RECOGNITION IN GERMANY
Information portal of the German government
for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications

Funded by:
Federal Ministry
for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth

Your recognition procedure as General nurse (m/f) (German: Pflegefachperson) in Düsseldorf, North Rhine-Westphalia

Download: 03.11.2026

Quick-Info

Name of the procedure

There are two necessary procedures. The first procedure is called:

- Assessment of equivalence (in German: **Feststellung der Gleichwertigkeit**).

Once equivalence has been successfully determined, you must apply for the second procedure. This procedure is called:

- Issuing of authorisation to use the professional title (in German: **Erteilung der Erlaubnis zum Führen der Berufsbezeichnung**).

Requirements for recognition

For the assessment of equivalence:

- Equivalence of your professional qualification

For authorisation to use the professional title:

- Equivalence of your professional qualification

- Personal aptitude
- Medical fitness
- Knowledge of German

Knowledge of German

- For the authorisation to use the professional title, you need knowledge of German at **language level B2** of the Common European Reference Framework for languages.

This way you can prove your German language skills:

- You can prove your German language skills by a language certificate.
- You can also prove your German language skills with the specialist language examination for nursing. You can take the specialist language examination for nursing at the Pflegekammer NRW.

You are not required to prove your German language skills when applying. You can provide evidence of knowledge of German at a later point in time.

Duration

- **One month** at the latest following receipt of your application by the competent authority: The competent authority will notify you of receipt of the documents. They will inform you if documents are missing. The procedure begins when the documents are complete.
- After **4 months** at the latest you will receive notice containing the result. In specific cases the competent authority may extend the procedure.
- For professional qualifications from the EU, EEA or Switzerland, the procedure is often shorter. It then lasts for a maximum of **3 months**. For this, you must meet the requirements for automatic recognition.

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Costs and financial support

- Recognition procedure: maximum €277,50
- There may be additional costs, e.g. for certifications, reports from the Central Assessment Agency for Healthcare Professions (GfG) or compensation measures

It may be possible for costs to be paid via financial support. **Here** you can find more information. You can apply for financial support if you live in Germany. **Important note:** You must first apply for financial support and then apply for recognition.

Costs and financial support

- Recognition procedure: maximum €277,50
- In addition, there may be costs for, e.g., equivalence assessments or a knowledge test. The competent authority will inform you of the exact costs.
- There may be additional costs, e.g. for certifications, reports from the Central Assessment Agency for Healthcare Professions (GfG) or compensation measures

It may be possible for costs to be paid via financial support. **Here** you can find more information. You can apply for financial support if you live in Germany. **Important note:** You must first apply for financial support and then apply for recognition.

Documents for my application

Required documents

For the online application, you need the documents as PDF files. You can scan or photograph your documents for this purpose.

- **Proof of identity** (e.g. passport or personal identification). The following information must be in Latin characters: Last name, first name, place of birth, date of birth.

- **Birth certificate** or extract from the family register and a German translation

- **Evidence of the change of name** (e.g. marriage certificate, if your name has changed through marriage) and a German translation
- **Curriculum vitae** in German
- Evidence of your professional qualification (e.g. certificates, certificate of entitlement) and a German translation
- If necessary: certificate of conformity and a German translation
- **Evidence of your knowledge of German**: language certificate in German. You can also submit this document later by post or in person.
- Intention to start work in German: You may have to prove that you want to work in Germany.
- Information about an application for recognition already submitted. In this case, state to which authority you applied. If you already have a notice: Upload the notice in the online application.

In most cases these documents are submitted later. The competent authority will inform you as to when you should submit the documents.

- Evidence of your personal aptitude: Certificate of good conduct from your country of origin (e.g. criminal record extract). You also need a German translation. You can also submit the document later. The document must be no more than 3 months old when the application is submitted.
- Evidence of your medical fitness: doctor's certificate from Germany or from a consultant doctor at the German Embassy. You also need a German translation. You can also submit the document later. The document must be no more than 3 months old when the application is submitted.

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- **Curriculum vitae** in German
- Evidence of your professional qualification (e.g. certificates, certificate of entitlement) and a German translation
- Evidence of the content and duration of your training (e.g. diploma supplement, transcript of records) and a German translation
- Evidence of your **professional experience** in this profession (e.g. employment references) and a German translation
- Evidence of your other qualifications (e.g. continuing vocational training, seminars) and a German translation
- **Evidence of your knowledge of German**: language certificate in German. You can also submit this document later by post or in person.
- You have to prove: You are allowed to work in the profession in your country of training. You also need a German translation.
- Intention to start work in German: You may have to prove that you want to work in Germany.
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translation. You can also submit the document later. The document must be no more than 3 months old when the application is submitted.

Equivalence assessment or opting out of the equivalence assessment?

You have 2 options:

1. The equivalence assessment: The competent authority compares your professional qualification with the German equivalent. To do this, it examines your documents. It also takes into account, for example, your professional experience.
2. You opt out of the equivalence assessment. In that case, your documents will not be examined in detail. The process may be quicker. You will need to demonstrate your knowledge and skills in a different way: through a knowledge test or an adaptation period. You can usually choose between the knowledge test and the adaptation period.

If you opt out of the equivalence assessment, you will need to submit fewer documents. For example, you do not need to submit:

- Evidence of the content and duration of your training (e.g. diploma supplement, curriculum)
- Proof of your professional experience

You cannot change your decision later. Seek counselling beforehand on which option is best for you. The competent authority will help you.

Translations and certifications

If a certificate is not in German, you usually need a German translation. Sworn or authorised translators must prepare the translations.

Personally created documents do not have to be translated by sworn or authorised translators. In this case, a simple translation is enough. A personally created document is e.g. your curriculum vitae.

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My steps to recognition

I apply to the competent authority. How does this work?

You may also apply if you are not yet living in Germany.

- You can submit your application online. You will then leave our information page. For your application, you need to upload your documents. A tip: Collect your documents first. Then start the application.
- You can also hand in the application with the documents to the competent authority. You can also send the application to the competent authority by post. Do not send originals! In this case,use the application form. You can find the application form **here**.

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The competent authority is processing my application. What does that mean?

Application for recognition

The competent authority receives the application. After one month at the latest, it will confirm that the application has arrived. Once the competent authority has received all the documents from you, it processes your application.

The competent authority carries out an equivalence assessment: It compares your professional qualification with the German professional qualification. As part of this, the competent authority takes into account your professional experience, other certificates and other qualifications.

The competent authority then checks other requirements for use of the professional title. This includes, e.g. your personal aptitude, your medical fitness and your knowledge of German.

The recognition procedure takes a maximum of **4 months**. In specific cases the competent authority may extend the procedure. At the end, the competent authority sends you a notice containing the result.

Application for authorisation to use the professional title

If the equivalence assessment is successful, you apply for authorisation to use professional title. You apply to the relevant district government ("Bezirksregierung"). The district government then checks the notice and the further requirements. In most cases you must provide evidence of your knowledge of German, your personal suitability and your medical fitness.

Automatic recognition

For professional qualifications from the EU, EEA or Switzerland, automatic recognition often applies to this profession. This means that there is no individual equivalence assessment. The procedure therefore takes a maximum of 3 months.

However, you must also apply for automatic recognition to the competent authority. You must meet the following requirements for automatic recognition:

- You received your professional qualification after the so-called reference date. The reference date for each country of training is to be found in **Annex V.5** of the Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council

of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications (see under “Further Information – Info and links”).

or

- You have a certificate of conformity from your country of training.

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The competent authority receives the application. After one month at the latest, it will confirm that the application has arrived. Once the competent authority has received all the documents from you, it processes your application.

The competent authority carries out an **equivalence assessment**: It compares your professional qualification with the German professional qualification. Therefore, the competent authority will prepare an expert report on equivalence. As part of this, the competent authority takes into account your professional experience and other qualifications.

You can also take a knowledge test. In this case, the competent authority does not prepare an expert report on equivalence.

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The competent authority informs me of the result in a notice. What are the possible outcomes?

Outcome: Recognition

Your professional qualification and the German professional qualification are equivalent. You receive authorisation to use the professional title. You receive a certificate for this. You also meet all further requirements. Your professional qualification is recognised. Professionally you have the **same rights** as a person with the German professional qualification.

Outcome: No recognition because the professional qualification is not equivalent.

There are substantial differences between your professional qualification and the German professional qualification. You are not able to compensate for these differences with your professional experience and other knowledge of the profession. Your professional qualification is therefore **not equivalent** to the German professional qualification. Your professional qualification is not recognised.

In most cases you are able to complete a compensation measure. This allows you to compensate for the substantial differences.

Outcome: No recognition because you do not meet all the requirements.

Your professional qualification is equivalent. You have applied for authorisation to use the professional title. However, you do **not** meet **all other requirements** to use the professional title. You may still need to provide evidence that you e.g. are personally apt or have knowledge of German. Your district government ("Bezirksregierung") will inform you of which evidence is missing.

You are able to take legal action against the decision of the competent authority. Details on this procedure can be found in the **legal redress advice** (German: “Rechtsbehelfsbelehrung”) at the end of your notice. We recommend that you speak to a counselling centre first before challenging the decision or taking legal action.

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I receive no recognition. What can I do?

Compensation measures

If your professional qualification is not equivalent you can complete a compensation measure. A compensation measure allows you to compensate for substantial differences. Substantial differences are listed in your notice.

There are a range of compensation measures:

- Adaptation period
- Aptitude test

If you successfully complete the compensation measure, you receive a certificate. If your professional qualification is now equivalent, you will receive notice of the equivalence.

The notice enables you to apply to your district government ("Bezirksregierung") for authorisation to use the professional title. The district government checks the further requirements (e.g. personal aptitude or medical fitness). If you meet all requirements, your professional qualification is **recognised**. You receive authorisation to use the professional title. Professionally, you then have **the same rights** as a person with the German professional qualification.

Do you come from a third country? You are permitted to enter Germany for a compensation measure. Please seek advice if you have questions, or find out more about entry e.g. via the hotline **Working and Living in Germany**.

Counselling

If you do **not meet all requirements**, you can find out from the district government ("Bezirksregierung") about the options available to you. Were you not able e.g. to provide evidence of your personal aptitude or your knowledge of German? The district government can help you with this.

I receive no recognition. What can I do?

Compensation measures

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There are a range of compensation measures:

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- Knowledge test

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My other options

Recognition partnership

Do you need recognition in order to work in Germany? You can also apply for recognition after entering the country. For this you need a recognition partnership with your future employer in Germany.

The following requirements apply to a recognition partnership:

- You have completed training of at least two years or a degree.
- Your qualification is recognised by the state in the country of training. **The Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB)** will confirm this for you.
- You need German language skills at least at level A2 of the Common European Reference Framework for languages.
- You have found an employer.

Further ways to work in Germany

You may also be able to work in a non-regulated profession in Germany without recognition:

- This is possible, for example, with completed training and professional experience. What's also important is how much you earn, whether you have a contract of employment, whether you speak German and how old you are. We recommend that you complete the Quick-Check here, this will provide all the information: **Make-it-in-Germany.com**.
- This is possible, for example, with a higher education qualification: Find out whether it is comparable to a German higher education qualification. There are two ways of checking this.
- anabin database: You will find universities in the database. Your university must be recognised in the database (H+). AND your higher education qualification must be assessed as equivalent. This then means that your qualification is equivalent to a German higher education qualification. Save as a PDF. This is evidence. Further information and a guide is available at **Make-**

it-in-Germany.com.

- Statement of Comparability: What if your university or qualification are not in anabin? In this case you can apply to the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB) for an individual statement of comparability. The statement of comparability is a document that confirms the equivalence of your higher education qualification with a German **higher education qualification**.

Working without recognition

Partial access to the profession

Did you complete your professional qualification in an EU country, the EEA or in Switzerland? If so, you can work in the profession without recognition. However, you need so-called **partial access to the profession**. You must apply for partial access to the profession from the competent authority.

With partial access to the profession, the following applies:

- You are not permitted to perform all activities in the Profession.
- You are only permitted to use the professional title from your country of training.

You need to meet the following requirements for partial access:

- With your professional qualification, you are able to work without restrictions in your country of training.
- Your professional qualification is not equivalent to the German professional qualification. The substantial differences are large. In this case a compensation measure comprises the full German training.
- Automatic recognition is not possible for your professional qualification.
- Your professional qualification includes at least one so-called **reserved activity** (in German: **vorbehaltene Tätigkeit**) in the German professional qualification. Only specially trained individuals are permitted to carry out reserved activities.
- You are medically fit.
- You are personally apt.
- You have specific knowledge of German.

Freedom to provide services

Do you only wish to offer services in Germany occasionally and for short period? In this case you do not generally require recognition. You must meet these requirements:

- You must be resident of another country of the EU, the EEA or in Switzerland .
- You must provide evidence of your professional qualification.
- You must inform or register your activity in writing with the competent authority.

Procedure for Ethnic German Resettlers

As an Ethnic German Resettler, you can select between two procedures for vocational recognition:

- You apply for the procedure described here.
- You apply for the procedure under Section 10 of the Federal Expellees Act (German: “§10 Bundesvertriebenengesetz, BVFG”).

You can decide this. Your competent authority will advise you.

Other

European Professional Card (EPC)

Have you completed your professional qualifications in a country of the EU, the EEA or Switzerland? If so, you can also apply for the **European Professional Card (EPC)**. You can apply online on the European Commission website.

Counselling

Do you have any questions? Do you need help with the application? Seek advise! You will find your councelling centre one step back under **Counselling offers**.

Counselling

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- Do you have questions regarding entry or residence? For more information see **Make-it-in-Germany.com**.

Further information

Info and links

- **List of national Assistance Centres for professional qualifications from the EU, EEA or Switzerland.** The national Assistance Centre in your country will provide you with information about the certificate of conformity.
- For the application for authorisation to use the professional title: **Find your responsible district government for your place of work here** (in German)
- **European Professional Card (EPC): information is available from the European Commission, applications are submitted to the European Commission**
- **Information on the specialist language examination for nursing from Pflegekammer NRW**

Info and links

- For the application for authorisation to use the professional title: **Find your responsible district government for your place of work here** (in German)

Fair Recruitment in Healthcare

Are you searching for an employer in Germany? Do you have contact with a personnel service agency or care facilities that recruit nurses themselves? Then look out for the **quality seal "Fair Recruitment Healthcare Germany"** . The quality seal helps to ensure good working conditions for nurses from abroad. You can be sure that the recruitment process is fair and transparent at companies with the quality seal.

Legal Basis

- **Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications**

- **Pflegeberufegesetz (PflBG)** (in German)
- **Ausbildungs- und Prüfungsverordnung für die Berufe in der Krankenpflege (KrPflAPrV)** (in German)

last update on: 14.10.2026

Link to page

The competent authority

Bezirksregierung Münster

Zentrale Anerkennungsstelle für Gesundheitsberufe - Pflege- und Gesundheitsfachberufe (ZAG-PuG)

Domplatz 1-3
48143 Münster

View on Google Maps

www.bezreg-muenster.de/themen/gesundheit-und-soziales/zentrale-anerkennungsstelle-fuer-gesundheitsberufe/zag-pug

+49 251 411 2444

E-Mail

Your contact

Servicestelle PuG

Telefonische Sprechzeiten

Montag - Freitag:
10:00 - 14:00 Uhr