

# Applying for recognition as a nurse with a professional qualification from a third country

Would you like to work as a nurse in Germany? Then you need a state permit. To obtain a state permit, you must submit an application and have your foreign professional qualification recognized.

## Competent Department

- [Die Senatorin für Gesundheit, Frauen und Verbraucherschutz | Referat 20 - Berufe im Gesundheitswesen](#)

## Basic information

The nursing profession is regulated in Germany. This means that in order to work as a nurse in Germany, you need a state license. With this permit, you can use the professional title "Pflegefachperson", "Pflegefachfrau" or "Pflegefachmann" and work in the profession.

You can also obtain a state permit from the competent authority in Germany if you have a professional qualification from a so-called third country. Third countries are all countries that do not belong to the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland. In order to obtain the permit, you must have your foreign professional qualification recognized. In the recognition procedure, the competent authority will compare your professional qualification from abroad with the German professional qualification and check its equivalence. The equivalence of the professional qualification is an important prerequisite for the granting of a state license.

You can also waive the equivalence check and complete a knowledge test or an adaptation period directly. In this case, the competent authority will not carry out an equivalence check.

In addition to the equivalence of the professional qualification, you must also meet other requirements for the permit to be issued. Further requirements include, for example, sufficient German language skills and health suitability.

If your professional qualification comes from the EU, the EEA or Switzerland, other regulations apply.

You can also apply for the procedure from abroad.

## Requirements

- You have a comparable professional qualification as a nurse from a third country.
- You want to work as a nurse in Germany.
- Personal suitability: You are reliable to work as a care professional and have no criminal record.
- Health suitability: You are mentally and physically fit to work as a nurse.
- You have German language skills at the required level. This is normally language level B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

## What documents do I need?

- The responsible office will tell you which documents you need to submit. Important documents are generally
  - Proof of identity (identity card or passport)
  - Marriage certificate (if your name has changed due to marriage)
  - Curriculum vitae
  - Proof of your professional qualifications (e.g. certificates, professional certificate)
  - Proof of training
  - Proof of your relevant professional experience in a profession comparable to that of a nursing specialist
  - Proof of other relevant knowledge for working as a nursing specialist
  - Do you still live or work in a third country, i.e. not in the EU, EEA or Switzerland? Then you may need to prove that you have received a commitment from a health and care facility to work as a nursing specialist in Germany.
- You usually hand in these documents later. The responsible office will inform you when you should hand in the documents:
  - Proof of your personal suitability: Criminal record extract or certificate of good conduct from your country of origin.
  - Proof of your health suitability: Medical certificate.
  - Proof of your German language skills: Language certificate

The responsible office will tell you which documents you need to submit as a simple copy, a certified copy or the original.

## Procedure

### Application

You apply to the competent authority for permission to use the professional title "Pflegefachfrau" or "Pflegefachmann". Or you can apply for the professional title "Pflegefachperson". You can submit the application with the documents to the competent authority or send it by post. Do not send any originals. Sometimes you can also send the application electronically. The competent office will inform you.

You can submit an application if you do not yet live in Germany.

### Examination of equivalence

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The competent authority will then check whether you meet all the requirements. An important requirement is the equivalence of your professional qualification. The competent authority will compare your professional qualification with the German professional qualification as a nursing specialist. The professional qualification is equivalent if there are no significant differences between your professional qualification and the German professional qualification.

You can also waive the equivalence check and complete a knowledge test or an adaptation period directly. In this case, the competent authority will not carry out an equivalence check.

#### Possible results of the examination

If your foreign professional qualification is equivalent, it will be recognized. The competent authority can confirm the result in writing. You must still meet the other requirements. You will then receive permission to use the professional title "Pflegefachperson", "Pflegefachfrau" or "Pflegefachmann".

Are there any significant differences between your professional qualification and the German professional qualification? You may be able to compensate for the differences through your professional experience, other knowledge, skills or competencies (lifelong learning). Knowledge, skills and competences must be certified by an authority in the country in which you acquired the knowledge, skills or competences.

However, it may be that the significant differences cannot be compensated for by your professional experience, knowledge, skills or competences. In this case, the competent authority will inform you of the significant differences between your professional qualification and the German professional qualification and why you cannot compensate for these significant differences.

The competent authority will also tell you what compensatory measures you can take to offset the significant differences.

If you decide not to take compensatory measures, your professional qualification will not be recognized and you will not be allowed to work as a nurse in Germany.

#### Compensatory measures

There are various compensatory measures:

- Adaptation course: The adaptation course lasts a maximum of three years.
- Knowledge examination: The knowledge examination tests your knowledge in certain subjects and areas. The knowledge test comprises an oral and practical part.

You can choose between an adaptation period or a knowledge test, even if you choose not to take an equivalence test.

If you successfully complete the compensation measure and meet all other requirements, you will receive permission to use the professional title "Pflegefachperson ", "Pflegefachfrau" or "Pflegefachmann".

## Legal bases

- [§§ 1 Absatz 1, 40, 43 Gesetz über die Pflegeberufe \(Pflegeberufegesetz - PflBG\)](#)
- [§§ 43 ff. Ausbildungs- und Prüfungsverordnung für die Pflegeberufe \(Pflegeberufe-Ausbildungs- und -Prüfungsverordnung - PflAPrV\)](#)

## More information

### Notification of equivalence

The equivalence assessment is always carried out as part of the approval procedure (recognition procedure). You can apply for a separate decision on the result of the assessment.

### Procedure for ethnic German repatriates

As an ethnic German repatriate, you can choose to undergo the recognition procedure in accordance with the laws mentioned here or in accordance with the Federal Expellees Act. You can decide for yourself. The responsible office will advise you which procedure is right for you.

### Legal remedy

You can take legal action against the decision of the competent authority within a certain period of time (for example, by lodging an objection). The decision will then be reviewed. Details can be found in the information on legal remedies at the end of your decision. We recommend that you first speak to the competent authority before taking legal action against the decision.

## What deadlines must be paid attention to?

There is no deadline.

Sometimes documents are still missing from the procedure. The responsible office will then inform you by when you must submit the documents.

## How long does it take to process

The processing time varies from case to case. The responsible office will inform you if any documents are missing.

## **What are the costs?**

The responsible office will inform you of the costs. The costs generally depend on the time and effort required for processing.

Additional costs may also be incurred (e.g. for translations, certifications or compensatory measures such as an adaptation period or a knowledge test). These costs vary from case to case.

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