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,
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Your recognition procedure as Psychotherapist (m/f) in Düsseldorf, North Rhine-Westphalia

Download: 03.11.2026

Quick-Info

Name of the procedure

This procedure is called: Granting of approbation (in German: “Erteilung der Approbation“).

Please note: Approbation is the unrestricted authorisation to practise a medical profession for which an academic qualification is required.

Requirements for recognition

- Equivalence of your professional qualification
- Personal aptitude
- Medical fitness
- Knowledge of German

Knowledge of German

- You require knowledge of German at **level B2** of the Common European Reference Framework for languages.
- You are also usually required to complete the specialist language

examination at **level C2**. There are some exceptions: then you might not need to take the specialist language examination. The competent authority will inform you.

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

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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.

Costs and financial support

- Recognition procedure: approx. **€150 to €700.** The competent authority will inform you of the exact costs.
- Specialist language examination: **€880**
- There may be additional costs, e.g. for copies or certifications

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.

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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) and a German translation
- **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
- If applicable: **evidence of your practical training.** You also need 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.
- 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 certificate of good standing from the country in which you have most recently worked. 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.

For the online application, you need the documents as **PDF files**. You can scan or photograph your documents for this purpose. Most of the documents you will have to submit **later additionally in paper form as a certified copy**. You can send the documents by post or hand them in personally. You do not need to submit a certified copy of documents that you have created personally. A personally created document is e.g. your curriculum vitae or a written statement.

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- 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
- If applicable: **evidence of your practical training.** You also need a German translation.
- Evidence of your **professional experience** in this profession (e.g. employment references) and a German translation
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- 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.
- If applicable: Proof that your professional qualification has already been recognised in another member state of the EU, the EEA or Switzerland . In this case, you also need a German translation.

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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.

You need officially certified copies of your documents. With an official certification, an authority or a notary confirms that a copy matches the original.

My steps to recognition

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

- 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**.

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**.

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

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. This includes, e.g. your personal aptitude, your medical fitness and your knowledge of German.

The 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.

Following your application for recognition, the competent authority can register you for the specialist language examination. In most cases the respective federal state Chamber of Psychotherapists is responsible for the specialist language examination.

The competent authority is processing my application. What

does that mean?

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.

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 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.

Following your application for recognition, the competent authority can register you for the specialist language examination. In most cases the respective federal state Chamber of Psychotherapists is responsible for the specialist language examination.

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 the approbation. 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. You do **not** receive **approbation**.

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**. However, you do not meet all other requirements for the granting of approbation (licence to practise medicine). You may still need to provide evidence that you e.g. are personally apt or have knowledge of German. The competent authority 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.

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. You submit this certificate to the competent authority. The competent authority checks the certificate and all other requirements (e.g. personal aptitude or medical fitness). If you meet all requirements, your professional qualification is **recognised**. You receive the approbation. 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 competent authority 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 competent authority can help you with this.

I receive no recognition. What can I do?

Knowledge test as a compensation measure

If your professional qualification is **not** equivalent, you can take a knowledge test. A knowledge test allows you to compensate for substantial differences. Substantial differences are listed in your notice.

If you successfully complete the knowledge test, you receive a certificate. You submit this certificate to the competent authority. The competent authority checks the certificate and all other requirements (e.g. personal aptitude or medical fitness). If you meet all requirements, your professional qualification is **recognised**.

You receive the approbation. 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 knowledge test. 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 competent authority 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 competent authority can help you with this.

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

There are two ways of working in the profession without recognition of your professional qualification:

Authorisation to practise a profession

Did you complete your professional qualification in the third country? If so, you are able to work for a limited period without approbation. For this, you are able to apply for the so-called authorisation to practise a profession. Authorisation to practise a profession permits you to work under the supervision of a person with approbation. You may then only be permitted to carry out activities in a specific area of work. You need to meet the following requirements for authorisation to practise a profession:

- Equivalence of your professional qualification

- Personal aptitude
- Medical fitness
- Knowledge of German

You can apply for authorisation to practise a profession from the competent authority.

You may also be able to use the authorisation to practise a profession to prepare for a compensation measure for recognition.

A professional qualification from the EU, EEA or Switzerland rarely provides you with authorisation to practise a profession.

Partial access to the profession

Did you complete your professional qualification in an EU country, the EEA or in Switzerland? Under certain conditions you are then able to work **for an indefinite period and without recognition** in the profession. For this you are able to apply for the so-called partial access to the profession. However, partial access to the profession does not permit you to perform **all activities** in the profession.

You need to meet the following requirements for partial access:

- With your professional qualification, you are able to work in your country of training in this profession.
- Your professional qualification is only partially equivalent to the German professional qualification. The differences compared to the German professional qualification relate to specific activities which are necessary for the profession in Germany.
- Your professional qualification must be equivalent to one specific activity in the German professional qualification.
- Personal aptitude
- Medical fitness
- Knowledge of German

You must apply for partial access to the profession from the competent authority.

Working without recognition

Authorisation to practise a profession

Did you complete your professional qualification in the third country? If so, you are able to work for a limited period without approbation. For this, you are able to apply for the so-called authorisation to practise a profession. Authorisation to practise a profession permits you to work under the supervision of a person with approbation. You may then only be permitted to carry out activities in a specific area of work. You need to meet the following requirements for authorisation to practise a profession:

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You can apply for authorisation to practise a profession from the competent authority.

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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.

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

- Do you have any questions? Do you need help with the application? Seek advice! You will find your councelling centre one step back under **Counselling offers**.
- Do you have questions regarding entry or residence? For more information see **Make-it-in-Germany.com**.

Further information

Info and links

- **FAQ about Recognition of Professional Qualifications by The Association of German Professional Psychologists (BDP)**

Info and links

- **FAQ about Recognition of Professional Qualifications by The Association of German Professional Psychologists (BDP)**

Legal basis

- **DIRECTIVE 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications**
- **Psychotherapeutengesetz - PsychThG** (in German)
- **Approbationsordnung für Psychotherapeutinnen und Psychotherapeuten (PsychoThApprO)** (in German)

last update on: 09.06.2026

Link to page

The competent authority

Bezirksregierung Münster

Dezernat 241 - Anerkennungsstelle für Gesundheitsberufe - aH

Domplatz 1-3
48143 Münster

View on Google Maps

www.brms.nrw.de/themen/gesundheit-und-soziales/zentrale-anerkennungsstelle-fuer-gesundheitsberufe/approbation

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E-Mail

Your contact

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