



Vocational recognition for engineers – becoming a skilled worker

 Network "Integration through Qualification (IQ)"

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There is an increasing shortage of skilled workers in different engineering specialisms. The demand for employees who have obtained a degree abroad is therefore increasing.

In the view of economic institutes, there are good opportunities both now and in the future for finding the right job as an engineer. New sectors such as robotics, renewable energies and electrical drives that offer innovative positions in the engineering employment market. Very profound changes are also under way in traditional sectors such as mechanical and electrical engineering, and this may also result in lots of interesting posts and new employers.

Construction, research and in some cases also the manufacturing industry are facing difficulties recruiting new workers with many positions remaining unfilled each year. On average there are two vacancies for every unemployed engineer. Individual areas such as the chemical industry, the automotive sector and aerospace can, in some cases, still be described as having a shortage of skilled workers. In these areas however, it is mainly engineers with very specific skills which are needed.

Germany does not have a shortage of engineers across the board in all specialisms. Over past months dominated by the coronavirus there has been a sharp fall in vacancies.

If you come from a third country and are looking for a good job in this occupational field, it is very important that you are well-informed about the opportunities open to you with your qualification on the German labour market. A number of different and interesting specialisms may come into consideration for you as a reference occupation. The IQ recognition advice centre will help you to find the right reference occupation.

You will certainly need evidence that your degree is comparable to the German degree if you wish to migrate to Germany. Many foreign qualifications can be found in the **anabin** database. This is sufficient as evidence.

If your qualification cannot be found in anabin, you must have your certificate assessed by the **Central Office for Foreign Education**. Your statement of compatibility provides you with an official document which describes your foreign higher education qualification and certifies the options for its use for professional and academic purposes.

You are then able to work as an engineer. You are not able to refer to yourself as an engineer or consulting engineer until your qualification is recognised as equivalent. You must apply to the competent authority for this recognition.



Is my professional qualification likely to be recognised in Germany?

In order to be able to call yourself an engineer in Germany, you must have your foreign higher education qualification recognised. The job title is subject to special protection. The recognition procedure therefore involves granting authorisation for use of the job title of engineer. Without recognition you are not permitted to refer to yourself as an engineer or apply for work as an engineer. In this case you would have to perform work as an engineer without your title. The result of a formal recognition procedure, for example, is that your employer acquires a higher degree of transparency over what you have learnt.

The occupation in Germany is regulated by federal state law, in other words, it is recognised in the federal state in which you want to work. In 2018, more than 3,000 applications were made for full equivalence in the federal states. Of these, a positive decision was arrived at in around 95% of cases.**

You can find out precisely what recognition involves from the IQ advice centre. Advisers will help you to prepare for the recognition procedure and to begin this. This advice on recognition is free of charge.

IQ staff providing advice on recognition and job training are also happy to provide you with information about opportunities for working as an engineer in similar occupations, for example, as a salaried employee in a company or an engineering office. In this case, however, you are not permitted to refer to yourself as an engineer. You are not required to provide evidence of your German language skills. However, this is important for your applications and your work.

From January 2019 to June 2020, IQ recognition advisers provided almost 7,300 advisory sessions on the recognition of professional engineering qualifications from abroad. More than 620 have started an IQ course for the training of foreign engineers.



Worth knowing: Recognition procedure for engineers

Use of the job title “Engineer” is regulated by federal state law in Germany. This means you need permission from the state if you wish to work as an engineer or consulting engineer in Germany. Regulations relating to the training and the recognition procedure depend on the legislation in the respective federal state. It therefore depends where you live. Different federal state laws mean that the recognition procedure may differ in terms of subjects studied and recognition options for third country qualifications.

**BMBF: 2019 Report on the Recognition Act
https://www.bmbf.de/upload_filestore/pub/Bericht_zum_Anerkennungsgesetz_2019_eng.pdf

What pathways are available for working in Germany as an engineer?



1

Seek advice

In order to work as an engineer or a consulting engineer you need recognition of your professional qualification in the federal state in which you want to work. The network IQ advisers will discuss with you how you might gain this recognition. For example, they will help you to find the right recognition centre for your place of residence and occupation.



2

Submit an application

The Network IQ can help you prepare the documentation to apply for recognition of your qualification as an engineer. As a rule, you have to submit documentation regarding your work experience and qualifications/credentials in German to the recognition centre as well as your CV. The procedure involves a fee. In some cases, the German state may provide financial assistance.



3

The recognition centre checks your documents

The recognition centre in your federal state checks your documents and determines whether your foreign qualification is equivalent to the degree in Germany. This normally occurs within three months once all necessary documents have been submitted. In certain cases the time period may be extended.



4

You receive your assessment notice

The recognition procedure checks whether your foreign professional qualification can be recognised as equivalent to a German engineering qualification. The recognition procedure complies with the regulations of the law on establishing equivalence of professional credentials/qualifications and with the law of the federal state in which you are applying. Full equivalence means your qualification is fully equivalent to the respective German qualification. You are permitted to use the job title of engineer and can now apply for jobs as an engineer. However, your qualification could either be denied recognition or be only partially recognised. The differences compared to the German occupation are stated in your assessment notice. If your qualification is not fully recognised, you can usually compensate for missing elements by completing refresher training or an aptitude test. Your advice centre can help you to find a suitable continuing training programme so that you can obtain full recognition.



If you wish to work as a Consulting engineer, e.g. as an inspection engineer or an expert witness, then in addition to recognition with the competent authority you have to register yourself, e.g. with the Chamber. For this, you must also provide evidence of at least three years' employment.



How can I compensate for substantial differences compared to the German training? Is there support available?

You need full equivalence to be able to work using the title of “Engineer”. This means you are not permitted to refer to yourself as an engineer until authorisation to do so has been granted.



- A compensation measure allows you to compensate for substantial differences. The differences are specified in your assessment notice. The compensation measure may be adaptation training or an aptitude test. Sometimes you are also required to do both.



Once you successfully complete the compensation measure, you receive a certificate. If all the requirements are then met, you receive full recognition giving you the same rights as a person with the German qualification. If you are not yet living in Germany, you are allowed to travel to Germany for the compensation measure.



- Further training may also help you enter the labour market. For example, you can use a bridging measure to further develop language skills relevant to the profession or to familiarise yourself with important regulations and standards in Germany. You must organise a place on the training yourself – your IQ advice centre can help you with this. You are also permitted to travel to Germany for this further training.



Working without recognition

If you already live or work in Germany, then you may be able to work in an engineering office even without recognition. However, you are not permitted to refer to yourself as an engineer as the job title is subject to protection. For entry, you require at least a statement of comparability or evidence from the **anabin** data base.

**Network IQ offers a wide range of training courses for engineers.
CHANGE – Working in times of climate change – a bridging measure**



© Anita Ischiffer-Fuchs

The online learning programme “CHANGE – Working in times of climate change” is aimed at women with foreign degrees in a range of different specialisms (natural sciences, engineering, social sciences and economics, communication, management, tourism, information technology). The six-month programme is used by engineers from a range of different areas. It focuses mainly on specialist input—for example new building requirements, learning about sectors impacted by climate change, adapting to climate change and cross-disciplinary learning content (e.g. time-management self-presentation), empowerment, support with finding your way in the labour market and integrated subject-based and language learning.

In addition to extensive materials and learning provision on the e-Learning platform, you can participate in video meetings or online seminars.

Further information is available here:

<https://life-online.de/project/change/>

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Usama Al Mousa attended an IQ bridging measure in Kaiserslautern and today works in his dream job as a software engineer

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*“At the university
I regained
confidence in my
abilities.”*

Usama Al Mousa

Three employers were very interested

Usama Al Mousa actually had everything he needed for finding a job in Germany: a higher education qualification as an electrical engineer, programming experience, good German and excellent English. However, following two years in Germany and more than 50 applications, and still not having found an employer, his hopes began to fade.

This all changed when he gained his place on the qualification-oriented engineering training course (Ingenieurwissenschaftliche abschlussorientierte Qualifizierung, IAQ) organised by the Network IQ Rhineland-Palatinate. “From the very first day I knew that this programme would lead to a job,” explains Usama, describing the level of confidence he had in the idea. And sure enough – at the end of the six-month training with Kaiserslautern University of Applied Sciences, the course provider, he was able to choose from among three companies which had offered him contracts of employment.

What had happened? “At the university I regained confidence in my abilities,” explains Usama. Here he completed intensive further training in information technology and network engineering, while learning the specialist German terminology as he went along.

Success stories

“I devoured knowledge just like the Cookie Monster in Sesame Street devours cookies,” explains the Syrian, describing how highly motivated he was. He became immersed in programming techniques especially, as his dream was to work in Germany as a software developer.

Dream job: software developer

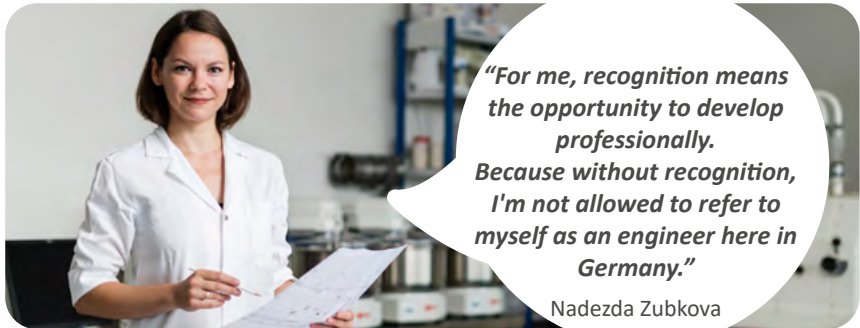
“Usama got through an unbelievable amount of work,” says Dr. Oksana Pleier remembering her gifted student. “He has excellent analytical skills and finds creative solutions to complex problems”. The physicist supervises the IAQ participants’ subject-specific further training at the university. The certificate lists both the graduates’ subject-specific competencies and their social competencies. The document from the university gives companies confidence. “Beforehand, I may also have received rejections due to my foreign qualification,” suspects Al Mousa. He explains how he had a clear sense that companies perceived appointing a migrant as a risk as they were unable to assess the quality of his training.

Today he works in his dream job as a software developer with Zahnen Technik based in the Eifel region, an innovative medium-sized company specialising in water and wastewater treatment facilities. “We are delighted to have recruited Mr Al Mousa as a highly qualified specialist,” explains director Herbert Zahnen. He is convinced that the integration of migrants is not just a win for individual companies but that it is very much the order of the day for the overall economy. “In these times of demographic change and increasing shortages of skilled workers, we have to utilize the potential offered by migrants.” he says.

The business owner first came across the man from Damascus with a talent for IT when he was training—the event was an IAQ jobs fair for which the university regularly invites companies to visit the campus. “We bring together IAQ participants and companies at an early stage. This is just as much part of our concept as the further technical training, application training, teaching participants about corporate culture in Germany and soft skills such as teamwork and presentation techniques,” explains Silke Weber, head of the project which has been running since 2016. The success speaks for itself: So far, 80% of graduates have been successful in entering the primary labour market immediately following completion of the course.

A spontaneous decision brought Nadezda Zubkova to Germany in 2016. Today the engineer from Russia is proud of what she has achieved. And she is grateful for the support received with her recognition.

© Web portal "Recognition in Germany"/BIlBB:
Robert Funke



"For me, recognition means the opportunity to develop professionally. Because without recognition, I'm not allowed to refer to myself as an engineer here in Germany."

Nadezda Zubkova

Migrate to Germany on the spur of the moment? Nadezda Zubkova from Russia did exactly that. At the very least, the decision was spontaneous and extremely courageous. On a short visit to Berlin she fell in love with the city immediately and chose it as her future home. However, Nadezda Zubkova certainly had a plan when she came to Germany with her husband in 2016. Prior to this, the two of them had spent three years living in Cyprus. However, the graduate engineer was convinced that there would be far more opportunities in Germany for professional development. In Germany she also hoped for better financial and social protection. And ultimately, she wanted to start a family with her husband.

And the language barrier? Nadezda Zubkova also addressed the language issue with determination. Ten months elapsed from the original spur of the moment decision to the actual move. She used this time to learn German on the internet, because when she arrived in Berlin she at least wanted to know "how the language worked". She could then use this as a starting point in Germany. She completed four language courses at the adult education centre and achieved language level B2.

The 29-year-old remembers the move to Germany with mixed feelings. "Everything was new. I was full of anticipation, but also uncertain. I asked myself, what do we have to do? What comes first?" But Nadezda Zubkova received lots of support from the very start. She had praise above all for the exemplary "chain of advice", as she calls it. This particularly helped at the start of the difficult path towards recognition. From the integration course at the adult education centre she then moved onto migration guidance from the Workers' Welfare Association (Arbeiterwohlfahrt, AWO). From there she moved to advice on recognition from the Club Dialog e. V. migrant organisation. This is one of the

advice centres of the Berlin IQ regional network and supported her in the recognition of her Russian professional qualification.

This type of referral guidance is not common. However, it was ideal in the case of Nadezda Zubkova. The example shows that referral advice is so important precisely because there is so much provision offering advice and support. This is because it can be hard to find your way through the impenetrable “jungle of provision” alone.

In August 2017 she then applied for recognition to the Berlin Construction Chamber. The name of the reference occupation for the recognition was “Engineer specialising in the mechanization and processing of agricultural products.” The application was successful. The Russian diploma was recognised as equivalent under the Engineering Act of the federal state of Berlin. That was a huge relief for Nadezda Zubkova who had now given birth to a child. “My whole family and I are really proud of what I have achieved. This is something I feel happy about every day.” She doesn't just have praise for the excellent advice. She's also grateful for the financial support from the recognition grant. She was advised by the Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (f-bb) regarding this.

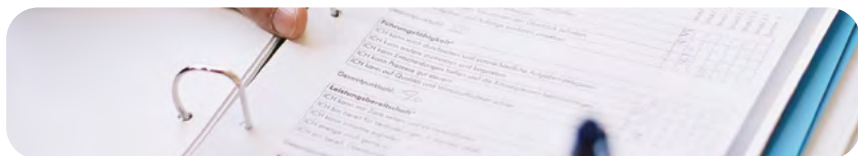
Nadezda Zubkova is currently enrolled in a part-time training programme for migrant academics. This is part of the “BeuthBonus+” project and takes place at the Beuth University of Applied Sciences. The participants are prepared for the German labour market following an individual, subject-specific and systematic training plan. Among other things, this training plan includes application training and language coaching. The 29-year-old also works as a translator and interpreter at the Workers Welfare Association (AWO) counselling centre where her path to recognition began. Here she helps people who were in the same situation as she was at the beginning. As soon as the child has settled in at the nursery, Nadezda Zubkova wants to implement the next step in her plan. She wants to make a start professionally and finally work in her dream job as an engineer. “I now feel secure, confident and ready to achieve my goals”.

The interview with Nadezda Zubkova was conducted in August 2019 by the web portal “Recognition in Germany” and the resulting article was kindly made available for this publication. She received recognition from the Berlin Construction Chamber. The Berlin Worker's Welfare Association (Arbeiterwohlfahrt, AWO) and Club Dialog e. V. advised her on the procedure. She received financial support through the recognition grant. At the time of the interview she was participating in the “BeuthBonus+” IQ subproject training programme at the Beuth University of Applied Sciences in Berlin.

Nadezda Zubkova's full success story is available here:

https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/erfahrungsberichte_ingenieurin-zubkova.php#gs-2106-1889

The qualification-oriented engineering training for academics (IAQ) with a university degree in a STEM subject obtained abroad.



Have you obtained a university degree abroad in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics? This training with the Network IQ Rhineland-Palatinate will help you to find work in Germany which matches your skills. The qualification-oriented engineering training (IAQ) at Kaiserslautern University of Applied Sciences is divided into a six-month university and a six-month practical phase. At the university you consolidate your technical knowledge and familiarise yourself with specialist German terminology. In interesting engineering projects you extend your competencies, learn about typical working routines and about corporate culture in Germany. The university helps you to find a company for the subsequent six-months practical phase in business. This training is currently being run for the sixth time at the university. So far, 80% of IAQ graduates have succeeded in achieving professional integration following completion of the course, and are working today in line with their qualification as mechanical engineers, computer scientists or physicists.

Attending the course is free of charge. It is possible to apply online now for the coming year 2021. The subproject in the Network IQ Rhineland-Palatinate is running until 31/12/2022.

Further information is available here:

<https://www.iq-zmint.de/index.php/fuer-zugewanderte/qualifizierung>

<https://www.iq-rlp.de/qualifizierung/akademische-berufe/ingenieurwesen-architektur-mint-berufe/integrations-und-qualifizierungszentrum-fuer-mint-berufe-iq-z-zmint>

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