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Apply for recognition of foreign professional qualifications (third country) as a physiotherapist

Physiotherapists mainly treat people whose physical movement possibilities are limited due to age or because of an illness, injury or disability. They also carry out preventive therapy measures.

The profession of physiotherapist is regulated in Germany. This means that in order to work as a physiotherapist in Germany, you need a state permit. This permit allows you to use the professional title of physiotherapist and to work in the profession.

If you have a professional qualification from a so-called third country, you can also obtain a state permit from the competent authority in Germany. Third countries are all countries that do not belong to the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland.

To obtain the permit, 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 state licence. In addition to the equivalence of the professional qualification, you must also fulfil other requirements for the granting of the permit. 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 the granting of permission to use the professional title of physiotherapist to the competent authority.

2. Equivalence check

The competent body will then check whether you meet all the requirements. One important requirement is the equivalence of your professional qualification. The competent body compares your professional qualification from abroad with your German professional qualification as a physical therapist. 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 competent body can confirm the result to you in writing. You still have to fulfil the other requirements. You will then be granted permission to use the professional title of physiotherapist.

- Are there 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 by this knowledge. In this case, your foreign professional qualification will not be recognised. You are then not allowed to work as a physiotherapist in Germany.
- However, the competent body will tell you the essential differences and why you cannot compensate for the essential differences through your professional practice. In most cases, you can take a compensatory measure. This allows you to compensate for the substantial differences.

4. Compensatory measures

There are various compensatory measures:

- **Adaptation course:** The adaptation course lasts a maximum of three years.
- **Knowledge examination:** The knowledge examination tests your knowledge in certain subjects and areas. The knowledge examination comprises an oral and a practical part. The practical part of the examination is combined with an interview.

You can choose between an adaptation course or a knowledge examination.

If you successfully complete the compensatory measure and meet all other requirements, you will receive permission to use the professional title of physiotherapist.

Prerequisites

- **Training in the health profession completed in a third country that is equivalent to German training or an equivalent level of knowledge.**
The equivalence of the level of knowledge is to be proven, if necessary, by an examination or an adaptation course.
- **Health fitness**
- **Proof of reliability and worthiness for the practice of the health profession**
- **Sufficient knowledge of German level B 2**
- **Proof of responsibility**

Documents required

- **Application for permission to use the professional title 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 job interviews)

- **Curriculum vitae in tabular form with signature and date**
- **Birth certificate and, if applicable, name change certificates**
- **Proof of identity (valid identity card or passport)**
- **Certificate of good conduct for presentation to an authority**
(<https://service.berlin.de/dienstleistung/120926/>)
To verify personal reliability, information from the Federal Central Register (certificate of good conduct) is required for submission to an authority (document type O).
The information must not be older than three months.
- **Certificate of Good Conduct/Certificate of Clearance of Offences** of the police or judicial authorities of the **home country**, if applicable, of the **study country** (if presented, not older than 3 months)
- **Certificate of good standing from the country of origin** of the competent authority of the country in which the profession was practised (if presented, not older than 3 months)
- **Medical certificate from a doctor licensed in Germany** (not older than 3 months if presented)
- **Documents on the training course and training qualification with German translation**
(see checklist for the granting of a permit to use the professional title for medical professions in the case of training in a third country)
- **Certificate B 2 on knowledge of the German language**
Certificate from the Goethe Institute, telc (telc certificates from Serbian language schools will no longer be recognised after 01.09.2022), TestDaf or ECL certified language school; not older than 3 years. Note: The language certificates submitted will be checked for authenticity and accuracy.
It is not necessary to submit the language certificates at the time of application.
- **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 permission to use the professional title in the case of training in a third country**
(https://www.berlin.de/lageso/_assets/gesundheits/berufe-im-gesundheitswesen/drittstaat/11ds_nah_antrag_berufsbezeichnung.pdf)
- **Medical certificate from a doctor licensed in Germany**
(https://www.berlin.de/lageso/_assets/gesundheits/berufe-im-gesundheitswesen/nicht-akademisch/aerztliche_bescheinigung.pdf)
- **Checklist for the granting of a permit to use the professional title for medical professions in the case of training in a third country**
(https://www.berlin.de/lageso/_assets/gesundheits/berufe-im-gesundheitswesen/drittstaat/12ds_nah_checkliste.pdf)

Fees

EUR 164.00

Legal basis

- **Masseur and Physiotherapist Act (MPhG) § 1 et seqq.**
(<https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/mphg/BJNR108400994.html>)
- **Training and Examination Ordinance for Physiotherapists (PhysTh-APrV) § 21 et seq.**
(<https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/physth-aprv/PhysTh-APrV.pdf>)
- **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/nichtakademische-berufe/>)
- **Explanations on the use of the professional title and contact persons Training in the European Union (EU)**
(<https://www.berlin.de/lageso/gesundheit/berufe-im-gesundheitswesen/ausbildung-in-der-europaeischen-union-eu/nichtakademische-berufe/>)
- **Information on the recognition of foreign professional qualifications ("Recognition in Germany")**
(<https://www.erkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/index.php>)
- **Financial assistance in the recognition procedure**
(<https://www.erkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/financial-support.php>)
- **Publicly appointed translators in Germany**
(<https://www.justiz-dolmetscher.de/Recherche/>)

Notes on responsibility

Permission to use the professional title is only granted by the Berlin State Office for Health and Social Affairs