

Geschäftsbereich Pflegeentwicklung



Integrationsmanagementkonzept für internationale Pflegekräfte

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International nursing professionals have been recruited at Münster University Hospital (UKM) for years. The project began with the recruitment of Spanish nursing professionals in 2014. In the meantime, the Integration Team of the Nursing Development Department can draw on extensive knowledge of integration from more than 15 nations – including Italy, Brazil, Vietnam and Colombia – and has been able to recruit well over 200 international professionals for the hospital. The Integration Team consists of three staff members in the Nursing Development Department and other colleagues in the nursing school. They are responsible for acquisition and strategic development on the one hand and for monitoring the process of professional recognition on the other. The integration concept at UKM thus moves in two dimensions. On the one hand, the focus is on recruitment and social integration, i.e. the arrival, living and working of the new international employees in Münster. On the other hand, there is professional integration, in which completely different aspects have to be taken into account. On these two levels, UKM tries to have a positive impact on the integration of international nursing professionals. The measures used for this purpose are regularly evaluated scientifically.

1. Preparations after recruitment

After the interviews and the personal selection of the international candidates by the staff of the Integration Team abroad or via video call, a very work-intensive phase begins that prepares for entry and living and working in Germany

Arranging formalities

Employment contract

This plays an important role in the process of immigration of the international professionals to Germany as well as for the relationship between employer and employee. UKM provides the recruitment agencies with the employment contract, which complies with all collective bargaining regulations of the public service, in written form in German. The agency is responsible of the communication with the professionals and the mother-tongue translation.

Visa for Germany

- All third-country nationals require a visa to enter Germany, which entitles them to take up gainful employment. The visa procedure is preceded by the procedures for residence and employment permits and recognition of professional qualifications.
- The time required for visa procedures depends on the type of procedure chosen. In the fast-track procedure for professionals (according to section 81a of Residence Act (AufenthG)), the deadlines are fixed. In procedures outside the accelerated procedure, the time frame for an appointment to apply for a visa varies between a few days and several months, depending on the degree of capacity of the respective German diplomatic representation abroad. Longer waiting times are published on the websites of the respective embassies.
- The Skilled Immigration Act (FEG) opens up the possibility of accelerating the entry procedure for qualified professionals (§81a AufenthG).

If there is a concrete job offer, the employer can apply for a “fast-track procedure for skilled workers” on behalf of the international professional against payment of a fee. In the fast-track procedure for skilled workers, the Foreigners’ Authority plays a key role and is responsible for:

- * advising employers on the entry requirements of the international professional,
- * checking the legal requirements for foreigners,
- * managing the recognition procedure, and
- * obtaining the approval of the Federal Employment Agency.

All authorities involved are bound by tight deadlines. If all prerequisites are met, the Foreigners’ Authority provides a pre-consent to the issuance of a visa, on the basis of which the diplomatic representation or consular post assigns a date for the visa application within three weeks and usually decides on the issuance of the visa within a further three weeks after the application has been submitted. Compliance with the specified deadlines is only possible if all the required documents are submitted in the correct quality, otherwise deadlines will be interrupted. Alternatively, the regular entry procedure and, if applicable, the procedure for obtaining prior approval from the Federal Employment Agency in accordance with Section 36 (3) of the Employment with Section 36 (3) of the

Employment Regulation (BeschV) are still available; the international professional and the employer can choose the procedure that appears to be more favourable for them in each case.

The German Agency for International Healthcare Professions (DeFa) supports UKM in recruiting from many third countries.

Recognition procedures

In order to be able to work as a nursing professional in Germany, the professional qualification acquired in the country of origin must first be recognised as equivalent in Germany. It is therefore necessary to submit the application for recognition to the locally competent recognition authority before the nursing professional enters Germany, in the case of UKM the District Government of Münster

The District Government of Münster then carries out an equivalence assessment. Significant differences to the reference occupation stated are named in an assessment notice (notice of deficiency). In such cases, the foreign professional qualification is deemed not to be equivalent, so that differences must be compensated for with the help of a compensatory measure in Germany (§ 16d AufenthG).

These application procedures and document management are handled at UKM by the agencies and DeFa.

German language skills

- In order to obtain a licence to practise as a nursing professional in Germany, it is not only necessary to have professional recognition, but also to have a German language level of B1 or B2 (which varies depending on the federal state) on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).
- In the case of entry to participate in a compensatory measure (according to § 16d AufenthG), visas and a provisional work permit can also be granted to nursing professionals who prove a B1 level according to CEFR. In this case, German language skills up to a level of B2 CEFR must be subsequently acquired before or during participation in a compensatory measure.
- The language acquisition of the professionals up to B1 CEFR level takes place in cooperation with a certified

language institute in the countries of origin and is organised by the agencies. Funding is provided by UKM. In individual cases, the project participants receive a monthly subsidy, which is calculated according to the current cost of living, if the language course takes place full-time.

Approval of the Federal Employment Agency

- The approval of the Federal Employment Agency for the issuance of the residence permit is mandatory for taking up a professional activity. The Federal Employment Agency also checks the relevance of the compensatory measures for the recognition of the professional qualification in the country of origin. In the case of public or state-recognised educational institutions as well as publicly funded or certified measures, suitability is to be assumed. The Foreigners' Authority and the diplomatic representation abroad adopt the Federal Employment Agency's examination result.
- The application for admission to the labour market is submitted by the Human Resources Department at UKM. Further information can also be found on the website: www.make-it-in-germany.com/de/

Support with the application procedures within the framework of skilled labour immigration

- Not only for Germany are there regulated procedures within the framework of international skilled labour immigration; in the countries of origin, too, administrative procedures often have to be completed before the international professionals leave the country.
- The German Agency for International Healthcare Professions (DeFa) takes over the application procedures within the framework of the immigration of skilled workers as well as the document management for UKM when commissioned and authorised. Further information can be found on the website: www.defa-agentur.de

Staying in contact until entry

Experience shows that these processes of document management, authority approvals and language learning take longer than expected.

Therefore, until the time comes that the nursing professionals from the country of origin can finally enter Münster, UKM has established measures that show how professional and personal contact with the selected candidates is nevertheless possible during this exciting and challenging time. An important confidence-building task in the recruitment process up to entry into Germany. It is important to the UKM Integration Team not to lose contact with the international nursing professionals in the country of origin directly after the interviews. As the professionals initially stay in their country of origin for a few months to learn German up to B1 level and to have the documents for the visa compiled and translated, a longer period of time passes during which contact with the new employer in Germany is difficult, not only because of the language barrier but also because of the physical distance. To prevent the new colleagues from feeling left alone on this challenging path, regular video conferences take place in the different countries of origin. The professionals are informed about the living and, above all, the nursing work situation in Germany and have the opportunity to request direct and unbureaucratic support from UKM Integration Team. The appointments are very popular and are an important element in the onboarding process at UKM.

2. Arrival and the first days

Preparing the arrival

After the time of recruitment, organisation and document management, it is finally possible to book the flight to Germany and fix the exact date of arrival of the recruited new employees; thus the next phase of preparations begins. Now the arrival and the first days in Germany can be coordinated and planned. These days are always very emotional and crucial, both for the new professionals and for the Integration Team at UKM, which naturally wants to give the professionals a warm welcome.

Organising the arrival in Germany

- Through regular contact with the Integration Team at UKM and the mentors of the agencies, a trusting relationship has already been established and many agreements about what will happen in the first days to the following months have already been communicated in detail.
- The professionals are met personally at the airport by a delegation so that they are not alone on their first steps in Germany.
- In addition to personal contacts, the use of a messenger service (e.g. WhatsApp), as this allows quick contact with the new employees. These contact groups with all participants, the UKM Integration Team and the agency mentors are created directly after arrival, usually by the agency mentors. Initial questions can be clarified over this medium and it serves as a short, unbureaucratic means of contact for everyday issues of any kind. For reasons of data protection, however, no employment contracts, authority-related or similar topics are shared or discussed.
- The nursing professionals recruited through the IB Agency are initially accommodated in a language boarding school with half board in Stuttgart. This is where the language course up to B2 level takes place.
- Representatives of UKM visit the nursing professionals during the first four weeks in Stuttgart and welcome them personally at an evening event with dinner. Here, the professionals then also learn about their final assigned ward and details about the apartments. Always a very exciting and enjoyable event.

Organising the arrival at UKM and in Münster

- After about eight weeks, the time has come for the international nursing professionals to travel by train to Münster. A reception committee from the Integration Team is waiting at the station in Münster. From there, they first go to their new home, the furnished apartments rented by UKM especially for the professionals, with a small typical “Münster” welcome gift and handwritten greeting cards by the Integration Team.
- In the following days, the nursing professionals will get to know UKM, their new colleagues and the city of Münster and register at the Citizens’ Registration Office.
- They receive a welcome folder with lots of useful information about UKM, but also about their new home Münster. Among other things, the Integration Team has produced an information brochure, “Das kleine Münster A-Z” (“Münster from A to Z”). Here you will find helpful tips on leisure activities, but also telephone numbers of the medical emergency service.
- A guided tour of the city and lunch together in the city centre will also take place during the first week. This activity is accompanied by the Integration Team of UKM and employees of the Association Münsterland e.V. An association that supports professionals in the Münsterland region in onboarding and social integration with great leisure activities and meetings outside the working environment and also helps family members to find work. <https://www.muensterland.com>.
- The Welcome Café helps professionals from abroad to get to know their mentors and the teachers for recognition of professional qualification in an informal way. Arriving and getting to know a new country and a new work environment is exciting and full of impressions. In order to support the new international employees at UKM in their arrival, the idea of the Welcome Café was developed by the UKM Integration Team. The Welcome Café aims to bring the new employees into contact with their mentors before they start work in the practice, in order to create a positive welcoming culture and to provide them with a familiar person before their first day at work. Here, the employees have the space to get to know each other professionally and privately in a relaxed atmosphere with drinks and snacks, and to exchange ideas outside of their daily work routine. The event is organised by the Integration Team and the par-

- ticipants receive selected guiding questions to support them. This intensive time together before starting work is perceived as very positive and helpful by all sides.
- With all the events, however, rest must not be forgotten. In between, they are always given space to process their impressions and to arrive and orientate in Münster and at UKM.
- The Campus-App helps with this orientation on the vast UKM campus.
- In addition, the Handbook Germany provides support. It offers a lot of information, links and videos about work, education, life, political asylum, laws and more. Local offers can also be found via the search function. handbookgermany.de/de.html
- mbeon. is another digital service that offers advice seekers the opportunity to use the mbeon app for free, anonymous and data-protected chat support on issues related to arriving in Germany (work and career, learning German, health, housing). As an initial orientation aid, extensive information on migration is provided in this app and on this website. In addition, it is possible to get personal counselling at an MBE Counselling Centre. www.mbeon.de/home/

Social media platform

UKM has both a Facebook and an Instagram account. Here, nursing professionals from abroad can get an impression of their potential new employer and the workplace in Germany even before they are recruited. In many videos, professionals present their workplace in nursing at UKM in their native language. Articles on topics such as diversity, international nursing professionals and interculturality are published at regular intervals. Questions from professionals from abroad are also repeatedly put to the Integration Team via these media.

3. Relocation management support

The process of moving to a new country and obtaining the recognition of professional qualification must be well supported by UKM as an employer. Some aspects are already managed by the recruiting agency, while others are only handled of by UKM's Integration Team during the move to Münster. The relocation service includes accompanying or handling formalities, administrative procedures and the search for accommodation.

Support with formalities

- A frequently used aspect of relocation services is assistance with applications, administrative procedures, opening a bank account and similar matters
- A special feature of the relocation of international professionals is that the process to full professional recognition and licensing must be guaranteed, which includes the following official steps:
 - The registration of a residence address in Germany (in this case Münster).
 - Participation in a recognition procedure (at UKM, this is the assessment test).
 - Registration with the Foreigners' Authority; obtaining the work permit (the UKM's Human Resources Department provides support here in communication with the Münster Foreigners' Authority).
- For all these services, the Human Resources Department must have a power of attorney from the recruited person. Otherwise, no one can act on their behalf.

Organising the first apartment

Before entering the country, it is not possible for professionals recruited from third countries to rent or even buy suitable accommodation on their own. UKM therefore provides the first apartment for the professionals. These are mostly fully furnished shared apartments in which the professionals live together. Here, the newly arrived professionals can first arrive and later, if they wish, look for a new place that suits them.

- UKM provides housing within the city area. All apartments are within cycling or walking distance of UKM
- UKM – in cooperation with the affiliate UKM IM – has apartments (fully furnished) that it makes available to

its international professionals at least until the end of the recognition process.

- The new employees are already sufficiently informed in their home countries about the size and furnishing of the apartment as well as the costs. They also receive a detailed information sheet with sample photos and information on the usual rules of conduct in Germany (separating waste, airing the rooms, etc.) in written form.
- The rental costs are borne by the new employee; UKM subsidises the apartments during the professional recognition period with at least 150,00 €.
- An initial supply of bed linen and towels is a welcome gift from UKM to the respective professional.

Ensuring mobility

An important question when moving internationally is how mobility will be possible in the new place of living. Münster has long been known beyond its borders as a cycling city. Therefore, cycling mobility is almost unavoidable alongside public transport.

- The international professionals have the option of buying a second-hand bicycle or renting one for a fee. Swapfiets is a good and inexpensive way to get a bike quickly: [swapfiets.de](https://www.swapfiets.de)
- If they are not able to ride a bike, they can get free bike training. For this purpose, a volunteer police officer supports the Integration Team. This offer is very gratefully accepted and brings a lot of joy to everyone involved.
- New UKM employees also have the option of a job ticket.

Ensuring internet access

Experience shows that international professionals use the internet to communicate with their families and private networks, but also to do research and organise everyday life in Münster after their arrival.

Not all accommodations have internet access. It is therefore possible to purchase a Vodaphone GigaCube, for example, so that this access can also be ensured at short notice.

All international professionals are equipped with a tablet upon arrival in Germany or, in some cases, already in their home country, so that on the one hand they can keep in touch with their family via video calls, but on the other hand they can also participate in the preparatory lessons for the assessment test in the best possible technical way.



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4. Establishing integration management

In order to be able to deal with the comprehensive concerns of recruited nursing professionals from abroad at UKM, the Integration Team works in a closely interlinked and broadly networked manner, also beyond the boundaries of the hospital, and thus has an answer for (almost) every question.

In integration management, all topics, questions and concerns related to recruitment, arrival in the country, induction and the recognition process can be filtered and processed. The Integration Team develops concepts for the strategic development of acquisition or also for the promotion of a welcoming culture and implements these together with the relevant agents.

The UKM Integration Team is part of the Nursing Development Unit – International Professionals Department and is structured as follows:



1. international recruitment and strategic development
 2. recognition of professional qualifications in theory and practice
- The exact description of tasks is laid down in function descriptions. The division of tasks is communicated transparently within the company. A substitution system has been established.
 - Their responsibilities include, for example, deciding how and when to conduct international recruitment, the choice of recruiting channel and which agency or government recruiters to employ. Furthermore, their area of responsibility includes the entire application process, the monitoring of the arrival process in the country as well as the presentation of the essential interfaces with the nursing service and ward managers. Additionally, they are responsible for developing a suitable induction plan, establishing

the mentoring programme and accompanying the entire recognition process. They are reliable contact persons for the international professionals, but also for the wards as well as for the nursing directorate and the board of directors.

- A total of 3 staff members are employed in the International Professionals Department and 2 others in the School for Nursing Professions.
- All colleagues have been specifically trained in intercultural competence through study courses or further training. Some have conducted scientific studies on the perspective of integration in their qualification work.
- The team is strengthened by a specialist in the Human Resources Division for the part of contractual and official formalities.
- All staff members are familiar with the creation and maintenance of important network and integration structures and have the necessary scope for action. This integration concept clarifies the tasks and thematic priorities of this team and is structurally closely oriented to the Welcome Culture & Integration Toolbox www.dkf-kda.de.

5. Sponsorships and mentoring programme

Personal contact persons and supporters are an important resource for many nursing professionals in their new working and living environment and help them find their way around. Particularly in the context of the international recruitment of nursing professionals, it makes sense to use these instruments of personnel development. UKM has therefore also developed valuable structures for this purpose and is still on the way to developing them further.

Mentoring concept

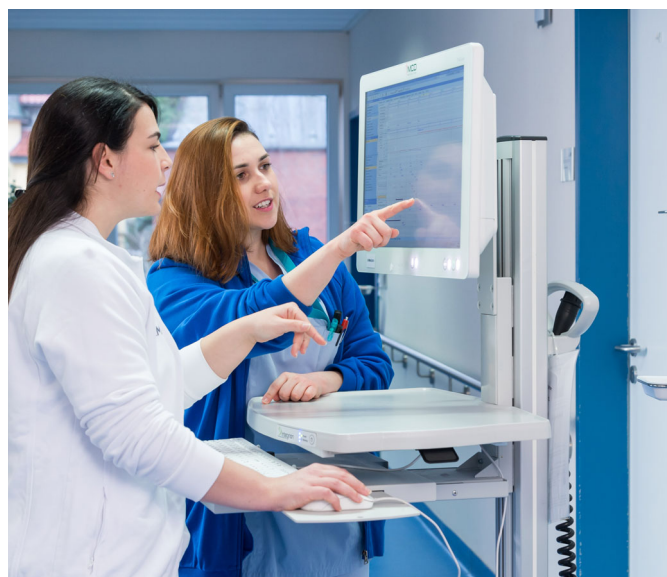
- At UKM, every international nursing professional is assigned a mentor as a permanent contact person on the ward. These contact persons are qualified for the role in advance in a training course and equipped with a wide range of information about culture and professional recognition. Regular feedback meetings of all persons involved in the process (Integration Team, ward, Nursing Care Service (PDL), school for nursing professions) are agreed upon and documented in writing.

- Members of the Integration Team supervise the entire process. They are available to provide support to all kinds of questions.
- The induction on the wards is ensured by the expertise of the mentors. In addition, of course, the colleagues on ward also provide support. Special induction concepts and information brochures for everyone involved in the process are available on the wards.
- In addition, members of the Integration Team provide practical support.
- The international professionals are additionally scheduled in the duty schedule in parallel with their mentor during the recognition.
- They bear the title “Nursing Professional in Recognition”.

Staying in exchange

Regular reflection meetings take place at different levels. Appropriate protocol templates have been developed to document the learning success. They are recorded in writing for each discussion.

1. professional exchange between the international professionals, their ward managers and mentors on the respective ward
2. practical support and reflection with international professionals and members of the Integration Team
3. superordinate joint reflection meetings with the international nursing professionals and their Nursing Care Service (PDL) under the supervision of the Integration Team



6. Organising the recognition process

The recognition of professional qualifications and permission to practice are an essential part of the professional integration of international nursing professionals. UKM provides them with full support in this process in order to ensure that they receive professional recognition as soon as possible, but also in a professionally sound way. A well-organised and closely guided professional recognition process as well as professional language support are the success factors of good integration. Teaching and learning methods help participants at different levels. The aim of the educational staff of the Nursing School is to teach methods that can be used, for example, to formulate and present specialised knowledge in the new language German as well as specifics and differences of nursing care to the home country. Furthermore, participants are provided with tablets, textbooks and an appropriate learning app free of charge. The rapid reacquisition of professional autonomy is a significant building block of successful integration; the additional specialist knowledge acquired strengthens the international professionals in their personal, professional attitude and underlines their professional self-image. The perception of professional degradation, especially against the background of the fact that they have not been able to use their (mostly academic) qualifications acquired in their home country, quickly manifests itself in dissatisfaction in their everyday work.

The professional recognition process

- Before entering the country – and therefore before the visa is issued – the application for professional recognition is already submitted to the responsible recognition office (for UKM, this is the District Government of Münster) with all the necessary documents and an indication of the desired reference profession (nursing professional according to PflBG (Pflegerberufegesetz)).
- This process is also accompanied by DeFa in some recruitments and is usually supported by the agencies–
- The District Government of Münster then carries out an equivalence check. In the case of nursing qualifications from third countries, significant differences from the indicated reference profession are often specified

in a determination notice (so-called deficiency notice). In such cases, the foreign professional qualification is not considered equivalent, so that differences must be compensated for with the help of a compensatory measure in Germany (§ 16d AufenthG).

The missing contents can be compensated at UKM within the framework of an assessment test.

- The curriculum includes several months of preparation for the assessment test through 12-14 weeks of block teaching, consisting of theoretical and practical learning content, as well as practical assignment phases on ward.
- This ensures early operational integration of international nursing professionals into the teams.

German language skills

- All professionals have a German language level of B2 according to the CEFR reference framework and proof of specialist language at this time. During the adaptation program, there is additional integrated language support. A particular focus here is on practical technical language skills.
- Additionally, professionals with extended language training needs have the opportunity to receive one-on-one tutoring at UKM.



7. Onboarding training

Induction as an important part of operational integration

The key element of onboarding is the core of the operational integration of new international employees. The better an onboarding process is organised and established, the faster the new international nursing professionals can strengthen the teams in nursing terms and are perceived as valuable support rather than a burden. Conflicts can be quickly resolved and dismissals during the probationary period can be prevented.

Focusing on onboarding in international recruitment

Like all new employees, nursing professionals recruited from abroad must also be introduced to UKM workflows and regulations. In these special cases, it is necessary to adapt the usual induction process.

All international professionals are introduced to the structures and most important events at UKM during an orientation week.

This is followed by skills training at the UKM Training Center to learn the first basic nursing skills before going to the ward for the first assignment.

- In the many years of experience in international recruiting, the Integration Team at Münster University Hospital (UKM) has noticed major differences in the everyday practice of nursing. In order to prepare the new international nursing professionals well and professionally for the job profile of nursing in Germany during the period of professional recognition, skills training days are held at the UKM Training Center even before the first practical assignment.
- In a friendly, clear and practical atmosphere, core nursing tasks, such as basic and personal hygiene, mobility techniques or dealing with emergency situations, are deepened by using nursing case situations and a wide range of tools. In the skills training, each international nursing professional is given the opportunity to practice their nursing skills in a protected environment and to ask questions. Furthermore, mutual observations and the exchange of professional experiences in

the implementation as well as the training of feedback loops take place.

- The skills training is led by members of the Integration Team and practical instructors from UKM and is continuously reviewed and adapted. Previous professional experience of the international nursing staff is actively integrated. The skills training also promotes exchange and is a lot of fun for everyone involved.

In addition, the international professionals, just like their colleagues, attend the basic training for new employees at UKM after successfully completing the recognition of professional qualification.

In the ongoing process, the Integration Team supports the wards and the international nursing professionals. Experience has shown that the process of integration and adaptation qualification works particularly well on the wards that are able to reflect the competencies of the guidance well in their team structure and have an interest in intercultural cooperation and guidance.

The integration ward (INSTA) for international nursing professionals serves as another component of practical training in the adaptation qualification (see Chapter 5).

On the wards, there are special induction concepts. The Integration Team supports the induction process with regular reflection meetings and practical support (see Chapters 5, 7).

The mentors on the wards are prepared for their role in special mentor training courses (see Chapter 5).

Using a staged induction plan

A staged induction plan reacts to the challenging period between entry into the country and full deployment as a nursing professional. Since most internationally recruited new employees are not yet recognised as nursing professionals after entering the country and are therefore not allowed to be deployed as such in the duty schedule, it is important to provide them with particularly good support during this special period.

Within the framework of the recognition of professional qualification, practical phases on the assigned ward thus alternate with theoretical phases in the preparatory course for the assessment test.

Position and status at the workplace

Professional awareness is also shown by the example of the name tag: international professionals are often referred to as “interns” or “assistants”. Therefore, UKM has agreed on the name “nursing professional in recognition” for the period until professional recognition, in order to avoid establishing them in the status of interns and thereby devaluing their qualification acquired abroad. It is a small token, but one that is appreciated very much.

8. Accompanying teambuilding

New international employees and their integration into the ward teams are not a routine situation in personnel management. It is therefore worth paying special attention to the teambuilding process.

In this way, misunderstandings and team conflicts can be addressed at the outset and the new situation can be used for team development and to increase employer attractiveness.

Considering the whole team

- Even before the professionals get to know their wards for the first time, the Welcome Café takes place at UKM. Here, the international nursing professionals meet their mentors from the wards and exchange ideas in an informal atmosphere.
- At the start of each group of international professionals, intercultural micro-trainings take place on the wards, in which employees of the Integration Team give brief impulses on cultural features and specifics of nursing training/studies during the handover period. A handout especially designed for this purpose is available to the teams in paper form and digitally prepared for further reading.

The aim of both activities is to preventively educate about different cultural understandings, professional understandings, professional trainings and to raise awareness about different language use.



9. Expanding competences

International recruitment of nursing professionals strengthens healthcare and provides relief in the nursing teams by increasing the number of qualified nursing professionals. Understanding intercultural competencies as an extension is a central aspect here.

Diversity as a resource for a welcoming culture

UKM sees itself as a diverse company, not only in terms of interculturality, which is reflected in more than 90 nations working at UKM.

At UKM, the Diversity Guide is emblematic of the hospital's cultural understanding and diversity dimensions. Various training courses offer the opportunity to expand competencies in this area. Interculturality is an integral part of all in-house training courses for nursing staff at UKM. In addition, regular management training sessions are held on this topic in the nursing management meetings. At UKM, all employees receive a target agreement meeting and a competence analysis once a year. This is where individual personnel development is discussed and promoted.





10. Intercept conflicts

While immigration is a cultural enrichment for a part of our society, it overwhelms others, who experience diversity as difficult or worry about the high presence of foreigners in the workplace. Moreover, this recruitment strategy poses a great challenge for both international nursing professionals and healthcare organisations: different cultural backgrounds and values as well as social influences and different socializations interact. International nursing professionals feel like migrants

between states, different healthcare systems, and different cultures. They not only have to find their way culturally in a new country and learn a new language, they also have to integrate professionally and find their place in nursing care at UKM in the interaction of many professional groups.

However, there are also forms of non-acceptance of the professional nursing knowledge of international nursing professionals. In studies, they describe the feeling that they are only used as “helping hands,” that they are not qualified, and that they are not perceived as professional

equals. Degrading behavior and low acceptance of cultural diversity can have a significant negative impact on the integration process. A positive attitude is essential for successful integration, no matter how challenging it may sometimes be for everyone involved, whether nationals or internationals. In the management workshops and micro-trainings in the teams on dealing with cultural diversity already mentioned (Chapter 9), this is precisely what is addressed at UKM and employees are sensitized to this.

For international nursing professionals, cultural conflicts are usually a stressful experience. However, they have the opportunity to find a new home in Germany and to gain both professional and private security. In order to accompany this process responsibly, the UKM integration concept provides for different levels of de-escalation of conflict situations:

- Primarily, the ward managers and mentors on the wards are the direct contact persons and provide support in such situations.
- In addition, it is also possible at any time to involve members of the Integration Team as moderators or to contact them confidentially. This is also possible unbureaucratically and very quickly via direct personal contact or by contacting them via WhatsApp.
- UKM offers coaching, counselling, mediation and supervision. This service is available to all employees of the nursing and medical service and is requested by the responsible Nursing Care Services (PDL) if required. In addition, the international professionals have the opportunity to take advantage of external coaching. The ‘open ear’ is an external coaching offer from a female coach with an intercultural focus. Mediators are also available to all UKM employees in the area of occupational health management. In addition, there is a psychologist at UKM available to the Integration Team on request. She provides individual support for the professionals in the event of psychological overload as a result of migration.
- In addition, international caregivers are offered language tutoring. For this purpose, the Integration Team has two volunteer retired teachers and a full-time educator at its disposal.
- The UKM Staff Council is available to all UKM employees as a neutral advisory body in the event of conflicts.

Despite all integration measures, there must be a willingness on the part of everyone involved at UKM to lead this dialog of diversity in a sustainable manner and to address professional as well as personal reservations and fears. Greater openness and awareness of these issues can help to develop a better understanding of international nursing professionals. The role model and support of managers are just as important on this path as the time resources and personal open-mindedness of German employees to look after the international professionals in mentoring.

11. Social participation

The length of stay in Germany for international nursing professionals depends not only on the work situation, but also on their integration into the social community. This involves understanding and living with the German constitution, legal system and legal social order. It is about being able to follow and help shape the social discourse in Germany, to participate in everyday public life and to have the safe feeling of being welcome and belonging.

It is about friendships, good neighborhoods and connecting in the community and region. Companies recruiting internationally can support their newly acquired employees in this process.

Promoting sociopolitical participation

UKM promotes sociopolitical participation of international nursing professionals by providing information opportunities:

- Information brochure “Das kleine Münster A-Z” with all FAQ’s about living and working in Münster and the Münsterland region.
- Common city tour to get to know Münster’s cultural assets and history.
- There are various contacts with consulates, international communities and national representatives of the city of Münster, which the Integration Team is happy to organise for the international nursing professionals.
- UKM is a member of Verein Münsterland e.V., an association that supports professionals in social onboarding

11. Social participation

The length of stay in Germany for international nursing professionals depends not only on the work situation, but also on their integration into the social community. This involves understanding and living with the German constitution, legal system and legal social order. It is about being able to follow and help shape the social discourse in Germany, to participate in everyday public life and to have the safe feeling of being welcome and belonging.

It is about friendships, good neighborhoods and connecting in the community and region. Companies recruiting internationally can support their newly acquired employees in this process.

Promoting sociopolitical participation

UKM promotes sociopolitical participation of international nursing professionals by providing information opportunities:

- Information brochure “Das kleine Münster A-Z” with all FAQ’s about living and working in Münster and the Münsterland region.
- Common city tour to get to know Münster’s cultural assets and history.
- There are various contacts with consulates, international communities and national representatives of the city of Münster, which the Integration Team is happy to organise for the international nursing professionals.
- UKM is a member of Verein Münsterland e.V., an association that supports professionals in social onboarding in the region (<https://www.muensterland.com>) and provides them with various welcome events across UKM (see also Chapter 2).
- All international professionals have the opportunity to participate in university sports at WWU at a reduced rate.
- At regular intervals, an event is held to thank everyone involved in the integration process and the international professionals, where success is celebrated together.
- The UKM cultural officer organises seasonal cultural activities for all UKM employees.

12. Dealing with termination and headhunting

UKM’s goal is, of course, to retain internationally recruited professionals in the company for as long as possible. Nevertheless, it will always happen that an internationally recruited person abandons the ongoing process before arrival or in the first few months after arrival.

Members of the Integration Team regularly visit the international professionals on ward and hold reflection meetings at various hierarchical levels.

What reasons can influence the termination of the project?

- Language problems
- Professional hurdles to integration
- Problems with authorities in the recognition procedures
- Homesickness or private (health) problems, especially in the family
- Infrastructural conditions of the city of Münster (expensive housing, childcare places rare, connection to the next intercontinental airport far)

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