

Applying for a license to practice as a psychotherapist with a professional qualification from a third country

Would you like to work as a psychotherapist in Germany? Then you need a license to practice. You can also obtain a license to practice with a foreign professional qualification. To do so, you must have your professional qualification recognized.

Competent Department

- [Die Senatorin für Gesundheit, Frauen und Verbraucherschutz | Referat 20 - Rechtsangelegenheiten Gesundheit, Beruferecht, Sozialversicherung](#)

Basic information

The profession of psychotherapist is regulated in Germany. This means that in order to work as a psychotherapist in Germany without any restrictions, you need a license to practice. Approbation is the state license to practice the profession. This means that you are not allowed to work independently as a psychotherapist without a license to practice.

You can also obtain a license to practice in Germany with a professional qualification from a so-called third country. Third countries are all countries that do not belong to the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland. In order to obtain a license to practice medicine, you must have your foreign professional qualification recognized.

In the recognition procedure, the competent authority compares your professional qualification with the German professional qualification and checks the equivalence. The equivalence of the professional qualification is an important prerequisite for obtaining a license to practice. In addition to the equivalence of the professional qualification, you must also meet other requirements for the license to be issued. Further requirements include, for example, sufficient German language skills and health suitability.

If your professional qualification comes from the EU, the EEA or Switzerland, other regulations apply.

In principle, you can also apply for the procedure from abroad.

Requirements

- You have a professional qualification as a psychotherapist from a third country.
- You want to work as a psychotherapist in Germany.
- You can provide proof of competence in the federal state of Bremen.
- Personal suitability: You are reliable to work as a psychotherapist and have no criminal record.
- Health suitability: You are mentally and physically fit to work as a psychotherapist.
- You have German language skills at the required level. This is usually general language skills at level B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and technical language skills at level C2.

Procedure

Application

You submit an application for a license to practice as a psychotherapist to the competent authority. The application must be submitted electronically. The original documents must be presented at a personal appointment.

The competent authority will then check whether your training corresponds to the German training and whether all other requirements have been met. Approval can only be granted if your training from abroad is equivalent to the German training.

Examination of equivalence

The competent authority compares your professional qualification from abroad with the German professional qualification. The competent authority will check whether your professional qualification is equivalent. The professional qualification is equivalent if there are no significant differences between your foreign professional qualification and the German professional qualification.

Possible results of the examination

If your professional qualification is equivalent, your foreign professional qualification will be recognized. The authority can confirm the result in writing. You must still meet the other requirements and provide proof of your language skills. You will then be granted a license to practice as a psychotherapist.

Are there any significant differences between your professional qualification and the German professional qualification? You may be able to compensate for the differences through your professional experience, other knowledge or skills (lifelong learning). You must provide evidence of your professional experience. Knowledge and skills must be certified by an authority in the country in which you acquired the knowledge or skills.

However, it is possible that the essential differences cannot be compensated for by this knowledge. You may then not work as a psychotherapist in Germany.

The competent authority will inform you of the significant differences and why you cannot compensate for the significant differences through your professional practice. The decision of the competent authority will also state the level of your training and the level required in Germany.

Compensatory measure

You can take a compensatory measure to make up for the significant differences.

If you acquired your professional qualification in a third country, you can take the following compensation measure:

- Knowledge examination: The knowledge examination is based on the final examination as a psychotherapist in Germany. The knowledge examination is an application-oriented examination.

If you pass the knowledge test and meet all other requirements, you will receive your license to practice as a psychotherapist.

Legal bases

- [§ 61 ff. Approbationsordnung für Psychotherapeutinnen und Psychotherapeuten](#)
- [§ 1 Abs. 1, § 2, § 11 Psychotherapeutengesetz](#)

More information

Temporary professional license

A temporary professional license allows you to work without a license for a limited period of time. With a temporary work permit, you can work under the supervision of a person with a license to practice medicine. You may then only be allowed to carry out activities in a specific area of work. You must meet the following requirements for the professional license:

- Proof of your professional qualification
- Health suitability
- Personal aptitude
- German language skills: You must provide proof of the German language skills required to exercise the profession within the scope of the professional license.

You can apply for a professional license from the competent authority.

Notification of equivalence

The equivalence assessment (recognition procedure) can also take place during the

licensing procedure. You can apply for a separate decision on the result of the examination.

Procedure for ethnic German repatriates

As an ethnic German repatriate, you can choose to undergo the recognition procedure in accordance with the laws mentioned here or in accordance with the Federal Expellees Act. You can decide for yourself. The responsible office will advise you on which procedure is right for you.

Legal remedy

You can take legal action against the decision of the competent authority within a certain period of time (for example, by lodging an objection). The decision will then be reviewed. Details can be found in the information on legal remedies at the end of your decision. We recommend that you first speak to the responsible office before taking legal action against the decision.

What deadlines must be paid attention to?

There is no deadline.

Sometimes documents are still missing from the procedure. The responsible office will then inform you by when you must submit the documents. This may prolong the procedure.

How long does it take to process

Depending on the individual case.

What are the costs?

The responsible office will inform you of the costs. The costs generally depend on the time and effort required for processing.

Additional costs may be incurred (e.g. for translations or notarizations). These costs vary from case to case.