

Do I have a right to a current account?!

If you don't have a current account, life can be expensive and complicated. For each individual transfer (Überweisung), you have to pay hefty charges. It also makes it more difficult to receive payments (wages, social benefits etc.) and even looking for a flat or job is harder.

Banks often refuse to open accounts if you have a negative credit record (SCHUFA report) of sometimes even if you receive unemployment benefit II (ALG II).

Unfortunately, you have no statutory legal right to a current account.

However, banks have voluntarily agreed to open so-called **credit accounts (Guthabekonto)**.

What is a credit account?

This is a current account that cannot be overdrawn. If the account is not sufficiently funded, no transfers will be carried out and you cannot take out any money. There is no point arguing with the bank staff as you then risk losing the account altogether. You will not be given a credit card. However, very often you will be given a cash card which you can use to withdraw money at cash machines, but which cannot be used as an EC card to make payments. Sometimes direct debit orders will be allowed.

How can I get a credit account?

Talk to your bank.

Don't forget: Take your passport/ID card and proof of earnings with you!

Apply for a **credit account** to be opened.

If the bank refuses, ask politely but assertively, why they have refused. The bank may refuse to open an account (in writing), if you have debts with this bank or already have an account with another bank.

If other reasons are stated (e.g. negative credit record), note down the date, reasons for the refusal and the name of the bank clerk and stand up for yourself!

Can the credit account be closed?

The account may only be closed if you overdraw the account without permission or if you behave badly towards a member of the bank staff. Unfortunately, however, accounts are also often closed if the bank receives an attachment order. You should fight this!

How can I defend myself?

First of all try to settle the matter with the bank (branch manager).

If this is not possible, go the complaints office responsible for the matter.

You can find the address and a model complaint on:
www.meine-schulden.de/ueberschuldung_vermeiden/ombudsstellen

Local debt advice bureaus will also be willing to help.

Gefördert von: