



# Professional recognition for general nurses — pathway to a new job

 Network "Integration through Qualification (IQ)"

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**Germany has an increasing shortage of skilled workers in healthcare organisations and care facilities. The demand for individuals who have obtained their professional qualification abroad is therefore rising.**

Demographic change, but also medical advances, have led to an increased demand for nursing personnel to work in nursing and in elderly care. This trend is set to continue. The number of people in need of care has risen significantly over recent years. Care sector statistics for 2017 show that 3.4 million people in Germany are in need of care. This number continues to rise because people in our society are growing increasingly older, which means more people are dependent on care.

This, in turn, also increases the demand for nurses. The forecasts of anticipated shortfalls in supply vary. The challenge faced is exacerbated by the fact that there is already a national shortage of skilled workers among registered geriatric nurses and general nurses. In 2018, a total of 1.7 million people were employed in care. This figure included 1.1 million in nursing and 600,000 in elderly care. From 2017 to 2018 alone, this represented an increase of approximately 41,000 thousand nurses.\*

There is a shortage of nurses in virtually all healthcare organisations. In 2018, around 27,000 general nursing vacancies were reported in job centres. The total number of vacancies is likely to be significantly higher. The demand for staff in nursing continues to rise. Due to demographics, an additional number of positions ranging from 140,000 (German Economic Institute) to 655,000 (RWI - Leibniz Institute for Economic Research) will need to be filled by 2030/2035. Furthermore, a wave of retirements over the next 15 years will see up to 40% of nurses leave the profession. The next generation will not be able to compensate for this, despite an average increase of 30,000 in the number of nursing staff employed from 2014 to 2018. This is why there is already very high demand for general nurses who have completed their training abroad, and this is set to increase further over the coming years.\*\*

If you want to work in Germany as a general nurse you need a recognised qualification. The professional qualification is still very new and has only been in existence since January 2020. The occupation merges together the paediatric nurse, general nurse and geriatric nurse occupations. The training takes place both in college as well as in the field. The training content is the same for all learners in the first two years. In the third year of training, learners have a choice. They can either specialise in geriatric or paediatric care. Alternatively, they can opt for the general qualification which enables them to work in all areas of nursing. Where the graduates work varies based on the specialisms chosen. For some this will be in hospitals and clinics, for others it may be (residential) nursing organisations or residential facilities supporting assisted living.

## Is my professional qualification likely to be recognised in Germany?

In order to be able to work as a general nurse in Germany, you must have your foreign qualification recognised. In 2018, almost 13,000 applications were made for full equivalence. Of these, a positive decision was arrived at in 47% of cases. 50% applicants are required to complete a compensation measure.\*\*\*

You can find out precisely what recognition involves from the IQ advice centre. Advisers will help you to prepare for the recognition procedure and to begin this. This advice on recognition is free of charge for you.

From January 2019 to April 2020, IQ recognition advisers provided almost 3,500 advisory sessions on the recognition of professional nursing qualifications from abroad. There are a large number of IQ offers relating to the training of foreign nurses.

If substantial differences are identified between your qualification and the German training, IQ staff providing advice on recognition and job training will be happy to provide you with information about ways to compensate for these differences. For example, completing an adaptation period or a preparation course for the knowledge test.

The adaptation periods and tests are completed in the federal state where you live. In the federal states, transitional arrangements still apply to the recognition procedure in some cases until 2024. This means procedures and tests may still be conducted according to the previous job descriptions.



### **Worth knowing: recognition procedures for non-academic healthcare occupations**

Work as a general nurse or in the 'old' occupations of general nurse, paediatric nurse and geriatric nurse is regulated in Germany. This means you need permission from the state if you wish to work in Germany in the occupation.

If your foreign training differs substantially from the German training, you must compensate for these differences. You can do this, for example, by taking a knowledge test or by completing an adaptation period.

# What pathways are available for working in Germany as a general nurse?



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1

## Seek advice

In order to work as a general nurse, you need recognition of your professional qualification. The network IQ advisers will discuss with you how you might gain this recognition. For example, they will help you to find the right recognition centre for your place of residence and occupation.



2

## Submit an application

The Network IQ can also help you to prepare the documentation to apply for recognition of your qualification as general nurse. As a rule, you have to submit employment references and qualification certificates as well as your CV to the recognition centre. The procedure involves a fee. In some cases, the German state may provide financial assistance.



3

## The recognition centre checks your documents

The recognition centre checks your documents and determines whether your foreign qualification is equivalent to the German training. This normally occurs within four months once all necessary documents have been submitted. In certain cases the time period may be extended.



4

## You receive your assessment notice

Full recognition means your qualification is fully equivalent to the respective German qualification. You can now apply to the relevant health authority for permission to practise the profession, and you can also apply for jobs as a general nurse. However, for the professional practice permit you still need further evidence such as a language certificate. The IQ advisers will discuss this with you.

Your qualification may, however, not be recognised or be only partially recognised. You receive an assessment notice from the recognition centre. The notice contains the differences compared to the training in Germany. If your qualification is not fully recognised, you are able to complete an adaptation period or a preparation course for a knowledge test. Together with the recognition centre, the IQ job training advisers on job training will help you to find appropriate training. This continuing education and training enables you to compensate for the differences and then receive full recognition of your occupation. For this continuing education and training, you will also already need to have German language skills.

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## How can I compensate for substantial differences compared to the German training? Is there support available?

You need full equivalence to be able to work as a general nurse. You must complete a compensation measure if substantial differences have been identified.

- **Adaptation period:**

An adaptation period involves you practising your occupation under the supervision of a qualified professional. Additional theoretical training may be necessary. The adaptation period addresses only the professional qualifications which are missing or for which evidence has not been provided in the assessment notice.

- **Preparation for the knowledge test:**

You must take the test to provide evidence that you have the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to be able to work as a general nurse. The content of the test covers the key core subjects in the German professional training. However, it is not a full final examination. If significant differences have been identified in another subject, this subject will also be tested. You are able to attend a course to prepare for the knowledge test.\*\*\*\*

## What language skills do I need?

The requirement for practising the profession is currently still that the language skills are 'sufficient' for practising the recognized profession of general nurse. At the moment, this is set at a general German language level of B2 (see resolution of the Conference of Health Ministers [GMK] June 2019). However, a general level of language skills in nursing has often been found to be insufficient. For this reason the Conference of Health Ministers has decided to provide a specialist language examination for nursing by the end of 2020. The language level will be B2. Some nursing colleges and employers already require these language skills today.

## What does an application for recognition cost?

In principle, applicants are required to pay the costs of the application themselves. The amount is determined by the cost regulations of the competent authorities and is dependent on the individual cost of the procedure. The IQ advisers are happy to provide you with information about financial support options from the job centre, the employment agency, federal state programmes and via the recognition grant.

**Saranda Shafik worked for ten years as a sales assistant before receiving partial recognition of her Kosovan nursing training.**



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© Saranda Shafik



“I'm so happy that I can finally work again in the occupation I love!”

Success stories

Saranda Shafik came to Germany in 2006 to join her family. She originally came from Kosovo, where she trained as a nurse for four years and had already worked in her occupation for six years. She also came to Germany hoping to find a good job here as a nurse. Unfortunately her training was not recognised to start with. She did find a job quickly in a retirement home but to begin with was only allowed to clean and tidy. She wasn't even permitted to perform the work of a care assistant. Over the next 10 years she worked as a sales assistant. She had given up on her dream of finding qualified work in a hospital until she happened to read about the possibility of professional recognition in the newspaper. With great courage, perseverance and help from an acquaintance, she gathered together all the necessary information, compiled the documentation and applied for her recognition to the Düsseldorf district government. In the assessment notice, the state examinations office stipulated that Ms Shafik needed to complete a placement lasting 730 hours as well as 340 hours of theory. The assessment notice itself suggested that Ms Shafik should contact the Louise Marillac College in Cologne-Nippes. There she was able to attend the IQ refresher training. At the college she discovered that she was able to complete her hours of practical training at the Marienhospital cooperating with the school. For this she received an 18-month contract as a care assistant; the time spent in taught sessions was also paid.

In July 2020 Saranda Shafik completed her final interview and is now waiting for the notice of full equivalence. She has already secured a permanent contract as a general nurse at the Marienhospital. She is delighted that, despite everything, she made it and is able to continue to practise the occupation she loves.

**Network IQ offers a wide range of refresher training courses for general nurses. In North Rhine-Westphalia you can complete further training in five locations.**

In North Rhine-Westphalia, five nursing colleges are running adaptation periods as part of their IQ subprojects in the context of the Recognition Act. Each subproject has developed its own curriculum and adapted it on a modular basis to the assessment notices of the Düsseldorf District government. All colleges collaborate closely and also work with the North Rhine-Westphalia state examinations office at the Düsseldorf District government.



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photography



The purpose of an adaptation period is to compensate for the substantial differences compared to German nursing training under the Nursing Professions Act—these differences are determined by the competent recognition authority at a local level. Depending on the goal of the individual adaptation period, it is run either in the form of theoretical and practical teaching, or practical training with theoretical instruction, or both, and takes place at government-approved schools and practical placement locations in accordance with Section 6(2) or (3) Sentence 1 of the Nursing Professions Act or in accordance with Section 4(2) Sentence 3 of the Nursing Act. For applicants from member states of the European Union or another contracting state to the Agreement on the European Economic Area, a certificate must be provided as evidence of completion of the adaptation period. For applicants from a third country, the adaptation period is completed with a test in the form of a final interview on the content of the adaptation period. If the final interview is not successful, applicants are able to complete the interview following an appropriate extension to the adaptation period. If, at this point, the final interview is still not completed successfully, the applicant is permitted to repeat the adaptation period once.

[https://www.brd.nrw.de/gesundheit\\_soiales/landespruefungsamt/index.jsp](https://www.brd.nrw.de/gesundheit_soiales/landespruefungsamt/index.jsp)



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in Münster**

■ Münster

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■ Wuppertal

■ Mönchengladbach

■ Cologne

The postcard is used to inform those seeking recognition about colleges in North Rhine-Westphalia where adaptation periods are taking place within the scope of IQ. A postcard is attached to the assessment notice provided by Düsseldorf district government's state examinations office. This means those individuals who have received an assessment notice and are able to achieve full equivalence via an adaptation period can approach a school in their region.

More information is available at:

<https://www.iq-netzwerk-nrw.de/startseite/>

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## German Red Cross (DRK) preparation course for the knowledge test – training provision for foreign nurses in Rhineland-Palatinate



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As a foreign nurse, this training course with the Rhineland-Palatinate IQ network will prepare you for the knowledge test you need to pass in order to practise your occupation. In nine learning modules spread over 160 hours of teaching in four-week blocks, you are taught all the knowledge and skills needed to practise the occupation of general nurse. The training culminates in a final examination.

There is no charge for attending the course. The subproject will run until 31/12/2022.

Further information is available here:

<https://www.iq-rlp.de/qualifizierung/ausbildungsberufe/pflege>

<https://www.drk-rlp.de/angebote/bildung-und-beruf/qualifizierung-auslaendische-pflegekraefte.html>

DRK Landesverband Rheinland-Pfalz e.V. (DRK Regional Association, Rhineland-Palatinate) | Mitternachtsgasse 4 | 55116 Mainz |

[www.drk-rlp.de](http://www.drk-rlp.de) | Anna Hoja | Tel.: 06131 28 28 13 22 | [iq-pflege@lv-rlp.drk.de](mailto:iq-pflege@lv-rlp.drk.de)

## Following a successful knowledge test, Marko Rašović now works in the Maria Königin elderly care centre in Mainz

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Rhineland-Palatinate



“The course wasn’t always easy, there was also a lot to learn in terms of language” explains Marko Rašović. Now my family can finally come to Mainz,” says the delighted father of two.

### For a good future

Marko Rašović has done it. He has created a secure future for himself with the help of the Network 'Integration through Qualification (IQ)'. In Serbia, he was working as a general nurse and came to Mainz a few months ago. In 2017, he started work as a care assistant because there were differences between the Serbian training and the German training. It was a good start, but below the level of his own training. To be able to work here in Germany as a general nurse, he attended the 'IQ knowledge test preparation course for professional recognition as a general nurse' at the Rhineland-Palatinate German Red Cross Regional Association, and completed this successfully with the knowledge test.

### An important step, and the right one to take.

Even though he missed his loved ones greatly, going to Germany alone really was the right step to take back then. “I was employed in Serbia, but my earnings weren't enough to properly support my family,” he explained. Now, Marko Rašović has a larger flat, and the school and nursery are also close by. He hopes that his wife and children will soon be able to join him in Mainz. “I wanted to give them a good future. I can do that now with recognition as a general nurse and a permanent contract in the bag,” he adds proudly. I knew from the outset that I would do this course as otherwise I would only be permitted to work as a healthcare and nursing assistant,” explains Rašović. He had already completed a German course in Serbia and in Mainz added language level B2 to this. “A good friend of mine then told me about IQ. He had also participated in the German Red Cross (DRK) preparation course, he said that it was the best option for me—he was right,” explains the general nurse. To make sure everything continues in a positive direction, he wants to keep on learning and also complete further training in the future.

## Weitere Informationen:

[www.netzwerk-iq.de](http://www.netzwerk-iq.de)

[www.anererkennung-in-deutschland.de](http://www.anererkennung-in-deutschland.de)

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