

Exceptions:

Setting up a business in a skilled trade requiring a licence without a master craftsman qualification

There are lots of exceptions when it comes to setting up a business in a skilled trade requiring a licence. You can find some examples here; although please be aware that these examples do not cover all of the exceptions. As such, we recommend that you seek advice from [experts from the Chamber of Crafts and Skilled Trades \(Handwerkskammer\)](#) if you do not hold a German master craftsman certificate and are interested in setting up a business in a skilled trade requiring a licence.

Exception: Limited practice with partial recognition (eingeschränkte Tätigkeit mit Teilanerkennung)

Your foreign qualification was only partially recognised as being equivalent to the German master examination during a recognition procedure. As such, you are not permitted to carry out the jobs that were not covered by your qualification. It is, however, sometimes possible to practise part of the trade requiring a licence. An example: You are permitted to become a self-employed barber, but you may not cut women's hair.

Exception: Master craftsman despite partial recognition (Meisterbetrieb trotz Teilanerkennung)

You have applied for recognition of your foreign qualification but only part of your qualification has been recognised. Despite this, there are ways to set up a business in a skilled trade requiring a licence:

- Register for admittance to the master examination at the chamber in the region in which you wish to become self-employed. It may be a good idea to take part in a vocational qualification that prepares you for this examination first.
- You hire someone with a master qualification; then you can set up a business in the skilled trade requiring a licence. As such, you can become self-employed even while you are preparing to take the master examination yourself.

Exception: Qualifications from Austria and France (Qualifikationen aus Österreich und Frankreich)

Master qualifications which have been attained in Austria or France are automatically recognised as a result of agreements between Germany and the countries in question.

Exception: Unacceptable master examination (Meisterprüfung unzumutbar)

Exceptions can also be made when a master examination can no longer be accepted – for example, due to your age. This is stipulated in [§ 8 of the Crafts and Trade Code \(Handwerksordnung\)](#). In this case, you still need to prove your technical and entrepreneurial skills, your qualifications and your professional experience. EU citizens and citizens from the EEA and Switzerland can also obtain this type of exemption. In order to do so, you must provide proof of the relevant professional experience (see [§ 2 EU/EEA Crafts and Trade Code](#)) or of an equivalent foreign qualification (see [§ 3 EU/EEA Crafts and Trade Code](#)).

Exception: Journeymen with lots of professional experience (Gesellen mit viel Berufserfahrung)

Journeymen with lots of professional experience can acquire an exemption. This also applies for those whose foreign qualifications have been recognised in full. The conditions for this exemption are stipulated in [§ 7b of the Crafts and Trade Code](#): The apprenticeship, or the recognition of a foreign qualification, must be in the relevant skilled trade requiring a licence. You must have proof that you have worked for at least six years in this specific skilled trade. You must have held a management position for at least four of these years. This should be proven by way of certificates and references. The Chamber of Crafts and Skilled Trades (Handwerkskammer) charges between 100 and 500 euros for the test, depending on the amount of work required. Foreign professionals should note: Professional experience is only counted from the point that the recognition of the foreign qualification was certified.