



IQ minimum standards for uniform high quality

Advice on recognition and job training – services for persons with foreign professional and vocational qualifications

IQ GOOD PRACTICE in a nutshell



Addressees for transfer

Federal Employment Agency, job centres, advice centres in the area of migration and labour market integration, migrant organisations, chambers, welfare associations

Instrument

IQ advice on recognition and job training (AQB) delivers specialised and professional advice nationwide on the recognition procedure and on associated training options. The target group comprises persons who have acquired professional or vocational qualifications abroad.

Technical support

The IQ Recognition and Qualification Competence Centre assists the IQ advice centres via means such as technical support and training and networking formats.

Project

IQ Competence Centre for Recognition and Migrants
IQ recognition and job training advice centres

Provider

Provider of the Competence Centre:
Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (f-bb) (Forschungsinstitut Betriebliche Bildung (f-bb) gGmbH)
Providers of the advice centres: multiple providers

Contact at the Competence Centre

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Services

All previously published IQ Good Practice examples, all information relating to the advice centres and to the Competence Centre, further information material and details of points of contact can be found at www.netzwerk-iq.de

Starting position

In some work areas, the recognition of professional or vocational qualifications acquired abroad is a prerequisite for exercising an occupation in Germany. But recognition can also bring crucial benefits in professions and occupations for which it is not mandatory. It has, for example, been shown to help lead to employment and remuneration appropriate to qualifications. Within the context of the immigration of skilled workers, recognition is also a requirement for the acquisition of certain residence permits. However, the legal foundations and processes for recognition vary by profession or occupation and also by federal state in some cases. The complex general conditions and different individual prior learning on the part of those seeking recognition mean that there is a need for specialised expert advice. Against this background, advice on recognition within the scope of the Network IQ was instigated to coincide with the entry into force of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) in 2012. Advice on job training was added a few years later. As part of quality processes, advisory provision has undergone continuous further development in a needs-oriented way.

Implementation and advice contents

IQ advice on recognition and job training (AQB) is an established service in all 16 federal states, and there are a total of 60 advice centres (2023–2025 funding period). It offers comprehensive support to those who wish to obtain recognition of a professional or vocational qualification acquired abroad. Evidence of the training and occupational experience of the people using the services is inspected during the advisory session. The possible German reference occupation and the competent body are identified, and the prerequisites for recognition are explained. Advisers remain available throughout the whole of the recognition procedure to assist as and when required. They provide support with compilation of the necessary documentation, questions relating to funding oppor-



tunities and understanding the recognition notice. In the event of partial recognition or of a notice imposing compensation measures, discussions take place with the service users to clarify the training opportunities that will enable achievement of full recognition or entry to the German labour market.

Advice is offered face-to-face, by telephone, and in digital formats. It may also take place on a mobile basis (e.g. at job centres) or in the form of a group advisory session. The language used in the advisory session is adapted to the needs of the service users. There are often multilingual advisers, or advice can be given in simplified language. Advice is free of charge, neutral and confidential.

Minimum standards

Minimum standards for AQB have been drawn up in the Network IQ in order to ensure uniform high quality nationwide. Migration-specific anti-discrimination has been adopted as a general principle in these standards, and the necessity for diversity competency on the part of advisers has been set out. Further minimum standards encompass aspects such as consideration of the individual requirements of persons seeking advice and the neutrality and independence of the AQB.

Good knowledge management and efficient management of interfaces have been defined as standards with regard to the general conditions governing successful AQB. Awa-

renewal and availability of the advice provision are further linked factors. Other focuses include ensuring a discreet setting for the advisory session and thorough preparation and follow-up of advice.

Conclusion

The comprehensive support structure of the AQB allows it to help those affected to negotiate recognition procedures successfully. The combination of individual advice, a high

degree of professional competency, regional networking and a focus on sustainable integration make the AQB a valuable instrument within the context of securing a skilled worker supply and of integration policy.

Specialist expertise and individual support

Three questions to Tatjana Erfurt and Olesia Hausmann, academic researchers at the Competence Centre for Recognition and Job Training



1. What is special about advice on recognition and job training (AQB) in the Network IQ, and why is it so important?

Firstly, the advice provided is characterised by a high degree of professional expertise. This lays the foundation for successful AQB. Recognition procedures are governed by the BQFG and by specific legislation covering individual professions at a federal and federal state level. This means different procedures and training pathways are possible, and the advisers need to be familiar with these. This is supplemented by technical expertise in related topics, such as the identification of competencies acquired by non-formal and informal means, residence law and opportunities to access higher education study. Referral advice is offered in this case, secured by good regional networking with relevant stakeholders.

Secondly, one of the stipulations of the IQ minimum standards is that advice should be aligned to the individual needs and goals of those seeking it. It should also be low threshold and sensitive to diversity and should be offered in various forms. This requires in turn a high level of diversity and methodological competency from the advisers.

2. What typical challenges do persons seeking recognition encounter, and how can the AQB provide support in this regard?

Different education and labour market systems in the countries of origin already mean that persons seeking recognition may experience a considerable hurdle in independently identifying their matching German reference occupation. The AQB provides assistance with this so that the application for a recognition procedure can be submitted to the right authorities.

Waiting times with regard to equivalence assessment are frequently long, and this is another challenge. The period needed for processing depends on many factors. One aspect which plays a role here, for example, is repeated subsequent requests for documentation. The AQB can at least offer a partial remedy in this regard by supporting service users with the correct and complete submission of their application.

In addition to this, the persons seeking guidance

often find it difficult to understand the notices setting out the decisions of the competent bodies and the possible steps which may follow. The AQB also provides assistance here by helping to ensure understanding and by advising on the planning of necessary training courses or examinations.

3. How sustainable is the advice concept?

Individual and ongoing support for persons from a migrant background throughout the whole of the recognition and training process is a key aspect of the AQB. Depending on their needs, service users are able to avail themselves of several more detailed consultation appointments. This holistic approach facilitates targeted support in line with the respective prerequisites and requirements of the persons seeking advice. Following successful recognition of their qualifications obtained abroad, foreign skilled workers are in a better position to apply on the German labour market and to participate in accordance with their competencies.

Finally, IQ advice on recognition and job training also has a (further) systemic added value. While networking and interaction of the advice centres with regional stakeholders leads to effective knowledge transfer, it also facilitates impetuses for structural optimisation. These benefit both the persons seeking advice and the advisory staff.

Legal notice

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