



# **Recognition of medical training acquired in a third country**

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# Responsibility for the recognition of qualifications

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- Germany is federally organised. The federal states are responsible for recognising professional medical qualifications.
- Shared responsibility within the federal states: Licensing and professional authorisation is the responsibility of the state authorities (depending on the federal state: ministries, regional councils, health authorities), recognition of specialist qualifications is the responsibility of the relevant regional medical chambers
- Medical chambers are corporations under public law, i.e. 'state-affiliated' institutions of medical self-administration (compulsory membership, quality assurance, standardised)
- Partial outsourcing of tasks to medical associations: Carrying out the knowledge test, specialised language test

# Legal requirements for the recognition of **basic medical training** from third countries

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- **Completed studies** in a third country
- **Application for recognition** of basic training in Germany
- **Examination by the competent licensing authority for the **equivalence** of basic medical training**
- **All other requirements are met** (proof of specialised language skills, certificate of good standing, health suitability)

## **Legal basis:**

Federal Medical Code (BÄO); Licensing Regulations (ÄApprO)

# When can the equivalence of the level of training be assumed?

(...) if the equivalence to the requirements of § 3 para. 1 sentence 1 no. 4 BÄO  
(= medical studies with at least 5500 hours, at least 6 years, etc. can be proven

1. Determination of the equivalence of the level of training in the third country **based on the documents submitted** = equivalent → License to practice medicine is granted
2. Level of training **not equivalent**; i.e. **significant differences have been identified**:
  - **Compensation possible through professional practice or lifelong learning** regardless of the country in which this knowledge and skills were acquired
  - **Compensation possible through knowledge examination** = taking an examination that relates to the content of the state final examination
  - **“Special case”**  
The required knowledge and skills must also be demonstrated by means of a knowledge test if the examination of the application is only possible with unreasonable time or material effort because the required documents and evidence cannot be submitted by the applicant for reasons that are not attributable to the applicant.

# Recognition practice of the licensing authorities

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- Consultation of the Assessment Centre for Healthcare Professions (GfG), which is based at the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB), for the preparation of equivalence assessments
- Granting of a professional licence for the duration of the recognition of third-country training, which is sometimes handled differently in the federal states (see § 10 BÄO)
- ‘Analogue application’ of the special case recommendation to take a knowledge test **without** prior equivalence assessment on the basis of documents (e.g. due to the duration of application processing)

## **Court ruling:**

Equivalence test takes precedence over the knowledge test; no waiver is possible; knowledge test unlawful without prior equivalence test; applicant still entitled to have it carried out.

# Licensing regulation for doctors

## § 37 Knowledge examination according to 3 BÄO

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(1) The examination relates to the subjects of internal medicine and surgery. The questions should also take into account the following aspects: Emergency medicine, clinical pharmacology/pharmacotherapy, imaging procedures, radiation protection, legal issues relating to the practice of medicine. In addition, the competent authority may specify a subject or a cross-sectional area as relevant to the examination in the notification in accordance with Section 3 (2) sentence 8 of the Federal Medical Practitioners' Code in which it has identified significant differences and which is not covered by the examination topics listed in sentences 1 and 2.

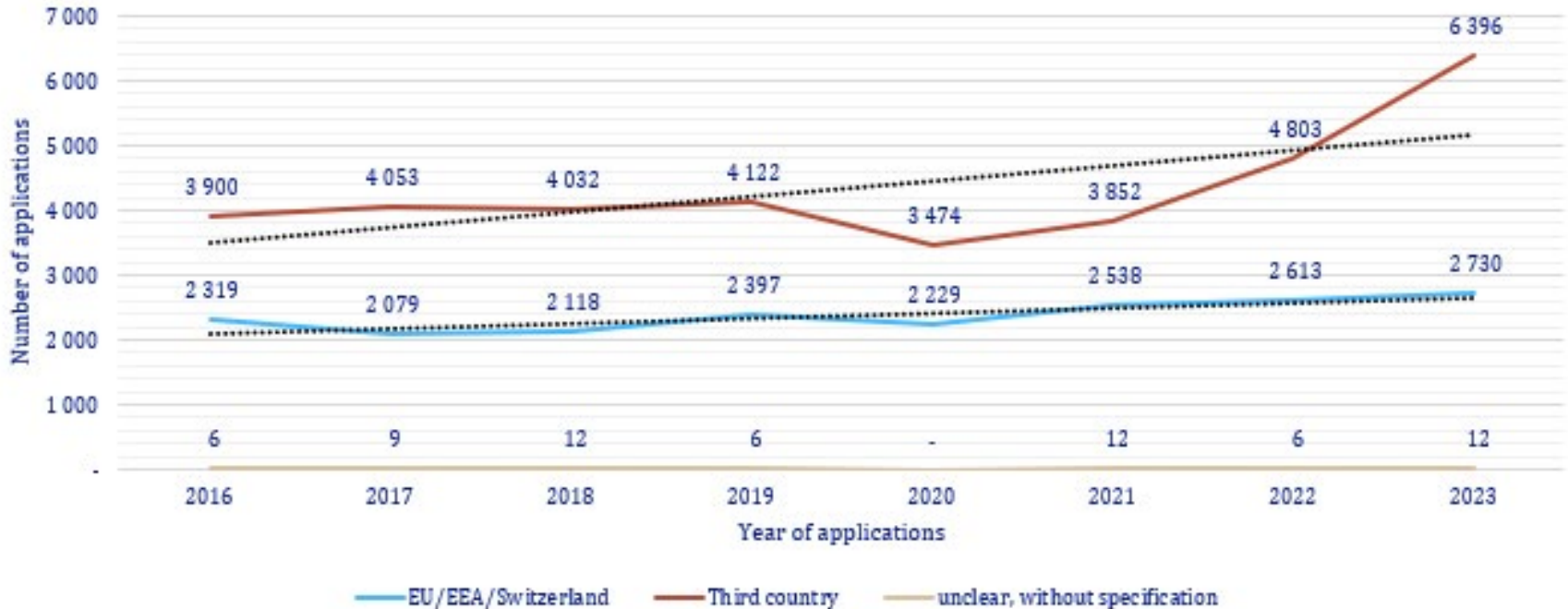
# Knowledge test

## How is the test structured and what are its characteristics?

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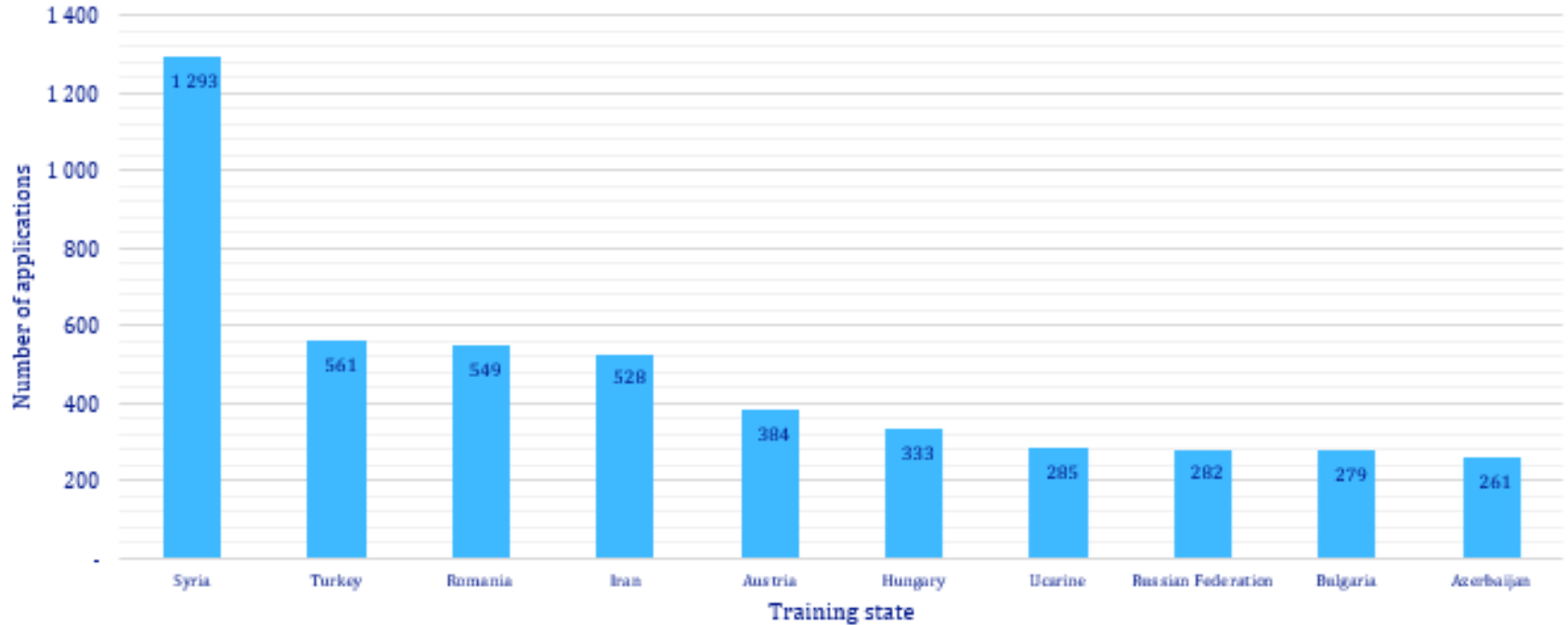
- Oral-practical examination with patient presentation
- Takes place over the course of one day
- Takes at least 60 minutes and no more than 90 minutes for each applicant, with a maximum of 4 applicants
- Patient presentations can also be carried out with the help of simulated patients
- and, in justified cases, with the help of simulators, models, or media.
- Can be repeated twice.

# New applications by country of training: Development since 2016





# New applications by country of origin: Top 10 (2023)



# Concluded Proceedings: Outcome 2023

Decided proceedings 2023								
Training state		Decided proceedings	of which decisions (before appeal)					
			Positive - full equivalence of the professional qualification	below (path to full equivalence)			Condition of a compensation measure	Negative - no equivalence
				Automatic recognition	without compensatory measure	with agreement/knowledge test		
Total	absolute	9 537	6 267	2 676	1 320	2 274	3 189	78
	in per cent	100%	66%				33%	1%
EU/EEA/ Switzerland	absolute	2 721	2 706	2 673	15	15	9	3
	in per cent	100%	100%				<1%	<1%
Third country	absolute	6 813	3 558	-	1 305	2 253	3 177	75
	in per cent	100%	52%				47%	1%

Source: Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (2024)

# Reform efforts

## Federal Council Resolution, 5 July 2024

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Objective: Carry out recognition procedures more quickly without jeopardising patient safety:

- Knowledge examination as the standard case: document-based examination of equivalence to be expressly chosen by the applicant; standardised federal requirements for knowledge examination with greater emphasis on the legal nature of the examination; high level of examination to ensure patient safety; regulation on final failure for the knowledge examination
- Possibility for professional licensing authorities to allow electronic submission of documents (waiver of submission of originals or officially certified copies)
- Enable affidavit under German law if documents are not issued in the country of origin (Section 3 (1) sentence 1 no. 2 BÄO)
- Responsibility for deciding on licence to practise applications from persons with foreign training lies with the competent authority of the federal state in which the applicant has their first place of residence