

Information on labor migration to care in Germany

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Off to Germany?!

You have a nursing education and are considering coming to Germany to work as a nurse? Have you been approached by a placement agency, through a language school or by other means to ask if you would like to work for an employer in Germany?

This can be a good idea, especially in view of the increasing demand in the health and nursing professions in Germany.

But an international job migration is also a big event and so it is advisable to inform yourself about specific circumstances and possibilities in advance.

Here are some tips on topics that may be relevant for internationally employed nursing professionals.

Do not rely on simplistic or generalized descriptions or promises and gather as much concrete information as possible.

Feel encouraged to gather information on your own and assess and evaluate the situation for yourself. This will protect you from unpleasant surprises and allow you to choose the path that suits you best.

1. Information about the occupational field

Nursing as a profession is not practiced in the same way all over the world. In Germany, too, there are - in international comparison - some special features. This is important for you both during the recruitment and recognition process and for the subsequent professional activity in Germany - perhaps even until you leave the workforce. In Germany, nurses work either in privately organized institutions, in church-run institutions (Caritas, Diakonie, etc.) or in public institutions (e.g. university hospitals).

1.1. Nursing professions are regulated professions

You should know that:

Nursing professions are "regulated professions" in Germany.

What does that mean?

Regulated professions are professions whose training is regulated by the state. In the federal state of Germany, professions are regulated either by the federal government or by the respective state.

Anyone wishing to work in one of these professions in Germany must submit an application for occupational licensing and provide proof of their qualifications - i.e. training. Only after the professional license has been granted may one work as a nurse in Germany.

Persons with a degree acquired abroad must therefore have it recognized in Germany. Only then can a professional license be applied for or granted.

How and where can you get further independent information on this?

You can find more information on this topic here, for example:

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/working-in-germany/professions-in-demand/nursing>

The website Perspektive Gesundheitswirtschaft of the Berlin IQ Network is intended to give you an overview of the health care industry and inform you about qualification requirements and fields of work.

<http://www.kompetenzen-gesundheitsberufe.de/> (german)

1.2. Education, training and continuing education opportunities in nursing professions in Germany

You should know that:

If you decide to immigrate to Germany for work in the care sector, you are probably also interested in career opportunities.

you are probably also interested in career opportunities, i.e. training and further education opportunities for your occupational field.

Training opportunities

Nursing professions are vocational training programs in Germany. Since 2020, there has been a standardized professional qualification of "nursing specialist", which teaches overarching nursing competencies. These competencies are intended to enable the care of people of different age groups in various areas of care and, in the long term, to replace the previous occupational titles of geriatric nurse or health and pediatric nurse.

Further education and training opportunities

Those who are already working in nursing and would like to take on new tasks or more responsibility can choose from a very wide range of continuing education courses to achieve these goals.

You can find an overview of offers here:

<https://berufenet.arbeitsagentur.de/berufenet/faces/index?path=null/kurzbeschreibung/anpassungsweiterbildung&dkz=132173> (german)

1.3. Current labor market information for nursing professions in Germany

You should know that:

The labor market situation for your occupational group as well as the labor market opportunities by region or employer (hospital, long-term care facility, rehab...) may play a role in the selection of your employer or the region that is interesting for you in Germany.

In general, there has been a shortage of health care professionals in Germany for several years. About 50,000 positions will remain unfilled in the future. As a result of this shortage, more and more employers, such as hospitals and long-term care facilities, are recruiting care professionals from abroad in order to be able to guarantee the provision of care in the medium to long term.

How and where can you get further independent information on this?

You can find out more about the labor market situation in the nursing field in Germany by visiting the website of the German Federal Employment Agency:

<https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/DE/Navigation/Statistiken/Interaktive-Angebote/Berufe-auf-einen-Blick/Berufe-auf-einen-Blick-Anwendung-Nav.html> (german)

1.4. Tasks and fields of work of nursing staff

You should know that:

There are several areas of work for nurses. Some are:

- Nursing
- Pediatric nursing
- Geriatric nursing
- Intensive care
- Operating room

The above areas are in turn carried out in different nursing care areas, namely inpatient acute care (e.g. hospital), inpatient long-term care (e.g. nursing home) and outpatient care (e.g. care at home).

As a nurse, you will provide care and support to people at every stage of life. The various tasks in the nursing field include:

As a nurse, you will care for and assist people at every stage of life. The various tasks in the nursing field include, among others:

- independent observation, consultation, care and nursing of patients
- Documentation and evaluation of nursing measures
- carrying out medical orders - assisting with medical procedures

Basic care activities, i.e. personal hygiene, nutrition, mobility, prevention (prophylaxis), the promotion of independence and communication, are of great importance in Germany and are performed not only by nursing assistants but also by skilled nursing staff.

How and where can you get further independent information on this?

You can find more information on this topic here, for example:

Brief description Nursing Specialist of the Federal Employment Agency

<https://berufenet.arbeitsagentur.de/berufenet/faces/index?path=null/kurzbeschreibung&dkz=132173> (german)

Brief description Federal Employment Agency Health and Pediatric Nurse Practitioner

<https://berufenet.arbeitsagentur.de/berufenet/faces/index?path=null/kurzbeschreibung&dkz=27357&such=Gesundheits-+und+Kinderkrankenpfleger%2Fin> (german)

Overview of the health industry sector of the Berlin IQ Network

<http://www.kompetenzen-gesundheitsberufe.de/>

1.5. Professional and trade associations

You should know that:

A professional association is a free and independent interest group whose members are members of the same profession or closely related professions. The aim is to better represent the interests of a large number of workers in the care sector to employers and the general public.

Professional associations have the task of representing the interests of their members with regard to the content of the profession, i.e. with regard to the meaning and manner of practicing the nursing profession and in the economic, social and societal sense. Are you looking for advice on legal issues, for example? Then a professional association could be of help.

How and where can you get further independent information on this?

In Germany, there are a large number of professional and trade associations for the nursing profession. You can find some selected professional and trade associations for nursing professions here:

German Nursing Council

<https://deutscher-pflegerat.de/> (german)

German professional association for nursing professions

<https://www.dbfk.de/de/ueber-uns/English.php>

German Society for Specialized Nursing and Functional Services e. V.
<https://www.dgf-online.de/>

German Professional Association for the Care of the Elderly
<http://www.dbva.de/>

Association of German Red Cross Sisterhoods
<https://www.rotkreuzschwestern.de/>

2. information on gainful employment

Germany has a well-developed labor law. Working hours, vacation and break entitlements, termination rights and many other points are regulated in employment contracts.

2.1. Rights and obligations of employees in Germany

You should know that:

The employment contract is the legal foundation for an employment relationship within Germany. It defines the rights of employees and their obligations towards the employer. In terms of content, it is essential that you obtain the following information before concluding the contract, if it is not mentioned in the employment contract:

- names of the contracting parties (you and the company)
- the start date of the contract and its duration
- information about the probationary period (if such a period is specified)
- the place of work
- if applicable, a job description, i.e. above all what tasks you will be expected to perform
- information about the salary
- information about working hours, i.e. how many hours you will work per week
- vacation entitlement, i.e. how many days you can take per year
- Details of notice periods on both sides, i.e. how long you or the company must give advance notice that the employment relationship is to be terminated. In Germany, there is generally a legally binding notice period of at least four weeks.
- However, it may be that you are employed through a collective bargaining agreement. In this case, this information is not in the individual employment contract, but in the collective agreement (e.g. AVR at Caritas).

Pay particular attention to **so-called commitment and/or repayment clauses** in your employment contract or other documents beyond that. These are special formulations that oblige you as an employee not to change your job for a certain period of time or to pay money back to your employer if you decide to do so. These should be appropriate and, of course, comply with German law.

The IQ Network's "Fair Integration" service (see also point 6 of this information brochure) offers advice on these topics.

As an employee, you are also entitled to co-determination and co-design within the decision-making processes of the company that employs you. In the case of public or private employers, you can contact the works council or staff council. As elected, institutionalized employee representatives in companies and corporations, they represent the interests and perspectives of all employees. In church or charitable institutions, the body for co-determination is called employee representation (MAV). Here, too, their elected members represent the interests of the employees vis-à-vis the employers. Their tasks are comparable to those of works councils.

How and where can you get further independent information on this?

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/working-in-germany/working-environment/work-contract>

<https://www.faire-integration.de/en/topic/48.faq.html>

2.2. Social security law in Germany

During your employment as a caregiver in Germany, you are subject to social insurance, which means that you are automatically a member of various insurances that provide you with financial security in the event of illness or unemployment. Accordingly, a fixed percentage of your salary is deducted directly from your salary as social security contributions and paid into these insurances. Social security contributions include all types of compulsory insurance, i.e. pension, health, long-term care and unemployment insurance. Insurances such as health or long-term care insurance are solidarity-based, which means that the contributions you pay are not paid directly to recipients, but are paid out to the contributing members as needed. Pension insurance is a contributory cash benefit, which means that if you become insured, the amount of your benefits will be based on the amount of contributions you have paid and will be paid directly to you. Unemployment insurance is also paid directly to you if you become unemployed. However, the amount of the benefit is calculated on the basis of your salary for the past 12 months.

Pension insurance:

You pay into the pension insurance in order to receive a pension, i.e. a state life support payment, after you have retired. The amount of the pension is determined by the amount of income during employment and the number of years of contributions in Germany. In principle, pensions from the statutory pension insurance are also paid abroad. In certain individual cases, however, there may be restrictions, which is why you should contact the German Pension Insurance in your case in good time beforehand.

Health insurance / long-term care insurance:

As an employee, you are always also covered by health insurance - either as a member of the statutory health insurance or a private health insurance. If you ever become ill, the health insurance company will cover the costs of medical treatment. By taking out health insurance, you are automatically also insured for long-term care. Long-term care insurance comes into effect if, for example, you can no longer care for yourself due to a serious illness - i.e. you need help from a caregiver.

Unemployment Insurance:

Unemployment insurance pays unemployed people a regular income for a certain period of time. In principle, you usually have to have been insured for one year within the last two years while you were working and you have to be looking for work again.

How and where can you get further independent information on this?

For more information on social security, see "Make it in Germany," among others:
<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/living-in-germany/money-insurance/health-insurance>

3. immigration process and integration promotion

If you want to enter Germany from a third country, you will need a residence title, which is determined by the purpose of your stay.

There is a wide range of migration and integration advice available in Germany.

3.1. Possibilities of immigration

You should know that:

The **Skilled Workers Immigration Act (FEG)** opens up the possibility of accelerating the entry procedure for skilled workers (Section 81a of the Residence Act (AufenthG)). This means that if you have a concrete job offer, the employer can apply for an "**accelerated skilled worker procedure**" for you against payment of a fee. In the accelerated procedure for skilled workers, the Foreigners' Registration Office plays a key role and is responsible for advising the employer about the entry requirements for you, for checking all applicable requirements, for initiating the recognition procedure etc... The authorities involved are bound by relatively tight deadlines throughout the process. However, the accelerated procedure for skilled workers usually does not take longer than 4 months (about six weeks for visa issuance, about two months for recognition procedure and about one week for approval procedure).

Alternatively, the **regular entry procedure** and, if applicable, the procedure for obtaining prior approval from the Federal Employment Agency in accordance with Section 36 (3) BeschV are still available to you. Which procedure you choose if an accelerated skilled worker procedure is not an option should be decided together with the employer.

The procedure can also be applied to the **family reunification** of spouses and children, provided that the applications for this are filed in a temporal context (this means: entry of the family members within 6 months from the entry of the professional).

Since March 2020, in addition to measures such as Triple-Win, there has been the possibility of entry to Germany within the **framework** of placement agreements between the Federal Employment Agency and employment services in selected countries of origin (Section 16d (4) Residence Act). Unlike the previously mentioned procedures, a visa for entry does not require a completed individual recognition procedure. However, entry within this procedure is only possible if, according to the assessment of the Federal Employment Agency, full recognition of the foreign professional qualifications is achievable. The Federal Employment Agency Arbeit therefore only concludes agreements for selected professional qualifications from the country of origin that it considers suitable in consultation with a body responsible for professional recognition or the professional associations or where, in its estimation, "appropriate training structures" exist.

How and where can you get further independent information on this?

For more information on the accelerated skilled worker procedure, click here:
Make it in Germany

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa-residence/skilled-immigration-act>

Further information on family reunification can be found here at the BAMF:

<https://www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/AsylFluechtlingsschutz/FamilienasylFamiliennachzug/familienasylfamiliennachzug-node.html;jsessionid=772F0A7BBAE327DC0FC2911FA0A7DEA3.intranet371>

Detailed information from the IQ Network on entry in the context of placement agreements can be found here:

https://www.netzwerk-iq.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Downloads/Fachstelle_Beratung_und_Qualifizierung/IQ_Handout_16d_residence_act_ENG.pdf

3.2. Infrastructure of migration and integration counseling

You should know that:

There is a wide range of migration and integration counseling services in Germany. Some of the most important contact points can be found in the following list:

Since 2005, the federal government has offered migration counseling for adult immigrants. It is an offer especially for newly immigrated migrants:

https://www.bmi.bund.de/EN/home/home_node.html;jsessionid=0E5F8E9BFEE7732B4CF1D18C8FA35A16.2_cid287

mbeon Migrationsberatung is a digital service that offers advice-seekers the opportunity to use the mbeon app for free, anonymous and data-secure chat advice on questions about arriving in Germany (topics such as work and career, learning German, health and housing).

At the same time, extensive information on migration is provided in the app and on this website as an initial orientation aid. In addition, there is the possibility to get personal advice at an MBE counseling center.

App: <https://www.mbeon.de/en/home/>

Advice center: <https://bamf-navi.bamf.de/en/>

Fair Integration is a nationwide counseling service on social and labor law issues for refugees and other non-EU migrants.

At the counseling centers, people who are already in work, training or internships can receive advice on specific issues, as well as those who want preventive information about their working conditions. The counseling centers also offer workshops for the target group, e.g. as part of integration or language courses. The range of counseling services includes labor and social law topics directly related to the employment relationship, e.g.: Wages, working hours, vacation, termination, health insurance, etc.

For other thematic issues - e.g. job search or residence status - referrals are made to specialized counseling centers and advisory institutions.

<https://www.faire-integration.de/en/topic/46.beratungsstellen.html>

How and where can you get further independent information on this?

General information on migration counseling can be found here:

IQ-Network

<https://www.netzwerk-iq.de/en/>

Federal Ministry of the Interior, for Construction and Home Affairs

https://www.bmi.bund.de/EN/home/home_node.html

3.3. Political, social, religious and cultural participation opportunities.

You should know that:

In Germany, you can become politically, socially, religiously and/or culturally active in many ways. The website of the Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration provides an initial introduction to finding opportunities for participation and support:

<https://www.integrationsbeauftragte.de/ib-de> (german)

Social and cultural participation is also made possible by migrant (self-)organizations, such as the Association of Internationally Recruited Nurses in Germany. Another option is to contact your local community/church or clubs in your area.

How and where can you get further independent information on this?

The IQ networks also offer numerous offers. Here you can find offers in your area:
<https://www.netzwerk-iq.de/foerderprogramm-iq/landesnetzwerke/karte>

4. recognition process

In order to be able to work in Germany, your foreign degree must be recognized. This requires a so-called recognition procedure. In order to receive recognition, very specific competencies must be demonstrated in Germany. The nursing profession differs from country to country, so you may still lack certain competencies that are particularly important in Germany.

If you meet all the requirements, your **professional qualification** may already be recognized before you enter Germany.

You will receive a professional license to practice as a nursing specialist in Germany.

Often, however, you still lack skills that you can catch up on at the beginning of your stay in Germany. These are indicated by a so-called deficiency notice.

You should know that:

here are two ways to compensate for deficits:

Knowledge examination: In a comprehensive oral and written examination, content that you have acquired through your training abroad is tested for equivalence with the German training. Special courses for nursing professionals prepare you optimally for successfully passing the knowledge test.

Adaptation qualification: Unlike the knowledge test, the adaptation qualification is a course that is adequately oriented to the need for post-qualification. In most cases, these courses are modular. If it is part of the requirement in the recognition notice, B2 language courses are taught, specialist training is provided and internships are completed in hospitals.

How and where can you get further independent information on this?

The IQ Network has published a topic dossier on nursing that provides general information on the **professional recognition of nurses**.

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees: Hotline for the Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications "**Working and Living in Germany**"

Recognition in Germany: **The Federal Government's information portal** on the recognition of foreign professional qualifications.

You can find out how to have your vocational qualification recognized and who is responsible for this with **the Recognition Finder**, free advice centers can be found here.

Make it in Germany: **The German government's portal for skilled workers from abroad**

BQ-Portal: [Information on foreign professional qualifications and country and occupational profiles](#)

5. language acquisition information

In order to obtain a professional license in Germany, a certain level of language proficiency must be demonstrated.

You should know that:

Currently, the language certificate of level B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is required for professional admission.

B1 (CEFR) is currently required for entry into Germany; qualification for B2 can be done in Germany.

In the future, the language certificate will be based on a B2 specialist language test, i.e. for the specialist language of nursing. Some federal states are already preparing for the changeover. Initially, this B2 specialist language test will be introduced in Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Bremen, Lower Saxony and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. General language courses will be offered, as well as those that specifically prepare students for careers in the nursing professions.

The Ordinance on the Promotion of the German Language for Vocational Purposes - DeuFöV for short - is the legal basis on which vocational German language courses are conducted. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) is responsible for the implementation of the DeuFöV courses. For this purpose, the BAMF allows public and private providers.

For persons in the recognition phase of their foreign professional qualification, authorizations can be granted by the BAMF.

How and where can you get further independent information on this?

The IQ Fachstelle Berufsbezogenes Deutsch offers another service for German in nursing with the interactive learning game "Ein Tag Deutsch - in der Pflege": exercises on communication, vocabulary, structures and pronunciation for learners of German from B1. Available as an app and web version as well as with detailed additional materials for the classroom.

<https://www.ein-tag-deutsch.de/>

On the page of the IQ-Fachstelle Berufsbezogenes Deutsch you will find a collection of materials for the field of nursing, which can help you with language acquisition. There is a detailed collection of materials for the field of nursing, in which the target group addressed could certainly also find useful materials.

<https://www.deutsch-am-arbeitsplatz.de/english.html>

On the pages of "Make it in Germany" you will find detailed information about the required German language skills:

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/living-in-germany/learn-german/knowledge>

Here you can view the different levels of the reference framework:

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions>

6. neutral advice and other support

In Germany, there is a large and wide-ranging landscape of counseling and support services, most of which also provide free assistance and offer neutral counseling.

You should know that:

Regardless of the information you receive through your employer or your agency, you should know about neutral counseling centers.

There are numerous offers, some of which are listed here. Don't be afraid to take advantage of these offers - they can be very helpful in various situations.

How and where can you get further independent information on this?

There is a wide range of advice available on employment contracts, commitment clauses, breaks, dismissal and compulsory insurance. You can find a selection here:

The offer Fair Integration is a consulting focus of the funding program IQ. The counseling offer includes labor and social law issues directly related to the employment relationship, e.g.: Wage, working hours, vacation, termination, health insurance, etc.:

<https://www.faire-integration.de/en/topic/46.beratungsstellen.html>

Handbook Germany provides answers from A-Z about life in Germany in seven languages (German, Arabic, English, Persian, Turkish, French, Pashto and Russian). With important tips on asylum, housing, health, work and education, as well as daycare, studies and much more. On the local pages you will find suitable contact persons in your area.

Here are some examples:

[Health Insurance in Germany](#)

[Nursing Care System](#)