Physicians

The Federal Republic of Germany is dependent on young medical professionals. Become a part of the German health service as a doctor.

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How to start your career as a doctor in Germany

Working as a doctor in Germany

In comparison to other countries, Germany has a highly effective **healthcare system**. Using the latest treatment methods and modern medical instruments allows for a high level of care. A dense network of hospitals and local doctors ensure that patients swiftly receive the medical services necessary for them. The ongoing digitalisation in the healthcare sector continues to reveal new opportunities for medical care. Thus, data in electronic patient files is rapidly available, and access to digital healthcare applications and telemedicine can be established. This testifies to the great innovative power of the German healthcare sector and its dynamic economic sector. With about 7.7 million employees, the public health service is also a crucial resource for employment; the number of employees has been increasing steadily for years. As of right now, about 446,100 doctors make sure that patients are well cared for.

What is a doctor's job in Germany?

A new generation of medical personnel is urgently required in Germany. The demand will continue to grow in the years to come – especially since many physicians in hospitals will be retiring. When it comes to local doctors, general practitioners as well as family doctors are in demand. Many doctors can no longer find a successor to take over their practice, namely in Eastern Germany and in rural areas.

At the same time, the number of international doctors working in Germany has almost doubled within the last decade. Each year, many doctors from abroad apply to have their foreign qualification recognised as an equivalent to a German qualification. Doctors are often second only to nurses in the list of occupations with the highest number of applications.

As a doctor in Germany, there are a wide range of career opportunities available to you. For instance, you may work in hospitals, clinics, healthcare centres, geriatric care services or home care services where you will most likely work as an employee. You could also work independently as a local doctor in your own medical facility. In addition, there are other professional fields such as in medical **research** and teaching, in public health departments, health insurance companies or in the private sector, e.g. as a **scientist** in medical technology or the pharmaceutical industry. Out of all academic fields in Germany, doctors earn the highest salaries.

In the video: Working as a doctor in Germany

Labour market for international doctors: an overview in figures

71,480

foreign doctors are working in Germany (as of 2025).

52,360

foreign doctors in Germany come from non-EU countries.

51,000

foreign doctors have been in Germany for less than ten years (2024).

What requirements apply to doctors from abroad?

If you completed your education and training as a doctor abroad, you will require an official licence (*Approbation*) in order to work in your profession in Germany. Without this licence, you may not be able to treat patients as an on-duty doctor in Germany. The *Approbation* is an official **licence to practise** medicine with an unrestricted professional permit. To obtain this licence, your education and training must be recognised as an equivalent to the German education and training programme for doctors.

The competent authorities for access to the profession are the medical licensing authorities in your respective **federal state**. A list of the competent authorities issuing licences to practise medicine is provided by the **German Medical Association** or via the "**Recognition Finder**". When applying for a licence and a professional permit to practise medicine, proof of your physical fitness (proof from your country of origin or a medical certificate issued in Germany), personal suitability (certificate of good conduct or standing from your home country or a German certificate of conduct (*Führungzeugnis*)) and your knowledge of the German language are usually required. Information on the language requirements for each federal state is provided by the **Marburger Bund association**. The minimum requirement in all federal states is general language level B2 of the **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)**. In addition, a special medical language test based on level C1 of the CEFR is usually required.

German for international doctors

The "IMED-KOMM" platform offers a comprehensive online course entitled “German for foreign doctors” as well as a special practice area for patient communication.

Do you have an additional medical qualification or specialisation as a consultant obtained abroad? You can also apply for this specialisation to be recognised. This application can only be made if you already have been granted a licence to practise medicine.

You can find more information about the recognition procedure for doctors on the multilingual portal Recognition in Germany or on the website of the German Medical Association.

Visa for doctors: when is it necessary?

As a citizen of the European Union, Liechtenstein, Iceland, Norway or Switzerland, you do not require a visa or a residence permit to work in Germany. Citizens of other countries do require a residence permit for that purpose. You can find more information on the work visa for qualified professionals and the EU Blue Card in the "Visa" section.

Visa for partial recognition of qualifications

Did you apply for recognition of your qualification and the certification authority in Germany determined that you require further qualifications for full recognition? Then you can find out whether the visa for the recognition of foreign qualifications is an option for you.

Visa options for doctors in research

Are you a doctor wishing to work in research and require a visa to work in Germany? If so, there are two options for you: you can apply for either a visa for research or the EU Blue

Card for this purpose. Check the requirements for each residence title to see whether you fulfil them.

Support programme for medical doctors from Mexico and Colombia

Doctors from **Mexico** and **Colombia** who already have German language skills at a B2 level can participate in the "Specialized! – recruitment, qualification and integration for foreign doctors" programme. More details on the programme can be found on the website of the Federal Employment Agency.

Specialized!: Recruitment of doctors from Mexico and Colombia

How to start your career as a doctor in Germany

Your career prospects: with our Quick-Check, you can find out about the opportunities available to you for working and living in Germany.

Begin the recognition process: in our "Recognition" section, you can find more information on the recognition of international qualifications.

Apply now: find a suitable position in our "Make it in Germany" job listings and use our tips for a successful job application in Germany.

Get advice: If you are interested in working as a doctor in Germany, the International Services (ZAV) of the Federal Employment Agency (BA) will also help you find employment opportunities. In addition, the Service Centre for Professional Recognition (ZSBA) provides free advice on the recognition procedure and helps you to find the appropriate bodies for the recognition procedure and the right contacts. You can also use the "Counselling search" tool on Anerkennung-in-Deutschland.de.

Information on the web

Federal Ministry of Health

Website of the Federal Ministry of Health

Digitalisation in healthcare

The German Medical Association

Recognition of training certificates from third countries

Marburger Bund

FAQ for foreign doctors in Germany

Anerkennung in Deutschland

How to get your qualification recognised and who to contact

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