Information

on Labour Migration in the Nursing Sector to Germany

Living and Working in Germany: Orientation and Decision-Making Aids for the successful Labour Migration of International Nursing Care Staff

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Bound for Germany?!

You are trained in nursing and are considering a move to Germany? And you would like to work here as a professional nurse? Maybe you have already been approached by a placement agency or language school about your potential for the German labour market. The labour migration of international professionals is a promising prospect, particularly with the increasing demand for professional staff in the healthcare and nursing sectors in Germany. It is also, however, a major step that should be well planned and well organised.

You will therefore find in this brochure specific information on the living and working conditions in Germany. First of all, the following pages will provide you with an initial overview of your options as an international professional nurse. You may regard the brochure as the basis for your further research. We encourage you to seek out reliable sources and question information that seems overly simplified or makes unrealistic promises. The more information you obtain from other media, the better prepared you will be for your exciting path toward working as an international professional nurse.

After extensive research you may decide for yourself whether you wish, in the future, to work in Germany as a nurse. If you enter the application phase well informed, you will be able to guard against complications and delays. We hope you thoroughly enjoy your research and that you find the courage to explore the possibilities you have abroad.

1. Information on the Professional Field

As a profession, nursing care is not practised in the same way everywhere in the world. Certain characteristics set the German approach to nursing apart from other countries in international comparisons. In this brochure, you will learn exactly what that means for your recruitment and recognition procedure. You will also learn some fundamentals about your professional activity as a nurse in Germany.

You should know beforehand that nursing staff in Germany can work in different types of institutions. This means that health and social care providers can be run by different organisations. These include:

- Privately organised institutions (in other words private companies)
- Institutions run by churches (for example Caritas and Diakonie)
- Institutions run by non-church charity associations (for example AWO (Workers’ Welfare Association) and Rotes Kreuz (Red Cross))
- State-run institutions (for example university clinics)
1. Information on the Professional Field

In Germany, nursing professions are so-called "regulated professions". What does that mean?

1.1 Nursing Professions are regulated professions

What you should know:
Regulated professions are professions for which the training is prescribed by the State. In the federally-organised country of Germany this means that regulated professions are organised by either the Federation or by one of the Federal States. The Federation consists of all 16 Federal States. Regulations at the federal level thus affect all Federal States. Regulations at the State level, however, apply only to the respective Federal State. Should you wish to work in a regulated profession in Germany, you must submit an application for professional accreditation. In this way, you prove your training and thus also your qualification for the relevant profession. Only after you have been granted professional accreditation you will be able to work as a nurse in Germany. Should you have concluded your vocational training in another country, you must first of all have your final certificate recognised in Germany. Once this is done, you may be granted professional accreditation in Germany. You may then officially work in a regulated profession.

You can obtain detailed information here:
Further information on this topic may be found here, for example:
www.pflegeausbildung.net
The website “Perspektive Gesundheitswirtschaft (Perspectives for the Healthcare Sector)” run by the Berlin IQ network also provides you with an overview of the healthcare sector. Here you may obtain detailed information on qualification requirements and fields of work:
www.kompetenzen-gesundheitsberufe.de

1.2 Qualification, further training and advanced training opportunities for nursing in Germany

What you should know:
Immigration to Germany related to employment in the nursing sector can open up various career possibilities. There is thus a wide range of options for obtaining qualifications as well as further and advanced training within the field of nursing care.

Qualification options:
Nursing professions require vocational training in Germany. Since 2020 there has been a uniform vocational qualification leading to the title of “nursing professional”. This vocational qualification imparts overarching nursing competences. The competences gained here should enable one to look after people of different age groups in various areas of care. The designation "nursing professional" thus replaces the following former job titles:
- Geriatric nurse
- Paediatric nurse

Further/Advanced Training Possibilities:
Are you already working as a nurse but would like to take on new duties or more responsibility? If so, you may select from a very wide range of further training opportunities and thus achieve your new aims. An overview of your possibilities is to be found here, for example:
www.pflegestudium.de
1. Information on the Professional Field

You can obtain detailed information here:

Advisory service on further training of the BMBF (Federal Ministry of Education and Research):
www.der-weiterbildungsratgeber.de
Telephone: +49 800/2017909

Further/Advanced Training offers from the Federal Job Agency:
berufenet.arbeitsagentur.de

1.3 Information on the current labour market situation for nursing professions in Germany

What you should know:

When selecting your employer and your future place of work, various factors will play an important role. For example, the situation in the labour market or the foreseeable opportunities for your occupational group in the relevant region. You should also ask yourself where you see your greatest potential: as a nurse in a hospital, an institution for long-term care, a rehab facility etc.

In Germany, there has been a shortage of qualified professionals in the fields of healthcare and nursing for a number of years. In the future there is also expected to be approximately 50,000 jobs vacancies in this field. What does that mean for you as an international nursing professional? — The shortage of qualified professionals will induce an increasing number of employers from the broad spectrum of healthcare and nursing to recruit nursing professionals from other countries. In order for hospitals and nursing facilities to be able to ensure their care in the future, nursing professionals from abroad will become increasingly important.

You may obtain in-depth information here:

You may inform yourself as to the labour market situation in the field of nursing in Germany on the homepage of the Federal Job Agency:
statistik.arbeitsagentur.de
1. Information on the Professional Field

1.4 Tasks and Fields of Work for Nursing Staff

What you should know:

There are a number of fields in which nursing staff can work. These include, for example:

- Patient care
- Paediatric nursing
- Geriatric nursing
- Intensive care
- Nurse in the operating theatre

The aforementioned fields are themselves sub-divided into various fields of nursing care. These are:

- Acute inpatient care (e.g. clinic)
- Long-term inpatient care (e.g. a nursing home)
- Outpatient care (e.g. nursing private persons in their own homes)

As you can see: as a nursing professional you look after and assist people in every phase of their lives. Your responsibilities include a broad range of important activities. These include:

- The autonomous observation, advising, supervision and care of patients
- The documentation and evaluation of the nursing measures
- The implementation of doctor’s instructions
- Assistance in medical measures

Basic nursing activities are highly important in German nursing facilities. This is why the following activities are not exclusively carried out by auxiliary staff, but are also a part of your own field of responsibility:

- Personal care
- Diet
- Mobility
- Preventive measures (prophylactics)
- Promotion of independence
- Promotion and maintenance of communication

You may obtain in-depth information here:

Brief description nursing professional: berufenet.arbeitsagentur.de

Brief description nurse - und paediatric nurse: berufenet.arbeitsagentur.de

An overview of the healthcare sector: www.kompetenzen-gesundheitsberufe.de
1. Information on the Professional Field

1.5 Professional and Expert Associations

What you should know:

A professional association is free and independent and represents the interests of its members, who all belong to the same or related professions. The members of a professional association practise the same or related professions. The interests of the numerous workers converge here. This enables them to assert their demands in negotiations with employers or in relation to public interests more easily.

Professional associations thus represent the interests and wishes of their members regarding the way in which the nursing profession is exercised. The interests of those members may be, inter alia, of an economic, legal, social or societal nature. — Are you seeking advice on legal matters, for example? If so, a professional association could be of assistance to you.

You may obtain in-depth information here:

In Germany, there is a multitude of professional and expert associations in the field of nursing care. Here a selection of professional and expert associations in the field of nursing professions:

Deutscher Pflegerat e.V.
<deutscher-pflegerat.de>

Deutscher Berufsverband für Pflegeberufe
<www.dbfk.de>

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Fachkrankenpflege und Funktionsdienste e. V.
<www.dgf-online.de>

Deutscher Berufsverband für Altenpflege e. V.
<www.dbva.de>

Verband der Schwesternschaften vom Deutschen Roten Kreuz e.V.
<www.rotkreuzschwestern.de>
2. Information on Gainful Employment

Germany has strong labour laws. This means that working hours, holiday and break entitlements, cancellation rights and many more points are precisely regulated in employment contracts.

2.1 Rights and Duties of Employees in Germany

What you should know:

The employment contract forms the legal basis for a working relationship in Germany. It defines the rights and the obligations of both employee and employer. In terms of content, you should always ensure that you specify the following information prior to or upon concluding the employment contract:

- Names of the contractual partners (your name and that of the company)
- Beginning and duration of the contract
- If applicable, details pertaining to the probationary period
- Place of work
- Description of activity (your duties at the workplace)
- Details of your salary
- Details of working hours in terms of the number of hours per week
- Details of your holiday entitlement in terms of the number of days per year
- Details of the periods of notice applicable to both parties

It may be the case, however, that you will be employed on the basis of a collective agreement. If so, the above information is to be found not in your own individual contract of employment but in that collective agreement. Should you, in the future, work for Caritas for example, the aforementioned points are set down in the AVR-rule book. This is “The Guidelines applicable to Employment Contracts in the Facilities run by the Deutscher Caritasverband”. These guidelines plus the valid collective agreements in general must be available to employees for inspection.

Periods of Notice:

Periods of notice inform you as to how long in advance you must inform your employer of your intention to terminate your working relationship. The same applies vice versa for the company towards you. As a basic rule, there is, in Germany, a legally binding period of notice of at least four weeks. But beware: this statutory period of notice only applies if you have been in an employment relationship of indefinite duration for more than six months.

All information pertaining to your periods of notice, also during the probationary period, is to be found in either your own contract of employment or in your collective agreement. You will receive collective agreements in facilities run by the Deutscher Caritasverband, for example. Should you not find any details regarding periods of notice in either your employment contract or collective agreement, it is imperative that you should regulate these details additionally in writing.
2. Information on Gainful Employment

Commitment and/or Repayment Clauses:
Pay particular attention to so-called commitment and/or repayment clauses. You will find these in your employment contract or in supplementary documents. — What are commitment or repayment clauses? They describe certain obligations that you, as an employee, have towards the company. Quite specifically, these regulations determine that you may not change your job for a certain period of time. Should you, in spite of the respective regulation, nonetheless change your job, you must expect to have to make monetary payments to your employer. It is therefore imperative that you should review the financial aspects of your contract for appropriateness. In case of uncertainties, independent lawyers specialising in German labour law will assist you.

You may also take advantage of the offer “Fair Integration” of the IQ network. This offers you advice on topics such as commitment and/or repayment clauses. In this brochure you will find additional information on this under Point 6 (“Neutral Advice and Other Support”).

Co-determination and Active Participation in the Company:
As an employee, you have a right to co-determination and active participation in the decision-making processes within the company employing you. In the case of public or private employers you may also turn to the works council or personnel representatives. These are elected, institutionalised representatives in business establishments, companies and groups. They represent the interests and perspectives of all members of the workforce.

In church or charitable institutions, the body for co-determination is known as “MAV” (employee representative committee). Their elected members also represent the interests of the members of the workforce towards the employer. Their duties are comparable with those of works councillors.

You may obtain in-depth information here:
- karrierebibel.de
- www.make-it-in-germany.com
- www.faire-integration.de
- www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de | Geltende Gehaltsuntergrenzen
2. Information on Gainful Employment

2.2 Social Insurance Law in Germany

What you should know:
During your term of gainful employment as a nursing professional in Germany, you are obliged to pay social insurance contributions. This means that you are automatically a member of various insurance institutions. Accordingly, a fixed percentage of your salary is directly retained as statutory social insurance contributions. These contributions are paid into the social insurance companies. In return, thanks to these insurances, you will receive financial support should you become ill or lose your job.

The contributions to social insurance encompass all compulsory insurances. These are:

**Pension Insurance, Health Insurance, Nursing Care Insurance, Unemployment Insurance**

Solidarity Insurance:
The health and nursing care insurances are organised according to the principle of solidarity. This means that the contributions paid by you are not paid out directly and in the same amounts in all cases to recipients. Instead, these supportive benefits are paid out according to need and thus also in varying amounts to the contribution-paying members of the insurances.

Contribution-based Benefits:
The pension insurance scheme is a contributions-based benefit. The amount of the insurance payments is thus made up of the sum of the contributions paid by you. Put succinctly, this means: you receive what you previously paid into your pension insurance scheme. Unemployment benefit will also be paid to you directly, should you lose your job. In this case, however, the amount of the payments will be calculated on the basis of your salary during the previous 12 months.

Details on Pension Insurance:
You pay into the pension insurance scheme in order to receive a pension upon retirement. This period is known as retirement. The amount of your pension is calculated on the basis of your income during your working life. The years during which you paid contributions in Germany are counted towards this. Generally speaking, pensions from the statutory scheme can also be paid to other countries. This is the case if you should, after retirement, leave Germany again. In certain individual cases, restrictions may apply, however. It is therefore important that you should seek information on your own individual circumstances from the German Pension Insurance Scheme in good time.

Details on Health and Nursing Care Insurance:
As an employee you are insured against illness at all times. You are thereby a member of either the statutory health insurance scheme or have a private health insurance policy. Should you become ill at any time, the health insurance fund will pay the costs of your medical treatment. When you join a health insurance scheme, you also automatically have nursing care insurance. This insurance comes into play should you, due to serious illness or the infirmities of old age, no longer be able to take care of yourself. You may, for example, be able to pay for the assistance of a nursing professional with the aid of your nursing care insurance.

Unemployment Insurance:
The unemployment insurance scheme pays those who are without employment a regular income for a certain period of time. Generally speaking, in order to receive this benefit you must have been insured for at least one year within the last two while employed, and you must also be actively looking for new employment.

You may obtain in-depth information here:
Further information regarding social insurances may be found, inter alia, on the website of Make it in Germany.
3. Immigration Process and Furtherance of Integration

If you wish to come to Germany from a third country, you require a residence permit. This permit will be granted to you on the basis of the purpose of your stay here.

3.1 Possibilities of Immigration

What you should know:

There is in Germany a broad range of offers of advice on migration and integration. The Skilled Workers’ Immigration Act (FEG) thereby opens up for you the possibility of accelerating your entry procedure. This is regulated in Section 81a of the Residence Act (AufenthG). Do you have a specific offer of a place of work? If so, your employer may, in return for payment of a fee, apply for a so-called “Fast-Track Admission Procedure for Skilled Workers” on your behalf.

Fast-Track Admission Procedure for Skilled Workers:
The immigration authority plays a key role in the fast-track admission procedure for skilled workers. It is responsible for advising your employer on the prerequisites for entering the country in your case. Moreover, the immigration authority assumes the examination of all applicable conditions and the initiation of the recognition procedure. The authorities involved are tied to relatively short deadlines throughout the entire procedure. All in all, the fast-track admission procedure for skilled workers does not, as a general rule, take longer than four months. In terms of times, the deadlines may be broken down as follows:

- Approximately six weeks for the granting of a visa
- Approximately eight weeks for the recognition procedure
- Approximately one week for the approval procedure

Regular Admission Procedure:
Alternatively, the so-called “Regular Admission Procedure” remains an option for you, and possibly also the “Process for Obtaining the Prior Consent of the Federal Job Agency”. This is legally regulated in Section 36 Paragraph 3 of the Employment Regulations (BeschV). Should the fast-track procedure for skilled workers not be an option in your case, discuss with your employer which procedure is to be opted for instead:

- The regular admission procedure or
- The Process for Obtaining the Prior Consent of the Federal Job Agency

The process may also be applied to the subsequent immigration of spouses and children. It is important here that the applications should be submitted at roughly the same time. This means that the immigration of the family members must take place within six months of the time of the immigration of the skilled worker.

Since March 2020, it is also possible to enter Germany within the framework of placement agreements between the Federal Employment Agency and the employment services of selected countries of origin. This option is legally set down in Section 16d Para. 4 of the Residence Act (AufenthG). The entry visa procured hereby does not presuppose a completed individual recognition procedure. This is what distinguishes it from the previously mentioned procedures.
3. Immigration Process and Furtherance of Integration

There is one important prerequisite for entering the country in the context of the aforementioned procedure according to Section 16d Para. 4, however. This is only possible if, in the estimation of the Federal Job Agency, the full recognition of the foreign professional qualifications is achievable. The Federal Job Agency therefore only negotiates such agreements for selected professional qualifications of the country of origin. Decisive in this context are these three points in particular:

- The Federal Job Agency considers the respective professional qualification to be suitable
- The specialist associations and bodies for professional recognition involved consider the respective professional qualification to be suitable
- Suitable training structures for the respective professional qualification exist in the estimation of the Federal Job Agency

3.2 Infrastructure of Advice on Migrations and Integration

What you should know:

In Germany, there exists a wide range of migration and integration advisory services. Some of the most important points of first contact are to be found listed below:

- Since 2005, the Federation has offered Migration Advice for Adult Immigrants. This is a service especially conceived for recently-arrived migrants.

- mbeon Migrationsberatung (Migration advice) is a digital offer. It offers those seeking advice the opportunity to access advisory services in chat form via the mbeon-App. Here, you will find answers to questions related to arriving in Germany, work and profession, learning German, health and accommodation. Use of the chat advisory service is free of charge, anonymous and data-secure. At the same time, as an initial orientation guide, extensive information on migration is provided in both the app and on the website of the BAMF. Moreover, the possibility of seeking personal advice in an MBE-advisory centre is also given.
3. Immigration Process and Furtherance of Integration

- **Faire Integration** is a country-wide advisory service for refugees and other migrants who do not come from an EU country. This service encompasses questions of social and labour law matters. Owing to the practical selection of the topics, you will receive a lot of valuable information regarding aspects such as salary, working hours, holiday, cancellation and health insurance. In the advisory centres you may thus find advice on specific questions concerning working conditions in your job, during training and during work experience. It does not matter whether you are already working or just want to find out about the relevant conditions in advance. The advisory centres also offer you workshops, such as integration or language courses. Should you have any additional questions on matters such as job search or residence status, you will be referred to specialised advisory centres and institutions.

You may obtain in-depth information here:

General information on migration advice:

www.netzwerk-iq.de

Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat

www.bmi.bund.de

3.3 Political, social, religious and cultural participation possibilities

What you should know:

In Germany you may be active in a political, social, religious and/or cultural context in a multitude of ways. Initial information on the path to discovering participation and support opportunities can be found at the Website of the Officer of the Federal Government for Migration, Refugees and Integration.

www.integrationsbeauftragte.de

Social and cultural participation is also made possible for you by organisations that are themselves run by migrants. These include, for example, the Association of Internationally Recruited Nursing Professionals in Germany. A further option is making contact with your own (church) community or with clubs/associations in your place of residence.

You may obtain in-depth information here:

Numerous offers are available to you from the IQ networks. Find services in your neighbourhood here:

www.netzwerk-iq.de
4. Recognition Procedure

In order to be able to work in Germany, your foreign qualifications must first be recognised. This is done in so-called recognition procedure. In order to gain recognition, certain specific competences must be proven in Germany. The nursing profession differs from State to State. It is therefore possible that you may, under certain circumstances, lack the particular competences required in Germany.

Should you fulfil all prerequisites, however, your professional qualification will be recognised. It may even be possible that your professional qualification will be recognised before entering Germany. You will thus be awarded a permit to practise as a nursing professional in Germany. It is frequently the case, however, that competences are lacking that you may catch up on at the beginning of your residence in Germany. These will be set down in writing in a so-called Deficiency Notice and communicated to you.

What you should know:

There are two ways in which you may remedy any deficiencies:

- **By way of an assessment test:**
  This assessment test examines the extent to which the professional qualification you have gained abroad corresponds to its German equivalent. For this you must undergo both an oral and a written examination. Based on your results, a decision will be made as to whether your qualifications obtained abroad are equivalent to what is taught in training in Germany. But don't worry, there are specific courses for nursing professionals that ideally prepare you for successfully taking this assessment test.

- **By way of an adjustment qualification:**
  An adjustment qualification is a course that remedies an existing need for extra qualifications. Such courses are usually designed in a modular fashion. Should adjustment qualification be one of the preconditions for your recognition certificate, the following measures will be taken: B2 Language courses, Professional training courses, Work experience placements in hospitals.

You may obtain in-depth information here:

The IQ network has published a dossier on topics connected with the field of nursing care. This provides you with general Information regarding Recognition as a Nursing Professional. Federal Office for Migration and Refugees: Hotline for Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications “Working and Living in Germany”

Recognition in Germany: the Information Portal of the Federal Government on the Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications

You can learn more about the process of recognising your professional qualification and who is responsible for that by using a “Recognition Finder”. You may find free advisory centres here.

Make it in Germany: the Portal of the Federal Government for Skilled Professionals from Abroad

BQ Portal: Information on Foreign Professional Qualifications and State- and Professional Profiles

Federal Institute for Professional Training (BIBB): Information on the Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications in Germany

Central Service Point for Professional Recognition (ZSBA): Free Advice and Support during the Recognition Procedure | The Support Programme “Integration through Qualification (IQ)” supports you in your search for a suitable measure in your area. One is of assistance to you with advice on the following topics, for example: filing an application, qualification possibilities, perspectives on the labour market and travelling to Germany. You profit thereby from the regional IQ networks within the programme.
5. Information on Learning the Language

In order to be granted a permit to practise a profession in Germany, you must be able to prove a certain level of language competence.

What you should know:

Currently, in order to be granted a permit to practise a profession, a language certificate for the level B2 according to the Common European Reference Framework for Languages (CEFR) is required. For permission to travel to Germany, however, level B1 (CEFR) is sufficient. The Level B2 qualification can then be acquired here in Germany. In future, proof of language competence shall be based on a B2 specialised language test for the nursing care sector. Some Federal States are already preparing for this transition. The States of Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Bremen, Lower Saxony and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania will be the first to introduce the B2-specialised language tests. In those States, both general language courses and course that prepare you specifically for working as a professional in the nursing care sector will be offered.

The legal basis for professional language courses in German is the “Regulation on the Profession-related Promotion of Knowledge of German Language” (DeuFöV). The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) is responsible for implementing these DeuFöV courses. The BAMF permits both public and private organisations to do this. The BAMF may issue certificates of entitlements to persons who are in the middle of the recognition phase regarding their foreign professional qualifications.

You may obtain in-depth information here:

A further option for the imparting of knowledge of the German language in the nursing sector can be found at the IQ specialist unit “Professional German” and its interactive educational game: “One day of German - in the World of Nursing”. In this game you will find exercises on communication, vocabulary, sentence structure and pronunciation for German learners from Level B1 onwards. This educational game is available both as an app and as a web version. Extensive additional materials for the teaching of German. You may access the game from here:

www.ein-tag-deutsch.de

On the site of the IQ specialist unit “Professional German” you will find collection of materials for the nursing care sector. This collection can assist you in learning the German language. You will find the materials referred to here:

www.deutsch-am-arbeitsplatz.de

On the site of “Make it in Germany” you will find extensive information on the required knowledge of the German language:

www.make-it-in-germany.com

Here, you may take a look at the various levels of the European Reference Framework for languages:

www.europaeischer-referenzrahmen.de
6. Neutral Advice and Other Support

An extensive range of advice and support measures is available in Germany. This service also encompasses numerous advisory and support services that are neutral and free of charge.

What you should know:

Apart from the information you obtain from your employer or your agency, you should also be aware of neutral advisory centres. Numerous such services exist, some of which are listed on this site. Do not hesitate to take advantage of such opportunities. They may be of great help in many situations.

You may obtain in-depth information here:

“Fair Integration” is one of the main focuses of the advisory services offered by the IQ programme. This service encompasses questions of labour and social laws. These are questions that have a direct bearing upon the employment relationship, such as salary, working hours, holiday, cancellation and health insurance.

www.faire-integration.de

The network “Work and Life” for the advising of foreign employees was founded for the purposes of expert exchange, qualification and common public relations work. Advisory services are available in a number of languages (mainly German, English, French, Spanish, Polish, Ukrainian, Croatian, Russian, Turkish or Arabic).

www.arbeitundleben.de

“Handbook Germany” provides answers from A-Z on life in Germany in the form of videos and texts. There you may choose between the following seven languages: German, Arabic, English, Persian, Turkish, French, Pashto and Russian. You will find in Handbook Germany important tips on topics ranging from political asylum, accommodation, health, work and education, daycare centres for children and studying. You can also find on the local sites the names of the relevant contact persons in your region. Here a few examples:

Health Insurance in Germany

How does the German Nursing Care System work?

Last but not least, the YouTube channel of the German Trade Union Congress (DGB) on matters related to labour law is recommended. This does not contain any direct references to nursing professions, however.

www.youtube.com
Inprint

About Us

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