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Medical doctors with degrees from third countries: The path to approbation

In order to be allowed to work as a medical doctor in Germany, you need a state licence, a so-called approbation, to practise as a doctor. In order to obtain your approbation, a check must be conducted as to whether your degree from abroad is equivalent to a German degree as a doctor.



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To do this, you must submit an application to a “Anerkennungsstelle” (recognition body). This certifies a person’s professional recognition. Processing the application costs money. The review of your application takes place in two steps:

1. **Review of equivalence:** The recognition body checks whether the content of your vocational training corresponds to a German qualification as a doctor (content review). The recognition body can offer you to have the health professions assessment body (or an external assessor) conduct the respective assessment.
2. **Review of the professional licence (approbation):** The recognition body checks whether you are granted the licence to practise (approbation). This will only be checked once the content check has been completed. You can only work as a doctor in Germany without restrictions if you receive your approbation (licence to practise).

You must submit an officially certified copy of the following documents:

Documents for the assessment of equivalence (1)

- Completed application form
- Proof of identity
- Curriculum vitae
- Training certificates and final certificates
- Overview of subjects and grades
- Proof of professional licence in the home country
- Evidence of professional experience
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Documents for the professional licence (2)

- Language certificate C1
- Certificate of health-related suitability
- Official certificate of good conduct (“amtliches Führungszeugnis”)
- Criminal background check
- Certificate of good standing
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(A) Decision on full equivalence

Once you have submitted your application, the recognition body will check the documents submitted. In doing so, it compares whether there are differences between your vocational training and the vocational training in Germany (content check). Proven professional experience will also be taken into account in the review. The competent body will send you the result in a decision by post. If there are no differences between your vocational training and the vocational training in Germany, then you will receive a decision on full equivalence. This means that your professional qualification is equivalent to the German qualification as a doctor.

(B) Decision with the requirement of a compensatory measure

However, there may also be differences between your vocational training and the vocational training in Germany. Your decision will then state that you have to take a knowledge test. The knowledge test is a verbal-practical examination with patient presentation, and is based on the contents of the German state final examination for doctors. In order to prepare for the knowledge test, you can attend a preparation course.

In addition, you can work with a professional permit during this time. A professional permit is valid for a maximum of 2 years. You must apply for the professional permit separately. With a professional permit, you are only allowed to do certain jobs, and a medical doctor checks that you are doing everything correctly. If you have successfully passed the knowledge test, you will receive a notice of full equivalence and it will be reviewed as to whether you will be granted an approbation to practise as a doctor.