



Geriatric Nursing Care – A Promising Professional Field in Germany

In Germany, people in need of permanent care – in most cases elderly people – often cannot be taken care of by their families. In those cases, outpatient care services look after patients living in their own homes or group homes, or people in need of care permanently live in residential care homes. Both outpatient care services and residential care homes employ specially trained registered geriatric nurses, who look after the patients and residents.

The profession registered geriatric nurse – *Altenpflegefachkraft* – requires formal training in Germany. Women as well as men are working in this field. A registered geriatric nurse is responsible for planning and providing care, assistance, and mobilization for the resident or the patient in need.

Geriatric nurses are in great demand in Germany because the number of people in need of care in the population continues to grow. Training in geriatric nursing care therefore leads to a secure job and promising career prospects!

Training to become a registered geriatric nurse

Training consists of an academic part at a vocational school and a practical part, where the knowledge acquired is deepened and applied in nursing or support facilities. The training lasts three years full-time or four years part-time while working.

Formal requirements

Before nursing care training can commence, it is mandatory to be proficient in German (level B2) and to have your eligibility in terms of your health checked. Furthermore, anyone who wishes to undergo training in nursing care must have at least a secondary school-leaving certificate, or an early school-leaving certificate plus two years of vocational training. Vocational schools for geriatric nursing are able to help you with questions regarding the formal requirements.

Recognition of foreign school-leaving certificates

The following documents are required to have your foreign school-leaving certificate recognized in Germany:

- application form “recognition of foreign school-leaving certificate”
- German translations of your certificate or diploma by a certified translator; this is not required for documents originally in English or French
- proof of identity (ID or passport)
- personal data sheet

Fees apply for the recognition of foreign school-leaving certificates, currently amounting to 55 Euros. In Berlin, the process takes place at the Senate Department for Education, Youth, and Family (*Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Jugend und Familie*):

Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Jugend und Familie

Zeugnisanerkennungsstelle

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Application

To begin a training program in nursing care, you first need a training place for the practical element in a residential care home. It is recommended to search for homes in your neighborhood. The care homes inform you about the schools they cooperate with.

Trainee Pay

Trainee pay may vary widely; trainees do however have a right to reasonable pay. The following serve as orientation for reasonable pay: First-year-trainees may receive 946.29 Euros, second-year-trainees may be paid 1,011.30 Euros and for third-year-trainees, 1,116.01 Euros is considered reasonable.

Professional retraining

If you have received training in a different field of work, and would like to start working in geriatric nursing care, professional retraining may be of interest to you. Under certain circumstances, the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*) and the job centers (*Jobcenter*) give out education vouchers (*Bildungsgutscheine*) that cover the expenses for retraining.

Recognition of foreign vocational qualifications in nursing care

Anyone who has completed professional training in nursing care abroad can apply for recognition at the *Landesamt für Gesundheit und Soziales Berlin (LAGeSo)*. If your qualifications are recognized, you receive a state permit that entitles you to use the professional title of “registered nurse” and pursue the profession in Germany. Among other things, proficiency in German (at least level B2) is mandatory to receive a state permit. Further information can be found on www.altenpflege-deine-chance.de.

Training to become a registered geriatric nursing assistant

The 18-month training program to become a registered geriatric nursing assistant in Berlin may serve as a low-threshold alternative to get started in nursing care. A school-leaving certificate is not required for this program. After successfully completing the assistant care training, you may be eligible to commence a shortened training program to become a registered geriatric nurse.

Career

Geriatric nursing care not only offers secure jobs but also many career opportunities, e.g. specializations. For further information, see www.pflegebildungslandkarte.de.

Further information

Application form for the recognition of school-leaving certificates:

http://www.berlin.de/sen/bjf/anerkennung/schulische-abschluesse/formular_zeugnisanerkennung.pdf

List of translators: <http://www.gerichts-dolmetscher.de/suche.jsp>

Residential care homes and outpatient care services in Berlin:

[http://www.pflegelotse.de/\(S\(k1or4nnwosj01e10mbyev5qj\)\)/presentation/pl_startseite.aspx](http://www.pflegelotse.de/(S(k1or4nnwosj01e10mbyev5qj))/presentation/pl_startseite.aspx)

Information on retraining: <http://www.altenpflegeausbildung.net/ausbildung/umschulung.html>

Information on recognition of foreign professional qualifications:

<http://www.arbeitgestaltengmbh.de/assets/Downloads/Publikationen-Altenpflege/Flyer-Anerkennung-Pflegeberufe.pdf>; www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de