



CARE EDUCATION FORUM

Basic Information on Care Education in Germany

1. Professional training and study courses in the field of nursing

1.1. Generalist nursing training

In Germany, the three-year training as a “Pflegefachfrau/Pflegefachmann” is common in health care. In 2020, there was a new regulation here towards generalist nursing training, which grants permission to care for people of all ages in various facilities (inpatient acute and long-term care, outpatient care). There have already been several changes in this sector in the past. Over the past few years, various professional titles have been acquired in the field of nursing care. As a result, in addition to the above-mentioned nursing professionals, the training occupation “Krankenschwester/Krankenpfleger”, which was common until 2003, and the now valid title “Gesundheits- und Krankenpfleger*in” can currently be found in large numbers in care facilities in Germany. The current EU-wide recognized training comprises theoretical instruction (2,100 hours) and practical training (2,500 hours) in various specialist areas and ends with a state examination. Admission to the apprenticeship is granted to those who have at least an intermediate school-leaving certificate, a medical certificate of good health, an unencumbered certificate of good conduct and qualities such as empathy and resilience.

For more information (available in German only):

[PflBG](#)

[PflAPrV](#)

[Pflegeausbildung.net](#)

1.2. Specialized training in the nursing profession

Until 2020, the three-year nursing training program was divided into three parts. At that time, it was possible to train as a healthcare and nursing assistant, healthcare and pediatric nurse or geriatric nurse. In the course of generalization, these specialist areas were merged and the basic nursing training was formed. Specialized training as a “Gesundheits- und Kinderkrankenpfleger*in” or “Altenpfleger*in” is still offered in individual German educational institutions and is intended to provide specific training for the care of the corresponding paediatric or geriatric age group.

For more information (available in German only):

[PflBG](#)

[PflAPrV](#)

[Pflegeausbildung.net](#)



1.3. Primary qualifying study program in nursing (Bachelor of Science)

In Germany, an undergraduate Bachelor's degree course in "Pflegefachfrau/Pflegefachmann (B.Sc.)" leading to an academic degree is also offered at universities of applied sciences. This includes theoretical and practical learning units in cooperation with practitioners from a wide range of institutions. The course is designed to enable students to provide evidence-based nursing care for people of all age groups in various facilities (hospitals, inpatient long-term care, outpatient care). The conscious and reflective addition and application of scientifically based knowledge is intended to ensure the profession of nursing and quality in this field of activity. Prerequisites for enrolment include a general higher education entrance qualification, entrance qualification for universities of applied sciences or a corresponding previous vocational training. In addition to the state-recognized professional title, the degree of Bachelor of Science is awarded upon completion of the study program.

For more information (available in German only):

[PflBG](#)

[PflAPrV](#)

pflegeausbildung.net/pflegestudium.html

1.4. Training in the field of curative education nursing

People in the occupational field of "Heilerziehungspfleger*in" support people with mental, physical or psychological impairments. They work in facilities such as residential homes, workshops, integrative kindergartens, psychiatric clinics or in outpatient services. In addition to nursing activities, their tasks include educational support and organizational tasks to promote the independence and quality of life of the people in their care. The corresponding training usually lasts three years and is completed either full-time in special vocational schools or integrated into practice. The course content includes curative education, psychology, care and communication. There are different entry requirements depending on the federal state. The state-specific training is completed with a state examination. In some regions, it is also possible to obtain the entrance qualification for universities of applied sciences, which enables access to a degree course.

For more information (available in German only):

bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/gleichstellung/aufwertung-sozialer-berufe/heilerziehungspflege-vielseitig-anspruchsvoll-und-dringend-gebraucht-181506

bfz.de/kurs/eca-900010/heilerziehungspflegerin

arbeitsagentur.de/berufenet/beruf/9118

1.5. Advanced Nursing Practice (ANP) study program (Bachelor of Science/Master of Science)

The introduction of the "Advanced Practice Nurse", or APN for short, into nursing practice in Germany is also steadily developing. Graduates of this course take on specialized roles in direct patient care, particularly in areas such as acute care, community health nursing, oncology or paediatrics. They contribute to improving the quality of nursing care, work in an interdisciplinary manner and take on tasks in prevention, health promotion and the management of complex nursing processes with the addition of evidence-based knowledge. As an educational measure to obtain this title, part-time courses are usually offered at Bachelor's and Master's level, which include practical projects to link theory and clinical practice.



The degree stands for a sound scientific education that is geared towards practical nursing challenges and research. In order to complete the ANP degree course, students generally need to have completed training and have professional experience in a nursing profession.

For more information (available in German only):

pflegestudium.de/studiengaenge/advanced-nursing-practice/

1.6. Further (specialist) training and specialization in nursing

Depending on the basic training successfully completed, there are numerous opportunities for further professional development in the field of nursing in Germany. The generalist nursing training provides a solid foundation, which can be supplemented by specialized further and advanced training programs, sometimes in the form of academic degree courses, in order to meet different professional interests. For example, there is the option of completing (specialist) further training in specific specialist areas or areas of responsibility. Here you will find a list of some examples of popular (specialist) further training courses in the field of nursing in Germany:

“Practical instruction in nursing”, ‘Wound manager’, ‘Stoma care expert’, ‘Nursing consultant according to §7a SGB XI’, ‘Pain management’ (Pain Nurse), ‘Palliative care’, ‘Case management in social and health care’, ‘Hygiene specialist’, ‘Intensive and anesthesia care’, ‘Intermediate care nursing (IMC)’, “Nursing in oncology”, ‘Gerontopsychiatric specialist’, ‘Nursing in psychiatry’, ‘Psychosomatics and psychotherapy’, ‘Nursing in endoscopy’, ‘Nursing in nephrology’, ‘Stroke nurse’, ‘Pediatric intensive care and neonatology’, “Nursing service management (PDL)”.

These (specialist) training courses promote professional growth and specialization in various nursing disciplines. Certain prerequisites, such as professional experience, must often be proven for the individual training measures. At universities of applied sciences, specialized courses leading to an academic degree are offered in areas such as nursing science, nursing education and nursing management, sometimes with different titles at Bachelor's or Master's level and the possibility of a doctorate.

For more information (available in German only):

dkgev.de/themen/personal-weiterbildung/aus-und-weiterbildung-von-pflegeberufen/

<https://www.pflegestudium.de>

pflegeausbildung.net/?gad_source=1

kommweiter.bayern.de/lotse/weiterbildungskurse_pflegefachkraefte.php

vdpb-weiterbildung.de/weiterbildung-in-der-pflege/kursangebote-in-der-weiterbildung/

2. Assistant professions in the fields of nursing

2.1. Training in the areas of operating theaters and anesthesia

The state-recognized training courses to obtain the titles “Operationstechnische*r Assistent*in”, OTA for short, and “Anästhesietechnische*r Assistent*in”, ATA, are usually referred to together and offered at the same educational institutions, so-called “OTA/ATA schools”. The former work in the surgical service after graduation and are professionally involved in the preparation of procedures, provision of equipment and instruments, as well as patient care during surgery, including the documentation of procedures.



They work in operating departments, outpatient surgery centers and functional areas such as endoscopy or the emergency room. People trained as ATAs, on the other hand, support anesthetists in the induction, monitoring and withdrawal of anesthesia, as well as in the preparation and care of the equipment required for this. The areas of activity here are in anesthesia departments and emergency care areas. Both training courses generally last three years and comprise around 4,600 hours, of which 2,100 hours are theoretical and 2,500 hours are practical in the later areas of operation. The requirement for completing one of these courses corresponds to ten years of schooling. The entry requirement can also be met by completing vocational training. The standardization and thus reorganization of training in Germany took place in 2022.

For more information (available in German only):

[ATA-OTA-G](#)

bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/service/gesetze-und-verordnungen/guv-19-lp/ata-ota.html

2.2. Training in nursing aid and nursing assistant professions

People with training as “Pflegefachassistent*in”, “Pflegehelfer*in” or “Pflegefachhelfer*in” are available to support and thus relieve nursing staff in carrying out simple medical activities in various areas of care. The training is regulated differently in the individual German federal states in terms of the title to be obtained, the admission requirements and the content of the training measure and can last between one and two years in full-time form. From 2027, a uniform regulation for the training of this occupational group is to be offered.

For more information (available in German only):

bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/pflegeassistentengesetz-pm-04-09-2024.html

Gesundheitsberufe.de

2.3. Training in the field of social assistance

The field of “Sozialassistent*in” is also established in Germany. This profession supports people in need of help in educational, care, domestic and social care areas. They work in kindergartens, nursing homes, facilities for people with disabilities and in outpatient social services. Their tasks include basic care, housekeeping, support in child and elderly care, as well as the care and support of people in various life situations. The state-recognized training, which is considered to be practice-oriented, usually lasts two years and takes place at vocational schools. It combines theoretical lessons in subjects such as education, health promotion, work organization and care with three internships in the areas of child, elderly and disabled care for a total of 16 weeks. The requirements for admission to training are regulated differently in the various federal states with regard to previous school education. A qualification in this training occupation opens up the possibility of further training such as curative education.

For more information (available in German only):

web.arbeitsagentur.de/berufenet/beruf/9031

medi-karriere.de/medizinische-berufe/sozialassistent/



2.4. Medical assistant training

It is also possible to train as an assistant in medical fields. For example, a distinction is made between the job profiles “Medizinische*r Fachangestellte*r” (MFA) and “Medizinisch-technische*r Assistent*in” (MTA).

MFAs usually work in doctors' surgeries, clinics and medical facilities. They support doctors during treatments, take on organizational tasks and look after patients. MTAs, on the other hand, specialize in laboratory analyses, radiology or functional diagnostics. They work in clinics, laboratories and research facilities. Both training courses are state-recognized and comprise a three-year dual apprenticeship at a vocational school or vocational college in combination with practical work in the future field of activity. A nine-year secondary school leaving certificate is sufficient for the MFA apprenticeship, while the MTA apprenticeship requires at least a ten-year secondary school leaving certificate as an entry requirement. The state-certified qualification “Medizinisch-technische*r Assistent*in” can also be subdivided into the areas of „Medizinisch-technische Assistenz für Radiologie“ (MTR), „Medizinisch-technische Laboratoriumsassistent*in“ (MTLA), „Veterinärmedizinisch-technische Assistenz“ (VMTA) and „Medizinisch-technische Assistenz für Funktionsdiagnostik“ (MTAF). In 2023, some of these medical technical assistant professions in Germany were modernized in terms of training modalities.

For more information (available in German only):

[MedFAngAusbV](#)

[MTAPrV](#)

[bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/service/gesetze-und-verordnungen/detail/mta-reform-gesetz.html](https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/service/gesetze-und-verordnungen/detail/mta-reform-gesetz.html)
[ausbildung.de/berufe](https://www.ausbildung.de/berufe)

2.5. Additional support staff in health care

In Germany, there are numerous opportunities to provide support in the care. For example, there is the option for official recognition of foreign professional qualifications at various levels in Germany, as well as a wide range of educational opportunities to support career changers and immigrants who would like to enter the care sector but still need some preparation time. Many younger people who do not yet know what they want to do professionally and have a social streak decide to complete a FSJ, or “Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr”. This is a voluntary service in social areas. It is offered in Germany to young people and young adults who have already completed their compulsory full-time schooling and have not yet reached the age of 27. The basic framework conditions for such a voluntary social year are set out in the “Gesetz zur Förderung von Jugendfreiwilligendiensten”, or JFDG for short, and regulated in more detail at state level. In addition to the FSJ, there is also the “Bundesfreiwilligendienst” (BFD or “Bufdi”) at federal level. It was created to replace the German civilian service, which expired in 2012, and is also open to older people. As part of these measures, basic training courses are offered to prepare for the usually one-year activity. The range of tasks here is extremely broad in terms of nursing and social support in a wide variety of organizations and facilities. They also serve as a good preparation and introduction to later training in a social profession.

For more information (available in German only):

[bundesfreiwilligendienst.de/fsj-freiwilliges-soziales-jahr/](https://www.bundesfreiwilligendienst.de/fsj-freiwilliges-soziales-jahr/)

[JFDG](#)

[bundesfreiwilligendienst.de/](https://www.bundesfreiwilligendienst.de/)

[BFDG](#)