



Federal Ministry  
of Education  
and Research

Federal Office  
for Migration  
and Refugees

# Recognition procedure for healthcare professionals



**RECOGNITION**  
IN GERMANY

## Recognition procedure

### Do I need to have my professional qualifications recognised?

Do I need to have my professional qualifications recognised? If you wish to work without any restrictions as a doctor, dentist, vet, pharmacist, psychological psychotherapist or child/adolescent psychotherapist in Germany, you need state recognition, known as an “Approbation”. You may apply for an **Approbation** irrespective of your nationality and residence status.

If you obtained your qualifications outside the European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland, you may alternatively apply for a **temporary authorisation to practice**. However, this is usually only issued for a maximum of two years and can only be extended in particular individual cases. In order to obtain one, you will need to be able to demonstrate that you have completed your medical training. Authorisation to practice does not constitute recognition of the professional qualifications which you obtained abroad.

If you do not intend to practice as a doctor, but would like to work in industry, for example, you do not require an Approbation or authorisation to practice.

### How does the recognition procedure work?

You should first submit an application for an Approbation to the Approbation authority that is responsible for you. Which authority this is depends on where you actually work, or would like to work, in Germany. You can also submit an application if you are still abroad.

The next stage of the procedure mainly depends on the country in which you obtained your qualifications. Depending on your professional qualification, your application will follow either **the automatic** or **individual recognition procedure**:



■ In the case of the **automatic recognition procedure**, the qualifications of doctors, dentists, vets and pharmacists which were obtained in the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland will be recognised without an individual equivalence assessment. This is contingent on your professional qualification being listed in the Annex to the Professional Recognition Directive (2005/36/EC). Your nationality is immaterial. The Annex to the Directive contains a reference date for each professional qualification. If you began your training prior to this date, you must also provide evidence that you have actually continuously and lawfully practiced your profession for at least three out of the last five years.

In certain circumstances, the Approbation authority will also require a certificate of conformity from the country in which you completed your training. This confirms that your training meets the minimum standards of the Professional Recognition Directive.

You will be granted an Approbation if you also satisfy the other Approbation requirements (e. g. command of German).

■ The **individual recognition procedure** applies if the automatic recognition of the foreign qualification is not an option. This affects:

- people with qualifications from third countries;
- doctors, dentists, vets and pharmacists whose qualifications are not covered by the automatic recognition procedure;
- psychological psychotherapists; and
- child/adolescent psychotherapists.

In the case of the individual recognition process, the Approbation authority will compare your qualifications with the corresponding German qualifications, using formal criteria such as content and duration of training and professional experience.

You will be granted an Approbation if no substantial differences are found when comparing your qualifications and you satisfy the other requirements (e. g. command of German).

Should substantial differences be found when comparing your qualifications, you must take a knowledge or aptitude test in order to obtain an Approbation. In the meantime, you may work with a temporary authorisation to practice where appropriate. This entitles you to practice your profession to a limited extent (e. g. as a junior doctor).

#### Do I need to be able to speak German to obtain an Approbation?

A command of German is a pre-requisite for an Approbation. You must prove that your knowledge of German is at level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference (GER). Doctors, dentists and pharmacists must also prove that they have specialist language skills at level C1. Psychological psychotherapists and child/adolescent psychotherapists need to have specialist language skills at level C2. These occupationally-related specialist language skills are required so that you can easily communicate with your colleagues and patients.

There is no need to provide evidence of your language qualifications when submitting your application. You simply need to demonstrate your language proficiency during the course of the procedure. More information is available from your Approbation authority.

#### How much does the procedure cost?

The Approbation authority will determine the fee. Please therefore enquire about the likely costs of the procedure before submitting your application. If you are registered as a job-seeker in Germany or are claiming welfare benefits, the costs may – under certain conditions – be met by the public authorities, such as the Federal Employment Agency or the Job Centre. Please note that financial assistance must always be applied for in advance.

### What documents do I need?

You will need to submit the following documents **when applying for an Approbation**:

- application form (available on your Approbation authority's website);
- proof of identity (identity card or passport);
- an overview of training courses and previous work experience, in table form;
- a copy of qualifications and further certificates of competence where appropriate;
- certificates regarding relevant professional experience and further training;
- a certificate stating your entitlement to practice your profession in your country of origin;
- a declaration that you intend to practice your profession in Germany (does not apply to qualifications gained in the EU/EEA/Switzerland).

**During the course of the procedure**, you must also submit the following documents to demonstrate that you meet the other Approbation requirements:

- a current medical certificate confirming fitness to practice;
- a current certificate of good conduct;
- a statement of whether criminal proceedings are pending;
- evidence of language qualifications.

These documents must usually be submitted in German. The Approbation authority will inform you whether translations need to be made by a sworn translator and whether copies



need to be certified. They will also advise what other documents are required. Your application will not be processed until all the necessary documents have been submitted.

### Have you gained specialist qualifications outside Germany and intend to work as a medical, dental, veterinary or pharmacy specialist in Germany?

Then as well as an Approbation, you also require recognition of your specialised professional title. You can apply for this from the relevant Land Medical, Dental, Veterinary or Pharmacist Association in the Federal Land in which you wish to practice. In some Federal Länder, you can already apply for this approval if you hold a temporary authorisation to practice.

### Where can I find more information?

Details of which office is responsible for your recognition procedure and other information regarding the procedure are available online in several languages at [www.anererkennung-in-deutschland.de](http://www.anererkennung-in-deutschland.de). Initial information in German and English is available by phoning the Hotline “**Working and Living in Germany**” on +49 30 1815-1111 from 9 a. m. to 3 p. m. CET.



Useful information about practicing your profession in Germany is also available from the following websites:

- German Medical Association (German and English):  
[www.bundesaerztekammer.de](http://www.bundesaerztekammer.de)
- German Dental Association (German, English and French):  
[www.bzaek.de](http://www.bzaek.de)
- German Veterinary Association (German):  
[www.bundestierärztekammer.de](http://www.bundestierärztekammer.de)
- German Pharmacists' Association (German and English):  
[www.abda.de](http://www.abda.de)
- German Federal Chamber of Psychotherapists (German):  
[www.bptk.de](http://www.bptk.de)

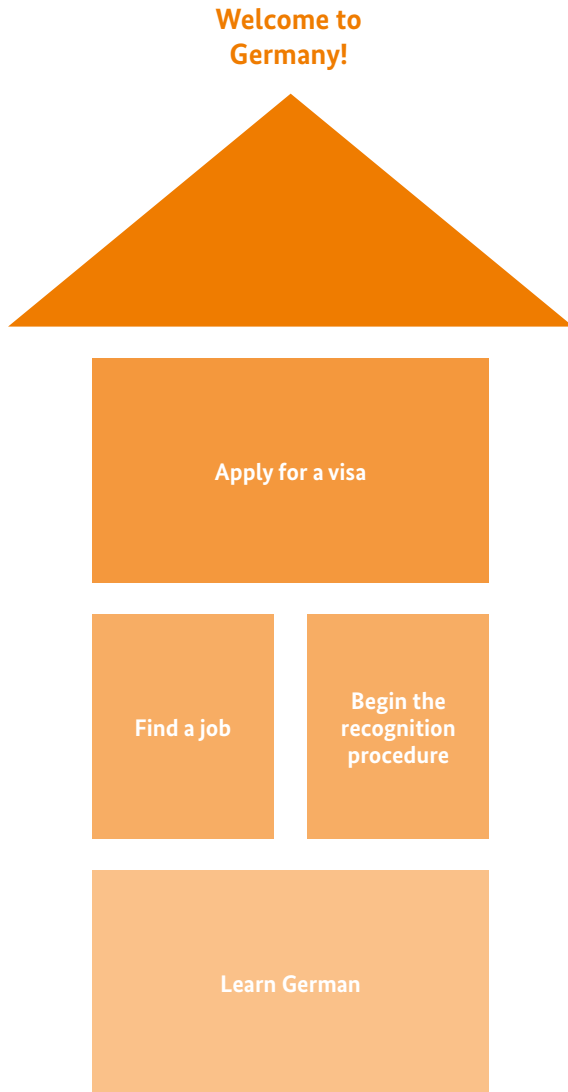
## Information on entering the country

### What do I need to consider when entering Germany?

The entry requirements that apply to you will depend on your nationality:

- If you are a citizen of a Member State of the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland, you can enter Germany **without a visa**. Swiss nationals must apply for a CH residence permit from the immigration authority after arrival.
- If you are a citizen of Australia, Israel, Japan, Canada, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand or the United States of America, you can also enter **without a visa**. You must apply for the necessary long-term residence permit directly from the immigration authority in Germany within three months of your arrival. You can also apply for a visa before leaving your country of origin. The advantage of a visa is that you will be allowed to work **as soon as** you arrive in Germany.
- If you are a national of another third country and intend to work in Germany, you must hold a **visa** in order to enter the country. You can apply for this from a German diplomatic mission in your country of habitual residence. As you want to come to Germany to pursue your career, you should apply for a **visa for the purpose of employment/EU Blue Card** to allow you entry.

## Your arrival in Germany – step by step



You will need to produce the following **documentation** in order to obtain a visa and/or residence permit:

- evidence of a German university degree, or a foreign degree that is recognised in Germany or is comparable with a German degree; and
- evidence of a specific job offer or contract of employment.

**If you intend to practice as a doctor**, you will require an Approbation, or authorisation to practice, in order to obtain a visa and/or residence permit. You must also demonstrate that your university degree is recognised in Germany or is at least comparable with a German university degree.

If your qualifications were not fully recognised during the Approbation procedure, you have two options:

- You can apply for a visa and/or residence permit using an authorisation to practice; or
- You can initially complete a **course to prepare for an assessment test** in Germany, for example, and then apply for an entry visa for this training programme in order to enter the country.

**If you do not intend to practice as a doctor**, but want to work in a company, for example, you do not need an Approbation or authorisation to practice to obtain a visa/residence permit. In this case, you can search the “anabin” database to see if your university degree is comparable with a German one. If you are unable to find your qualifications in the database, you must apply for a certificate evaluation from the Central Office for Foreign Education if necessary.

More information is available at <http://anabin.kmk.org/> and at [www.kmk.org/zab/zeugnisbewertungen](http://www.kmk.org/zab/zeugnisbewertungen).



### TIP: EU Blue Card

If you meet the abovementioned requirements and can also provide evidence of a certain **minimum salary**, you have the option of applying for an **EU Blue Card**. The EU Blue Card is a residence permit for highly-qualified persons, and makes it easier for your spouse to join you, for example.

More information about the EU Blue Card is available at [www.bamf.de/blauekarte](http://www.bamf.de/blauekarte).

### TIP: Looking for a job

You can use the Federal Employment Agency's "job exchange" to look for a job in Germany: [www.jobboerse.arbeitsagentur.de](http://www.jobboerse.arbeitsagentur.de).

Specific medical jobs are also advertised on the [www.aerzteblatt.de](http://www.aerzteblatt.de) website.

### Do you intend to look for a job once you have arrived in Germany?

Instead of entering with a visa for the purpose of employment/EU Blue Card, you can also do so with a six-month **visa for the purpose of seeking employment**. This is also contingent on you holding a German university degree or a foreign degree that is recognised in Germany or is comparable. As a visa for the purpose of seeking employment does not entitle you to work, you must also demonstrate that you can cover your living expenses yourself during your stay. As soon as you have found a suitable job, you can apply for a residence permit for employment from the local immigration authority.

Please note that an Approbation or temporary authorisation to practice is not required for this visa. A printout of your anabin database search or certificate evaluation will suffice. However, if you intend to work as a doctor, you will need an Approbation or temporary authorisation to practice from the day you commence your employment at the latest.

### Do you first of all want to come to Germany to learn German?

If you would initially like to improve your command of German, you have the option of entering with a visa for the purpose of **learning the language**. If you subsequently intend to remain in Germany uninterrupted, you should state this during the visa application process. Otherwise, you must expect to initially have to leave again upon completion of your language course.

German courses are offered by various language institutes. Information about specialist German courses for medical practitioners is available on the Goethe Institut website, [www.goethe.de](http://www.goethe.de), and others.

### Do you have any more questions?

Information about the issuing of visas is available from your German diplomatic mission and on the Federal Foreign Office website: [www.auswaertiges-amt.de](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de).

The [www.make-it-in-germany.de](http://www.make-it-in-germany.de) welcome portal and [www.bamf.de](http://www.bamf.de) also contain lots of information about entry to and employment in Germany.

The Hotline "**Working and Living in Germany**" not only provides information about the recognition of foreign professional qualifications, but also about entry and residence, learning German and on employment and careers. Hotline staff are available to provide advice in German and English from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. CET on: **+49 30 1815-1111**.





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