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Germany starting checklist

Five decisions before you pay for translations, examinations or courses

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Five decisions before you pay for translations, examinations or courses. For doctors whose medical training was completed abroad.

About the author

Alice Haydvogel-Rauppach is an Austrian-trained doctor licensed in Sweden and Norway. She has not been through a German recognition procedure herself. This guide organises publicly available rules and official pages checked on 26 October 2026, legal status updated on 5 November 2026. It is not legal advice; the law and the competent authority decide.

This PDF is fillable: you can type into the fields and tick the boxes on screen and save (e.g. in Adobe Acrobat Reader), or print it and write by hand.

1. Record your qualification and citizenship separately

☐ Done on

Write down the training country, exact qualification, start and completion dates, mandatory practical stages and existing licences. Record citizenship separately. You may apply for Approbation regardless of citizenship. A residence permit does not replace a medical licence. [1,2]

2. Identify a provisional route

☐ Done on

EU/EEA/Switzerland: automatic recognition may apply, but the qualification title and training dates must fit; additional certificates may be needed. Automatic does not mean no application. Third-country qualification: read the date check further down. A third-country degree already recognised elsewhere, or incomplete training, needs an individual route check rather than a guess. [2,3]

3. Identify the competent federal state

☐ Done on

For recognition decisions under sections 9b-9d BÄO, new section 12(2a), from 1 November 2026, assigns applicants living in Germany to the authority of their ordinary-residence state. Without ordinary residence in Germany, use the state where medical work is intended. A temporary licence (Berufserlaubnis), by contrast, is decided under section 12(3) BÄO by the authority of the state where medical work is to be carried out. Have the specific rule checked for earlier applications. A target job alone does not make the authority freely selectable. The medical chamber is not automatically the licensing authority. [1,3]

4. Separate language from medical knowledge

☐ Done on

Typical requirements are general German at B2 and professional medical German oriented to C1. Check accepted certificates, exemptions and registration locally. The Fachsprachprüfung and Kenntnisprüfung are different tests. An English guide does not replace German for clinical work or examinations. [4]

5. Confirm before commissioning work

☐ Done on

Inventory the records you already have. Ask for the current list for your route, submission format, translation and certification rules, and validity windows. Do not pay for extensive curriculum translations merely because a general online checklist mentions them. Obtain short-validity records to match the confirmed submission requirement.

Important: recognition route changes on 1 November 2026 (date check)

This edition was checked on 26 October 2026 and updated for the promulgated regulation on 5 November 2026. Article 6 of the Act of 22 July 2026 accelerating recognition procedures for foreign qualifications in the health professions (BGBl. 2026 I No. 225, promulgated 28 July 2026) brings the new recognition route described here into force on 1 November 2026. Under Article 6(2), some other provisions have applied since the day after promulgation. The related implementing regulation of 27 October 2026 was promulgated in BGBl. 2026 I No. 326 on 30 October 2026 and has applied since 1 November 2026. Among other things it amends the medical licensing regulation (Approbationsordnung für Ärzte, ÄApprO). For applications made by the end of 31 October 2026, the ÄApprO as in force on that day continues to apply (section 42(2) ÄApprO). [3,11,13,17]

Under the new section 15 BÄO, section 3(2)-(3) as in force until 31 October 2026 continues to apply to applications for recognition of third-country professional qualifications made by the end of 31 October 2026. This transition covers those recognition provisions; ask the authority whether other new provisions also apply to such an application. Do not rush an application because of this guide. Ask the authority which application date and procedure apply to your case. [3]

For the new third-country route, section 9d(2) makes the Kenntnisprüfung the default. The choice of a document-based equivalence assessment under subsection 3 is only possible within four weeks of application and is binding for the duration of that licensing procedure. That

option can still lead to a knowledge examination. The authority must explain the choice and consequences. Clarify special cases first. [3]

What the regulation sets for applications from 1 November 2026 (selection): you may apply in writing or electronically. Records are submitted as copies or electronically; the authority may ask for originals or certified copies if it has justified doubts. Records not issued in German or English need a translation into German or English by a publicly appointed or sworn translator; the authority may allow exceptions or, in justified cases, ask for a German translation (section 33a ÄApprO). Evidence of reliability and of health fitness may be no older than three months when presented (section 39e(2)). The authority confirms receipt within one month and names missing records (section 39f(3)). [17]

The regulation also sets time limits for the authority: a decision on the Approbation no later than three months after the records are submitted, one month longer with the document-based equivalence assessment (section 39f(1)); in the default route it must be possible to take the Kenntnisprüfung within six months of applying (section 37(9)). The Kenntnisprüfung covers internal medicine and surgery, plus emergency medicine, pharmacotherapy, imaging, radiation protection, the legal framework and doctor-patient communication, among others (section 37(3)). These are duties of the authority, not a promise for your case: time limits run only once the records are complete and can pause while queries are open. [17]

Application made	What applies under BGBl. 2026 I Nos. 225 and 326	Your note
by the end of 31 Oct 2026 (third-country qualification)	Section 3(2)-(3) BÄO as in force until 31 October 2026 continues to apply (new section 15 BÄO), as does the ÄApprO as in force on 31 October 2026 (section 42(2) ÄApprO). Ask the authority about details.	
from 1 Nov 2026 (third-country qualification)	New section 9d BÄO: the Kenntnisprüfung is the default. A document-based equivalence assessment only if you choose it within four weeks of applying; the choice is binding for the procedure. A Kenntnisprüfung may still be required.	
EU, EEA or Swiss qualification	Separate route (automatic recognition where the qualification fits, otherwise an equivalence assessment). The section 15 transition concerns third-country applications.	

My application date (made or planned)	
Procedure confirmed by the authority	
If new procedure: choice deadline ends on	

State pages may still describe the previous procedure: on 5 November 2026, only Berlin and Sachsen-Anhalt among the pages checked stated the new rule explicitly. Recheck final forms, submission formats and examination arrangements

after the change. No processing-time or examination-exemption guarantee is given.

Your starting note

Training country / qualification / year	
Existing licences and previous recognitions	
Ordinary residence (state) or intended place of work	
Earlier applications: date, authority, reference	
Language evidence held / missing	
My next action and date	

First enquiry / Erste Anfrage

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Subject: Jurisdiction and current application route
– medical qualification from [country]

Dear licensing team,

I completed medical training in [country,
university, qualification, year]. My mandatory
practical training is [details]. Previous
recognition decisions and licences: [details]. I
intend to practise in [location], supported by
[evidence]. Earlier German applications: [details
or none].

Please confirm whether you are responsible, which
recognition route and transition provisions apply,
and which current document list and submission
format I should use. Please also identify any
deadlines for choosing a route or supplying further
documents.

Kind regards,

[name]
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You can continue using this checklist and free official advice. The workbook is optional. Language coaching is not a recognition requirement.

Optional: German speaking practice with feedback

If your German is around B2 or above and you want to practise history-taking, clear explanations or handovers, a 45-minute language coaching session with Alice may fit. A study partner is an alternative. Sessions are in German, not legal advice, a clinical knowledge test or an accredited language examination. No original exam questions, pass guarantee or real patient details. Check the current price and booking terms before buying.

Limits and freshness

No legal advice, individual recognition decision, medical advice, recruitment or pass guarantee. Not an exhaustive official document list for every case. Law, the competent authority and binding chamber rules take priority. State details and the 1 November 2026 transition may change after the check date. No lifetime-update promise.

Sources

All sources accessed and checked on 26 October 2026. Not legal advice or an individual decision; the law and the competent authority decide.

[1]	Bundesärztekammer: medical practice, competent authorities, Approbation and chambers (German) https://www.bundesaerztekammer.de/themen/aerzte/internationales/aerztliche-taetigkeit-in-deutschland

[2]	Bundesärztekammer: EU/EEA/Switzerland; qualification evidence (German) https://www.bundesaerztekammer.de/themen/aerzte/internationales/aerztliche-taetigkeit-in-deutschland/eu-norwegen-island-liechtenstein-schweiz
[3]	Federal Law Gazette 2026 I No. 225: Art. 1 sections 9d and 15 BÄO; Art. 6; Act of 22 July 2026 https://www.recht.bund.de/bgbl/1/2026/225/regelungstext.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2
[4]	Bundesärztekammer: language, recognition, specialist training https://www.bundesaerztekammer.de/en/work-and-training-in-germany/recognition
[11]	Federal Ministry of Health: enacted law, commencement 1 Nov 2026 https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/service/gesetze-und-verordnungen/detail/berufsanerkennung-heilberufe
[13]	Federal Ministry of Health: implementing regulation (as of 30 Oct 2026, in force 1 Nov 2026) https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/service/gesetze-und-verordnungen/detail/vo-berufsanerkennung-heilberufe
[16]	Bundesrat, printed paper 504/26 (decision), 16 Oct 2026: consent to the regulation with conditions https://www.bundesrat.de/SharedDocs/drucksachen/2026/0501-0600/504-26%28B%29.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1
[17]	Federal Law Gazette 2026 I No. 326: regulation of 27 Oct 2026, Art. 1 (ÄApprO sections 33a, 37, 39e, 39f, 42) and Art. 6, read on 5 Nov 2026 https://www.recht.bund.de/bgbl/1/2026/326/VO.html