
Work-related language learning in

Germany

Majority language learning (L2) for newly-arrived migrants

Publicly-funded 'integration courses' are available for migrants. BAMF (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge / Federal Office for Migration and Refugees) is responsible for integration course funding and curriculum development. Courses are provided by various private and educational providers.

The course usually consists of 600 hours of language instruction and a 60-hour orientation course on Germany's federal system, culture and history. It leads to a B1 level German test for immigrants (*Deutschtest für Zuwanderer*). Participants who do not reach B1 level are entitled to a further 300 hours of instruction.

There are full-time and part-time courses and additional special courses (including e.g. literacy, courses for women, for young adults, for parents). Participants who are funded¹ need to show a certificate of eligibility (*Berechtigungsschein*) from the immigration authority (*Ausländerbehörde*).

Public funding is not available for courses above level B1. These higher level courses are offered by adult education providers on a fee-paying basis, open to all.

A range of project agencies also undertake work in this area. For example, MoBiProEU is a programme that supports young people from EU member states to start an apprenticeship in German companies. The programme includes instruction in work-related German.

Work-related L2 provision for employees/workers

The Integration through Qualification (IQ) programme is funded by the Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales / Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS). This IQ programme was established by BMAS in 2005 and operates through a network of agencies. Its aim is to address skills shortages in the

¹Courses are available to five categories of person:

- **Ethnic German repatriates admitted into Germany on or after 1 January 2005**, their spouses and children are legally entitled to a free integration course (funded by BAMF).
- **Foreign nationals with residence titles issued before 2005** can access an integration course where places are available. Foreign nationals in receipt of unemployment benefit may be required to attend. A token fee (€1.20 per lesson) is payable.
- **Foreign nationals with residence titles issued from 2005 onwards** may have a legal entitlement to attend an integration course and/or may be legally required to attend (e.g. if they cannot make themselves understood in German). The local immigration office decides if attendance is required when it issues a residence title. Likewise foreign nationals in receipt of unemployment benefit II may be required to attend. Again, a token fee of €1.20 per lesson is payable.
- **Non-German EU citizens and German nationals** have no statutory entitlement to an integration course. However, if places on a course are available, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) may allow German nationals to participate if they do not yet speak adequate German, or have particular integration needs. Contribution to costs is via the token fee of €1.20 per lesson. Those in receipt of unemployment benefit II or social assistance (*Sozialhilfe*) may apply for fee exemption.

German labour market by enabling migrants to gain German work-related qualifications. The IQ programme's network supports various projects delivering work-related German language learning.

Work-related L2 provision for job seekers, unemployed

Courses in German for work purposes targeted at migrants offer instruction in work-related German and typically include vocabulary, grammar and idioms used in writing and speaking. They may also include content related to specialised vocational knowledge, IT skills, numeracy/maths, employability and job search (e.g. how make job applications). These courses may also include company visits, work placements and/or internships. Learners with a migration background who have completed an integration course (see section 1 above) and can evidence A1 level German, may be entitled to a maximum of 730 hours of classroom instruction over 6 months.

Work-related German courses are typically delivered by language learning providers. BMAS commissions and funds some of this provision through its SGB (Sozialgesetzbuch) III programme, administered by the Federal employment agencies. Most is funded by Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) through the European Social Fund (ESF). This, however, will change.

On 1 July 2016 Germany established a new L2 provision based on the Asylum Procedure Act in §45a (Deutschförderverordnung). From 2018 on, this will fully replace the ESF-BAMF programme which will gradually be phased out as it is a time-limited promotion by the ESF. The new programme offers courses from level A1 to C2 with some coverage of work-related language. Besides this, more specific courses will focus on e.g. commerce, technical issues or logistics. Additionally language courses will be offered to support certification of professionals such as doctors, nurses and educators.

Work-related L2 provision in vocational courses

A range of language programmes integrated into vocational qualification programmes are delivered through the IQ Network of agencies, with funding from BMAS. Work-related language learning is also included in the national cooperation programme, 'Triple win', that recruits nurses from Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Philippines and Tunisia to work in Germany. Regional providers and agencies are responsible for supporting this language learning.

Practice examples of interest

Adaption training courses for teachers, state-certified educators, physicians, hospital nurses.

Work-related literacy provision for low-literate L1/L2 adults

Regional providers and agencies are responsible for implementing Germany's National Strategy for Literacy and Basic Education of Adults (Federal Ministry for Education and Research).

Practice examples of interest

Basic Education and Economy Hamburg (Grund: Bildung und Wirtschaft <http://www.fs-grundbildung.de/>)

Further information

[BAMF \(Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge/Federal Office for Migration and Refugees\)](#)

[Information from BAMF on learning German](#)

[IQ Network](#)

[Council of Europe surveys](#) on member state policy and practice relating to the linguistic integration of adult migrants

[European Web Site on Integration country information sheets](#)

[German government information service \(Bundeszentrale für politischen Bildung/bpb\) country profiles](#) on migration in Europe and beyond

[CEDEFOP VET in Europe project country reports](#)

[European Migration Network country fact sheets](#)

[Migration Policy Institute](#)

[Global Forum on Migration and Development Migration Profiles Repository](#)

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Participants at the Language for Work Workshop held at the ECML in Graz on 24-25 June 2015 were asked to prepare a brief review of policies and practice in their own country/region relevant to work-related language learning for migrant/ethnic minority workers and/or low-literate majority-language speaking workers. Reviews were completed for Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy (Emilia-Romagna), Kosovo, Macedonia, Malta, Norway, Romania (Bucharest), Sweden.