiting lists for family reunion, students and re-entry visas on the website very soon.

We are generally not accepting “Schengen visa” applications at this moment, apart from very urgent exceptional cases (e.g. medical emergencies or funerals of very close family members (parents, spouses, children).

We are regularly updating information on this topic on our website. Please visit

<http://www.beirut.diplo.de> and click on “Informationen für Visaantragsteller” (highlighted on the main page) for current information.

NEW! Please note that we cannot give you more detailed information via e-mail than the information that is on the website. You will not get information faster via e-mail, but we need time to answer your e-mail with referral to the website anyway – it is not a lot of time per applicant, but it quantifies if hundreds of people are asking the same questions every day.

Therefore: Please – also in your own interest and in the interest to achieve a process that is as fast and smooth for everybody – refrain from inquiries about the date for your visa application via e-mail and check our website regularly instead.

2. I have handed in my application before the closure, can you please process it while we are all waiting for better times?

Yes, we can and we do!

At the moment we do not have the usual number of employees present to work on all applications that were already handed in, but **we do our best. If we need anything from you, we will contact you directly.** There is no need for you to ask us whether we need something more from you if we do not contact you to ask for something. **The less e-mail requests and telephone calls we get, the faster we can process all applications.**

3. Can you please give me my visa so that I can take one of the flights that are currently leaving Lebanon for Germany?

NEW! If we can, we will contact you in the first half of July.

At the moment stricter entry regulations to the European Union are in place than is usually the case.

NEW! Lebanon has unfortunately not been added to the list of countries for which the European Commission recommended a complete re-opening of the borders to European Union member states.

NEW! As a general rule most of our applicants that have applied for a national visa (long-term stay) will be able to travel now, after they receive the visa. For some long-term visa categories there are still restrictions though.

If you are eligible to pick-up your visa, the visa section will call you in the coming days. Please note that we have to limit the pick-up slots per day due to health concerns. We are trying to facilitate a safe and quick handout of all visas that can be issued at this moment in the coming two weeks. **Please wait for our call/e-mail regarding your pick-up appointment and refrain from additional inquiries via e-mail. Please do not book a flight before you have your visa.**

If you have applied for a visa to travel there for a **short period** of time only (“Schengen visa”, i.e. family visit, tourism, business trip), **you can generally still not enter Germany coming from Lebanon** at this moment.

There are only very few exceptions from this rule. You can find more information on this on the website of the German Federal Police (our border police) <http://www.bundespolizei.de> who makes the final decisions about whether someone can legally enter Germany or not. The information there is currently only available in German. You can check our Ministry of the Interior’s webpage <http://www.bmi.bund.de/EN> for slightly more general information in English.

Please also consult our website <http://www.beirut.diplo.de> regarding this topic (click on “Informationen für Visaantragsteller” (highlighted on the main page)).

4. I have already received my visa but could not use it due to the pandemic – can the Embassy prolong it?

NEW! Good news! In many cases - yes.

- If your visa (category D –no Schengen) was issued by the German embassy in Beirut (Dekwaneh) AND
- if it had a validity from 15th march onwards and has now expired or will expire until 29th July AND
- if the purpose and the destination of your trip have not changed

please send a scan/photo of your expired visa to visa-extension-lbn@beir.diplo.de within one month after this FAQ has been published (15.07.2020).

We will assess your case and get back to you with information on the process and on whether we need further documents from you.

Please note that we will not be able to re-issue your last visa, if you don’t contact us through the above mentioned e-mail-address within the mentioned time frame.

5. I already live in Germany but got stuck in Lebanon during the pandemic and now my residence permit has expired – what can I do?

Most importantly: Please talk to your Foreigners' Office (Ausländerbehörde).

Once you have settled in Germany, the Ausländerbehörde is your most important partner regarding all matters concerning your residence status. They will be able to tell you what options you have regarding your residence permit and travelling back to Germany.

There is no centralized Aliens' Authority in Germany, so depending on where you live in Germany and your specific situation, their advice and approach might be slightly different (within the same regulatory framework).

In any case the Embassy cannot make any decisions in your case without at least consulting with the Ausländerbehörde at some point, so they are really the first authority that you should talk to. If you don't know the phone number or e-mail-address of the officer handling your case, please check on their website for general contact details. If your family members are currently at the place of your residence in Germany, they might be able to inquire on your behalf as well.

If your Ausländerbehörde does not have clear advice regarding your specific case or refers back to the Embassy for further info, you will have to apply for a re-entry visa (Visum zur Wiedereinreise) through our visa section. It is a category D type visa.

NEW! Appointments for this visa type are available through our website! We have uploaded an appointment waiting list only for persons who want to apply for a re-entry visa.

Please note that special priority appointments can only be given to persons whose residence permit expired SOLELY because of the closure of the airport – you will have to be able to prove this upon request.

6. NEW! As the Goethe Institute in Beirut has been closed due to the pandemic, will you waive any kind of German language requirements for national visas?

No.

The closure of the Goethe Institute in Beirut was only temporary. The Institute is slowly starting to open for language exams again at this point. If German language skills are required by law for the type of visa you applied for, there is a reason behind this which did not become invalid because the Goethe Institute has not been offering language exams for a few weeks.

However: You can hand in your application without the language certificate, if you don't have it yet. It is no problem if you hand it in at a later point of time. Depending on your visa type we might be able to start processing your file without the language certificate and add it to the file later on. In some cases we will have to wait for the certificate to start processing though.

You will have to prove your language proficiency before a visa can be issued though.

If your level of German is in fact much higher than the level required for your visa type (e.g. much higher than the A1 level required for a family reunion with your spouse), but you don't have a language certificate to prove this, please let us know when you hand in your documents. There might be options to waive the requirement to hand in a language certificate in your specific case.

This list of frequently asked questions will be frequently updated. Please check in again in a few days if your question has not been answered yet. All answers are given to the best of your knowledge at the time of publishing them. Please note that they are not legally binding.