

Work and training in Germany

In order to practise medicine or carry out speciality training in Germany, all physicians must be in possession of a valid full or temporary licence to practise. The full licence to practise (*Approbation*) is valid across the country for an unlimited period of time. The temporary licence to practise (*Berufserlaubnis*) is limited to a certain time period and is valid only within the federal state in which it was issued. In certain cases, a temporary licence may be limited to one position.

The state health authorities (*Oberste Landesgesundheitsbehörden*) of the respective federal state (*Land*) are responsible for issuing full and temporary licences to practise. The prerequisites for becoming a member of the medical profession in Germany are set out in sections 3 and 10 of the Medical Practitioners' Act (§ 3 and § 10 [Bundesärzteordnung \[PDF\]](#)).

Physicians wishing to practise in Germany must also become a member of one of the [17 State Chambers of Physicians](#) (*Landesärztekammer*). Each of the 16 federal states of Germany has a State Chamber of Physicians (there are two in North Rhine-Westphalia). As corporations under public law, these bodies are in charge of the administration of all matters related to speciality training in Germany. The state laws governing the healthcare profession and the activities of the Chambers (*Heilberufekammergesetz*) set out the responsibilities of the State Chambers of Physicians with respect to physicians professionally active, or residing, within their area of jurisdiction.

Basic medical training in Germany

The principles governing medical training in Germany are set out in the Licensing Regulations for Physicians ([Approbationsordnung \[PDF\]](#)) of 27/06/2002 (last amended 24/07/2010).

According to Article 1, Paragraph 2, medical training comprises:

- undergraduate medical studies of no less than six years at a university or equivalent academic institution which, subject to section 3, paragraph 3, sentence 2, must include 48 consecutive weeks of practical training (practical year)
- first aid training
- three months of nursing experience
- a four-month clinical elective
- a medical examination in two stages, the first to take place two years after commencement of medical training, the second after four further years of study
- with respect to section 10, paragraph 2 of the framework laws on further education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*), the regular length of study, including examinations and revision time, should, according to section 16, paragraph 1, sentence 2, amount to six years and three months

The earliest point at which the period of practical training may commence is two years and ten months after a student has passed the first stage of their medical examination. Placements are fixed to starting points either in February or August. Practical training consists of three 16-week work placements in:

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1. internal medicine
2. surgery
3. either general practice or another elective subject

Proof of completion of training in first aid has to be presented in order to register for the first stage of the medical examination after two years.

The three months of nursing experience must be completed at a hospital either before university or during one of the semester breaks in the 2 years prior to the first stage of the medical examination. The aim of this is to give students or prospective students an insight into the functioning and organisation of a hospital, and to familiarise them with the day-to-day activities of the nursing profession. The compulsory nursing experience can also be completed in three one-month segments.

The four-month clinical elective takes place outside of teaching periods after the first stage of the medical examination and before the practical year. Proof of completion of a clinical elective must be presented in order to register for the second stage of the medical examination.

Further information about this may be found under "[Ausbildung](#)" on the website of the German Medical Association.

The website of the [Institute für medizinische und pharmazeutische Prüfungsfragen \(IMPP\)](#) (Institute for Medical and Pharmaceutical Examination Questions) is also a good source of information for queries related to medical studies in Germany. It also contains the contact details of the [Landesprüfungsämter](#) (State Examination Authorities), who among others are responsible for assessing the accreditability of periods of study carried out abroad.

The [Hochschulrektorenkonferenz \(HRK\)](#) (Conference of University Rectors) is the voluntary association of state and state recognised higher educational institutions in Germany.

Speciality training in Germany

A prerequisite for beginning speciality training is the acquisition of a full or temporary licence to practise medicine (*Approbation or Berufserlaubnis*). Speciality training in Germany takes place exclusively within the framework of medical practise, and junior physicians receive remuneration for their work. Physicians who have completed their basic medical training and are in possession of a valid full or temporary licence to practise are entitled to apply for a position as a junior physician at an institution licensed for medical training in the relevant area of specialisation.

Speciality medical training usually takes between 5 and 6 years to complete, depending upon the specific training regulations for the speciality. Training is supervised by a clinical tutor authorised by the State Chamber of Physicians and takes place in a university hospital, clinic or other approved medical institution. This may include at an outpatient unit under the supervision of a practise-based physician. Lists of authorised institutions may be found on the websites of the relevant [State Chambers of Physicians](#) under "Weiterbildung".

Whereas the regulations regarding basic medical training and the granting of licences to practise are standardised at a national level through the Medical Practitioners' Act ([Bundesärzteordnung \[PDF\]](#)) and the Licensing Regulations for Physicians

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([Approbationsordnung \[PDF\]](#)), regulations on the content and configuration of speciality training are laid out in state by-laws and the autonomous statutes of the State Chambers of Physicians. These are largely based upon the [Guideline Regulations on Speciality Training](#) of the German Medical Association. These define the areas, focus and competencies covered during speciality training, as well as additional designations. The up-to-date speciality training regulations of each State Chamber of Physicians, which set out the content and duration of the speciality training for each area of specialisation, are available on their websites.

During their period of training, junior physicians must fulfil the points stipulated in the speciality training regulations and guidelines on the content of speciality training. Only when the checklist is complete may they apply to the State Chamber of Physicians to be assessed. This takes the form of an oral examination with a committee of three physicians, two of which will be qualified specialists in the area to be examined, who decide whether the speciality training has been completed successfully. Upon successful completion of the examination, the physician will be awarded a specialist diploma (*Facharzt Diplom*) by the State Chamber of Physicians.

Further information about speciality training may be found under [„Weiterbildung“](#) on the website of the German Medical Association.

Scholarship holders (*Stipendiaten*)

Many countries have programmes which offer financial support or scholarships for physicians to come to Germany to conduct specialty training.

In order to avoid any misunderstandings about the requirements for specialty training in Germany and possible problems resulting from this, the German Medical Association has developed an [Information Sheet for foreign physicians on the recognition of specialty training conducted within the framework of a scholarship or other funding programme \[PDF\]](#). This sets out the formal and professional requirements which must be fulfilled by anyone conducting specialty training in Germany.

Each individual federal state has its own regulations on specialty training, the details of which can vary from state to state. The German Medical Association therefore recommends that physicians coming to Germany to carry out specialty training always seek advice from the [state chamber of physicians](#) responsible for the state in which they will work before training begins.

Recognition of speciality training carried out abroad

The State Chambers of Physicians ([Landesärztekammer](#)) and the regional chambers of physicians, for example in Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate, are the main authorities responsible for the recognition of speciality training carried out or completed abroad. A physician must be a member of a State Chamber of Physicians before his or her specialist qualifications may be assessed for equivalence. For information concerning membership of the State Chambers of Physicians (compulsory or voluntary) please contact them directly.

According to the speciality training regulations (*Weiterbildungsordnung*) of the relevant State Chamber of Physicians, periods of speciality training, or other professional activity abroad,

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can only be accredited if they have taken place for a minimum duration of 6 months at an institution licensed for speciality medical training. Upon completion of training abroad, physicians should obtain a detailed certificate containing information about the size of the hospital at which training took place, the activities of the department in which he or she was employed, as well as any activities carried out independently. The certificate should reflect the content of the speciality training regulations of the relevant State Chamber of Physicians.

If a physician holds a licence to practise that has been issued by a foreign medical association, the state health authorities must first verify whether the evidence of formal qualifications in basic medical training can be recognised as equivalent to the German standards.

The Medical Practitioner's Act ([Bundesärzteordnung \[PDF\]](#)) and the Licensing Regulations for Physicians ([Approbationsordnung \[PDF\]](#)) form the legal basis for the practise of medicine in Germany. The recognition of speciality training carried out within the European Union is regulated by the EU directive [2005/36/EC](#).

For further information for citizens of the European Union, the European Economic Area and Switzerland, as well as for citizens of other countries not members of the above, please see the links below.

- [Physicians who completed their basic medical training in the EU, EEA or Switzerland](#)
- [Physicians who completed their basic medical training outside the EU, EEA or Switzerland](#)

Information concerning **vacancies** for physicians in Germany may be found on the website of the [Federal Employment Agency](#).

- The German Medical Journal (*Deutsche Ärzteblatt*), published weekly by the German Medical Association and the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians, is sent automatically to every physician in Germany registered with the State Chamber of Physicians. It contains a large [jobs section](#).

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