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Apply for an approbation to practise as a psychotherapist (third country)

Psychotherapists diagnose and treat mental and psychosomatic disorders with disease value in people by means of scientifically recognised psychotherapeutic procedures.

The profession of psychotherapist is regulated in Germany. This means that in order to be able to work as a psychotherapist in Germany without restriction, you need to have a licence to practise. Approbation is the state licence to practice the profession. This means that you are not allowed to work independently as a psychotherapist without an Approbation.

You can also obtain an Approbation 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 the licence to practise medicine, you must have your foreign professional qualification recognised.

In the recognition procedure, the competent body compares your professional qualification from abroad with the German professional qualification and checks the equivalence. The equivalence of the professional qualification is an important prerequisite for the granting of the licence to practise medicine.

In addition to the equivalence of the professional qualification, you must also fulfil other requirements for the granting of the licence. Further requirements are, for example, sufficient German language skills and health suitability.

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

You can also apply for the procedure from abroad.

Procedure

1. Application

You submit an application for a licence to practise as a psychotherapist to the competent body. The competent body then checks whether your training corresponds to German training and whether all other requirements are met. Approbation can only be granted if your training from a third country is equivalent to German training.

2 Examination of equivalence

The competent body compares your professional qualification from abroad with the German professional qualification. The competent body checks 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.

3. Possible results of the examination

If your professional qualification is equivalent, your foreign professional

qualification will be recognised. The authority can confirm the result to you in writing. You still have to fulfil the other requirements and prove your language skills. Then you will be granted a licence to practise as a psychotherapist.

- Are there any significant differences between your professional qualification and the German professional qualification? Perhaps you can compensate for the differences through your professional practice, other knowledge or skills (lifelong learning). You must provide evidence of professional practice. Knowledge and skills must be certified by an authority of the state in which you acquired the knowledge or skills.
- However, it may be that the essential differences cannot be compensated for by this knowledge. The competent authority will tell you the essential differences and why you cannot compensate for the essential differences through your professional experience.
- The decision of the competent authority also states the level of your training and the level required in Germany. You are then not allowed to work as a psychotherapist in Germany.

4. Knowledge examination

If your professional qualification is not equivalent and you cannot compensate for the differences, you can take a knowledge examination. The knowledge examination is based on the final examination as a psychotherapist in Germany. The knowledge examination is an oral-practical examination. If you pass the knowledge examination and meet all other requirements, you will receive your licence to practise as a psychotherapist.

Prerequisites

- **A psychotherapeutic training completed in a third country that is equivalent to a German training or an equivalent level of knowledge**
The equivalence of the level of knowledge is to be proven by an examination if necessary
- **Health fitness**
- **Proof of reliability and worthiness for the practice of the psychotherapeutic profession**
- **Sufficient German language skills level B 2**
- **Specialised language test**
- **Proof of competence**

Documents required

- **Application for the granting of a licence to practise medicine in the case of training in a third country**
- **Proof of responsibility for the Land of Berlin**
(e.g. confirmation of employment, proof of habitual residence in the Land of Berlin/
main residence if applicable, applications for vacancies in the Land of Berlin, invitations to interviews).
- **Curriculum vitae in tabular form with signature and date**
- **Proof of identity (valid identity card or passport)**
- **Certificate of birth**
in the event of a change of name, e.g. due to marriage, also this document

- **Certificate of good conduct for presentation to an authority**
(<https://service.berlin.de/dienstleistung/120926/>)
Zur Überprüfung der persönlichen Zuverlässigkeit wird eine Auskunft aus dem Bundeszentralregister (Führungszeugnis) zur Vorlage bei einer Behörde (Belegart O) benötigt.
Die Auskünfte dürfen nicht älter als drei Monate sein.
- **Certificate of Good Conduct/Certificate of Clearance of Offences**
of the police or judicial authorities of the home country and, if applicable, of the country of study.
(not older than 3 months if presented)
- **Certificate of good standing/Certificate of good standing**
of the competent authority of the country in which the profession was practised
(not older than 3 months if presented)
- **Medical certificate from a doctor licensed in Germany**
(not older than 3 months if presented)
- **Proof of completed education (third country)**
(see checklist for persons with third-country education)
- **Certificate B 2 on knowledge of the German language**
(from telc, TestDaF or Goethe-Institut - not older than 3 years).
It is not necessary to submit the language certificates at the time of application.
- **Specialist language test (Berlin Chamber of Psychotherapists)**
It is not necessary to submit the language certificates at the time of application.
- **Doctoral certificate (if available)**
- **Official certification of copies**
If copies are submitted, they must be officially certified. In the case of copies without official certification, the simultaneous submission of the originals is required.

Forms

- **Application for the granting of a licence to practise medicine in the case of training in a third country**
(https://www.berlin.de/lageso/_assets/gesundheit/berufe-im-gesundheitswesen/111_ds_akad_antrag_approbation_be_03_2020.pdf)
- **Medical certificate from a doctor licensed in Germany**
(https://www.berlin.de/lageso/_assets/gesundheit/berufe-im-gesundheitswesen/aerztliche-bescheinigung_eu_ds_akad.pdf)
- **Checklist: Evidence of completed education (third country)**
(https://www.berlin.de/lageso/_assets/gesundheit/berufe-im-gesundheitswesen/111_ds_akad_checkliste_approbation_be_03_2020.pdf)
- **Specialist language test (Berlin Chamber of Psychotherapists)**
(<https://www.psychotherapeutenkammer-berlin.de/>)

Fees

EUR 430.00

Legal basis

- **Psychotherapists Act (PsychThG) § 1 ff**
(https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/psychthg_2020/_1.html)
- **Licensing regulations for psychotherapists (PschyThApprO) §§ 59 et seq.**
(https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/psychthappro/_59.html)
- **Ordinance on the Charging of Fees in the Health Care and Nursing Sector (GesPflGebO)**
(https://www.berlin.de/lageso/_assets/gesundheit/berufe-im-gesundheitswesen/neue-gebuehrenordnung_11_2021.pdf)

Average time to process request

approx. 3-4 months, if all documents are complete

More information

- **Explanation Approbation and contact persons Training outside the European Union (third country)**
(<https://www.berlin.de/lageso/gesundheit/berufe-im-gesundheitswesen/ausbildung-ausserhalb-der-europaeischen-union-drittstaat/akademische-berufe/artikel.807216.php>)
- **Explanation Approbation and contact persons Training in the European Union (EU)**
(<https://www.berlin.de/lageso/gesundheit/berufe-im-gesundheitswesen/ausbildung-in-der-europaeischen-union-eu/akademische-berufe/artikel.807022.php>)
- **Information on the recognition of foreign professional qualifications ("Anerkennung in Deutschland")**
(<https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/index.php>)
- **Financial assistance in the recognition procedure**
(<https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/financial-support.php>)
- **Publicly appointed translators in Germany**
(<https://www.justiz-dolmetscher.de/Recherche/>)

Notes on responsibility

Approbation is only granted by the Berlin State Office for Health and Social Affairs.