

1. Recognition Procedure for IT Professions

In Germany, most IT professions are **not regulated**, meaning that formal recognition of a foreign professional qualification is not mandatory to work in this field. However, a recognition procedure can be voluntarily undertaken to establish the equivalence of a foreign qualification with a German reference profession (e.g., IT specialist). This is governed by the **Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG)** and is reviewed by the competent authority, such as the IHK FOSA (Chamber of Industry and Commerce).

- ✚ **Process:** Applicants submit documents such as degrees, work certificates, and curricula. Within three months (if all documents are complete), a decision is made on whether full, partial, or no equivalence exists. In cases of partial equivalence, adaptation qualifications or compensatory measures may be required.
- ✚ **Benefit:** A recognition certificate helps employers assess qualifications and can support visa or residence permit applications.

2. Special Provisions for IT Professionals

The **Skilled Immigration Act** (since 2020, amended in 2023) offers specific facilitations for IT professionals from third countries, especially if they lack a formal university degree:

- ✚ **Visa for IT Professionals with Work Experience:** Individuals without a recognized degree can obtain a residence permit if they:
 - Can prove at least **three years of professional experience** in IT within the last seven years (e.g., through work certificates),
 - Have a **specific job offer** in Germany,
 - Earn a minimum salary (2025: approximately €4,140 gross/month, adjusted to the pension insurance contribution assessment ceiling).
- ✚ **Language Skills:** German language skills are not mandatory, as many IT jobs accept English as a working language. However, basic German is recommended for integration.
- ✚ **No Formal Recognition Required:** Unlike regulated professions (e.g., medicine), the equivalence assessment is not obligatory, speeding up the process.

3. EU Blue Card for IT Graduates

IT professionals with a recognized university degree (e.g., in computer science) can apply for the **EU Blue Card** if:

- ✚ The degree is comparable to a German university degree (verifiable via the *anabin* database),
- ✚ They have a job contract with a minimum salary of €45,552 gross/year (2025, for shortage occupations like IT).
- ✚ This offers faster permanent residency options and family reunification.

4. Accelerated Skilled Worker Procedure

Employers can use the **accelerated skilled worker procedure** (§ 81a Residence Act) to shorten the recognition and visa process (max. two months). This requires a power of attorney from the professional and a fee of €411. It's particularly attractive for IT professionals with a job offer.

5. Practical Examples and Challenges

- ✚ **Flexibility:** In practice, employers often waive formal recognition, as practical experience (e.g., programming skills) is more critical in IT than formal degrees. Many foreign IT professionals start directly with a job contract.

- ✚ **Challenges:** Difficulties arise in proving professional experience (e.g., missing or vague certificates) or recognizing qualifications from countries with less standardized education systems.
- ✚ **Integration:** Employers value the special provisions, but integration can be hindered by a lack of German skills or cultural differences.

6. Recent Developments (as of March 2025)

The 2023 amendment to the Skilled Immigration Act introduced the **Opportunity Card**, allowing IT professionals with partial recognition or work experience to search for jobs in Germany for up to 12 months. Points are awarded for qualifications, experience, and language skills, among other factors.

Conclusion

The legal practice is designed for flexibility and speed to address the shortage of IT professionals. While formal recognition is optional, special provisions for experienced IT professionals and the EU Blue Card provide streamlined pathways. In practice, employers often prioritize pragmatic solutions, with proof of experience and integration remaining the biggest challenges.

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