


# **Integration Management Concept**

D	Integration Management Concept	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

## Integration Management Concept

### 1. Post-Recruitment Preparations

Once the employer and the employee agree on an employment contract, a process begins whose duration and cost is frequently underestimated, in which all formalities are taken care of which need to be addressed before the employee can travel to Germany and begin work.

This involves coordinating the following areas and processes:

#### Employment contract

The employment contract plays a key role in the employee's immigration process and in the relationship between employer and employee.

- Charité arranges to send foreign employees a written copy of the employment contract before they begin work, both in German and in their native language.
- The employment contract adheres to all provisions of collective bargaining law for the public service.

#### Visa for Germany


In order to travel to Germany, foreign nationals need a visa allowing them to pursue gainful activity in Germany. Prior to obtaining a visa, new employees will first need to obtain a residence and work permit, as well as obtaining recognition that their foreign professional qualifications are equivalent to a German degree.

- The International and Specialized Services department of the Federal Employment Agency (ZAV) provides assistance in this regard for recruits from Mexico, while the German Agency for International Health Care Professionals (DeFa) assists recruits from Brazil.

#### Recognition procedure

In order to work as a skilled employee in Germany, foreign workers must first obtain recognition as to the equivalence of their foreign professional qualifications.


Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 2 von 18
		Gepprüft: Welcometeam	
Freigabe am: 01.09.2021	Nächste Überprüfung: 01.09.2023	Freigegeben: J. Heepe	

<b>D</b>	<b>Integration Management Concept</b>	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

It is therefore necessary to apply for recognition at the competent local recognition authority before traveling to Germany. The recognition authority will then perform an equivalence assessment. In case of nurses with foreign professional qualifications, material differences from the identified reference profession are often cited in an assessment notice (or "deficiency" notice). In such cases, the foreign professional qualifications are not considered to be equivalent, so that the differences will have to be addressed by means of a compensatory measure in Germany (§ 16d of the Residence Act).

- At Charité, the application process and document management for immigrating workers are conducted by:
  - ZAV for Mexico; and
  - DeFa for Brazil.

### German language skills


 In order to obtain a license to practice the nursing profession in Germany, it is generally necessary not only to obtain recognition of the applicant's professional qualifications, but also to demonstrate mastery of the German language corresponding to the B2 level on the proficiency scale of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In the event that applicants travel to Germany to take part in a compensatory measure (in accordance with § 16d of the Residence Act), visas and temporary work permits may be issued to nurses who demonstrate a level of B1 in accordance with the CEFR. In this case, German language skills conforming to a CEFR proficiency level of B2 must be demonstrated prior to or during the applicant's participation in the compensatory measure.

- Language skills up to the B1 level in the CEFR are taught in Mexico and Brazil, in cooperation with a certified language institute.
- Classes are held all day, from Monday to Friday.
- The classes are paid for by Charité.
- Each participant also receives a monthly stipend in the amount of € 300 to cover cost of living expenses so that participants can devote all of their effort to learning the language.

### Approval from the Federal Employment Agency

Approval from the Federal Employment Agency for issuance of a residence permit is required in order to practice a profession in Germany. The Federal Employment Agency will also examine whether the compensatory measures are suitable for recognition of the foreign professional qualifications. The suitability of these measures is assumed in cases involving public or state-recognized educational institutions, as well as measures which are subsidized or certified by public

Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 3 von 18
		Geprüft: Welcometeam	
Freigabe am: 01.09.2021	Nächste Überprüfung: 01.09.2023	Freigegeben: J. Heepe	

D	Integration Management Concept	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

authorities. The Immigration Office and the German mission in the participant's country conduct this assessment for the Federal Employment Agency.

- The application for admission to the labor market is filed by the welcome team

Further information can be found on the following website:

- <https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/de/>

### Assistance with the application process for immigration of skilled workers


Like other countries, Germany has a defined procedure for the immigration of international skilled workers, and many countries of origin also have administrative procedures which must be completed before skilled workers can emigrate.

Experience has shown that the immigration process may be delayed to a considerable extent by the need to manage documents, deal with government agencies and possibly learn a new language.

While this process is still ongoing, Charité has found a way to maintain contact with new employees in a reliable, efficient and professional manner while they are still living in their country of origin.

- The permanent contact person at Charité is Ms. Schwarz of the welcome team, which is responsible for maintaining contact with immigrating employees.
- The welcome team is comprised of five nurses, all of whom have undergone training in intercultural skills.
- This time is put to constructive use, as video conferences are held with participants every 14 days.
- These conferences give the company an opportunity to get a feel for participants' progress in learning the language, as well as giving participants the opportunity to obtain important information about their future life and work in Germany, and to request assistance from the Charité welcome team in a direct and unbureaucratic manner.
- Another key element of the onboarding process at Charité is the language sponsor program. About four months after beginning language classes, each participant is assigned a nursing colleague at Charité as a language sponsor. The colleagues meet virtually on a regular basis, so that participants can develop their language skills while at the same time forming relationships with their colleagues from an early date.  
This program is very popular among both new employees and their sponsors.
- Employees also receive a station portfolio for their future workplace, as well as the contact information for the station management and the instructor who is assigned to integrate them into the work force.

Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 4 von 18
		Geprüft: Welcometeam	
Freigabe am: 01.09.2021	Nächste Überprüfung: 01.09.2023	Freigegeben: J. Heepe	

D	Integration Management Concept	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

- Nurses receive information about living in Germany and, of course, information about working as a nurse in Germany, and have the opportunity to request assistance from the Charité welcome team in a direct and unbureaucratic manner.  
This program is highly popular and is a key element of the onboarding process at Charité.

## 2. Arrival and the First Few Days

### Preparations for arrival

Once all post-recruitment arrangements are completed and all necessary documents have been filed and the company is finally able to book the trip and schedule a firm date for the new employee's arrival, the next phase of the preparations begins.

The next task is to plan and coordinate the employee's arrival and first few days in Germany.

- The welcome team has already established and maintained regular contact with the employee in a reliable and efficient manner.
- As a result, many of the events which are to take place in the employee's first few days, weeks and months can already be planned in considerable detail.
- Communicating e.g. via WhatsApp is popular among all participants, as a quick and simple way of maintaining contact.

### New employees

- For new employees of our company, the first few days after arriving in Germany are a particularly important and often emotional time, and one which many will remember all their lives.
- For the welcome team as well, and for their colleagues at their future stations, these are days of great significance and require careful preparation.


### Preparing for reception

The newly arriving employees should be given a warm reception:

### Upon arrival

- For members of the welcome team, greeting new employees in person upon their arrival in Germany is a matter of great personal importance.
- Accordingly, a delegation will meet new arrivals at the airport, welcome them with the flag of their country and bring them to their new home.

Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 5 von 18
		Geprüft: Welcometeam	
Freigabe am: 01.09.2021	Nächste Überprüfung: 01.09.2023	Freigegeben: J. Heepe	

D	Integration Management Concept	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

- Precautions are taken to ensure that new arrivals have enough food in their apartment to get them through the required quarantine period in good shape.
- New arrivals are also provided with a German SIM card for their smart phone and a starting balance in order to ensure that they can stay in contact with family and friends in their home country and with the welcome team.

### At work

Finally, the new arrivals will arrive at their future workplace for the first time.

- Members of the welcome team escort the new employees to their future departments and introduce them to their new colleagues.
- In addition, a welcome event for all new employees at Charité is held once a month. This event is organized e.g. by the nursing director, Ms. Heepe, and by members of the Management Board.

### Handbook Germany

New employees will have many questions upon arriving in Germany. *Handbook Germany* provides information, links and videos about work, education, life, asylum, laws and more. Employees can also use the search function to find local offerings.

<https://handbookgermany.de/de.html>


### Social media

Nursing professionals coming from abroad will appreciate it if they can form an impression of their potential new employer and workplace in Germany prior to recruitment via a social media presence.

Social media also provides an opportunity to inject life into the company's integration concept: from the recruitment process abroad through immigration, the recognition procedure and orientation, there are many opportunities for the company to create content.

- Charité has a Facebook and an Instagram account.
- These accounts feature frequent posts about topics such as diversity, foreign nursing professionals and intercultural issues.

Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 6 von 18
		Geprüft: Welcometeam	
Freigabe am: 01.09.2021	Nächste Überprüfung: 01.09.2023	Freigegeben: J. Heepe	

D	Integration Management Concept	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

#### Welcome folder

- Each new employee receives a welcome folder featuring important information about the company, as well as about everyday life in Germany.
- This folder serves as an important reference for new arrivals.

### 3. Assistance with Relocation Management

The following is particularly important:

- Moving to Germany is a big change for employees.

#### Assistance with formal requirements

A much-appreciated aspect of relocation services is helping new employees with applications, dealing with government agencies, opening a bank account and similar matters.

A unique feature in the relocation of internationally recruited nursing professionals is that arrangements must be made for full professional recognition and licensing. As a result, employers and/or the service providers they engage are required to take care of key official formalities over the course of the immigration process, such as e.g.:


- registering a residential address in Germany;
- taking part in a recognition procedure;
- registering with the immigration office and obtaining a work permit.

For all of these services, it is necessary to obtain power of attorney from the recruited person or a member of their family. Otherwise, it will not be possible to make arrangements on their behalf.

#### Arranging the first apartment: Charité has residential space available

- In cooperation with a real estate company, Charité has (fully furnished) apartments available which it can provide to internationally recruited employees at least until they complete their recognition procedure.
- New employees receive sufficient information about the size, features and cost of their new residence before they leave their home countries.
- New employees are responsible for paying rent.
- Based on our experience, we can say that new employees very much appreciate this option.

Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 7 von 18
		Geprüft: Welcometeam	
Freigabe am: 01.09.2021	Nächste Überprüfung: 01.09.2023	Freigegeben: J. Heepe	

<b>D</b>	<b>Integration Management Concept</b>	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

### Ensuring mobility

Another key question in connection with an international move is how new employees will be able to move around in their new location.

For many, the best way of getting around Berlin is via public transportation. The Berlin Senate has responded to the city's growth by steadily expanding the public transportation network.

- New employees at Charité have the option of purchasing a job ticket and information about subscription options can be obtained from the Berlin Transit Authority.

### Ensuring internet access


It is our experience that foreign employees use the internet to stay in contact with their family and co-workers from their home countries, to research topics after their arrival and to make arrangements for their everyday lives.

Since the apartments have no internet access, we offer the following solution:

- A German SIM card with a starting balance is provided for new employees' smart phones so that they can stay in contact with family and friends in their home country and with the welcome team.
- Once the bank account is set up, new employees are guided to a cell phone provider so as to ensure internet access on a permanent basis.

Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 8 von 18
		Geprüft: Welcometeam	
Freigabe am: 01.09.2021	Nächste Überprüfung: 01.09.2023	Freigegeben: J. Heepe	



D	Integration Management Concept	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

## 4. Establishing an Integration Management System

### Creating the integration management system

Setting up an integration management system and creating the position of integration manager have proven to be an effective means of managing all matters associated with the recruitment of foreign nursing staff.


All of the issues, questions and concerns associated with recruitment, immigration, integration and the recognition process can be channeled and addressed within the integration management system.

Integration managers develop and compile customized proposals for ways in which a welcoming culture can be strategically promoted.

- Charité's integration management team consists of 5 full-time employees.
- The team members have all received training in intercultural skills.
- The team members are entrusted with creating and maintaining necessary integration structures and have the necessary working time resources and freedom of action to accomplish this goal.

**The present integration concepts illustrates the tasks and focuses of the Charité welcome team/integration managers**

Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 9 von 18
		Geprüft: Welcometeam	
Freigabe am: 01.09.2021	Nächste Überprüfung: 01.09.2023	Freigegeben: J. Heepe	

D	Integration Management Concept	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

## 5. Sponsorship and Mentoring Program

### Mentoring, sponsorship and working in tandem: the advantage of personal guidance in a professional environment

- Personal contact persons, sponsors and advocates are an important resource for many employees attempting to navigate a new working and living environment and facilitate orientation.
- Each department which is designated as a welcome station for international nursing staff has at least one instructor who is assigned to facilitate integration. These instructors receive training in intercultural skills.

The following models are used in our company:

#### Tandem work


- Due to our goal of allowing international nursing staff to continually improve their German language skills so as to allow them to practice their profession in Germany, having colleagues on the team who are committed and willing to help is a big advantage.
- They play a key role when it comes to helping international nursing staff acquire (technical) language skills.
- But working in tandem is not limited to the goal of improving language skills: rather it is practiced as part of the everyday work routine.
- Tandems are also used for recreational activities outside work.

#### Sponsorship models

Sponsorship models offer many advantages for new employees in the orientation phase.

- The sponsor will be on the same team and at the same hierarchical level as the new nursing employee.
- Sponsors assume this role on a voluntary basis, guiding their new colleague from their first day on the job for a period of at least six months, or longer if necessary.
- Sponsors point out and explain formal processes and procedures at their specific workplace and throughout the company, to the extent possible.
- They help new employees connect with other team members and explain any unwritten rules.
- The integration process is planned and conducted in close consultation with the instructor who is responsible for the integration process. Routine discussions are arranged with all those involved in the process and the feedback they provide is documented in writing.
- The welcome team is available to assist new employees with questions of any kind.
- However, integration into the specific department is left to the expertise of the colleagues in that department.

Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 10 von 18
		Geprüft: Welcometeam	
Freigabe am: 01.09.2021	Nächste Überprüfung: 01.09.2023	Freigegeben: J. Heepe	

D	Integration Management Concept	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

## 6. Arranging the Recognition Procedure

### The professional recognition procedure

Before arranging for travel to Germany, and therefore before a visa is issued, an application for professional recognition is filed with the competent recognition office (in Berlin, this is the State Office for Health and Social Affairs) including all necessary documents and statements about the desired reference profession ("nurse" in accordance with the Nursing Professions Act and/or "general care nurse" in accordance with the Nursing Act).

- This process is guided by the International and Specialized Services department of the Federal Employment Agency for recruits from Mexico and by the German Agency for International Health Care Professionals (DeFa) for recruits from Brazil.

The State Office for Health and Social Affairs then performs an equivalence assessment. In case of nurses who received their degree in third countries, material differences from the identified reference profession are often cited in an assessment notice (known as the "deficiencies" notice). In such cases, the foreign degree is not considered to be equivalent, so that the differences will have to be addressed by means of a compensatory measure in Germany (§ 16d of the Residence Act).

For example, an adaptation period may be coordinated for the individual employee to make up for the missing content.


- Adaptation periods at Charité are conducted in cooperation with the Berlin Education Campus for Health Professionals (BBG).
- The curriculum includes a six-month course with both theoretical and practical content.
- This course ensures that foreign nursing staff can be quickly integrated into teams

### German skills: important not only for licensing

In order to qualify for a job title in regulated nursing professions in Germany, and in order to practice those professions, applicants need to demonstrate German language skills conforming to a B2 level in the CETR. As of 2021, they will also need to demonstrate their skills with technical jargon.

- Language courses are held at Charité in cooperation with a certified language institute.
- Each participant undergoes 3 units of instruction in German twice a week.
- A total of 400 units of instruction are provided for, after which participants take the B2 language exam.
- Integrated language development is conducted during the adaptation period. Language and technical instructors work together to design the lessons, and a particular focus may be placed on practical skills involving the use of technical jargon.

Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 11 von 18
		Geprüft: Welcometeam	
Freigabe am: 01.09.2021	Nächste Überprüfung: 01.09.2023	Freigegeben: J. Heepe	

D	Integration Management Concept	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

## 7. Adjusting Orientation

### Orientation is an important aspect of workplace integration

The aspect of orientation, or "onboarding," is the centerpiece of the workplace integration process for new employees. This is a crucial phase, and one in which the employer has an opportunity to demonstrate its attractiveness and abilities: the degree to which the orientation process is organized and implemented effectively will affect the speed with which the new employee will be able to perform the desired work, as well as the employer's ability to manage conflicts and prevent termination of the employment relationship during the trial period.


- Integrating nursing staff from all over the world is an important task for an internationally oriented university hospital like Charité.
- Job interviews are held with the nursing director/welcome team and, once their application is accepted by Charité, international nursing staff are assigned to various stations on an individual basis, depending on their prior experience.
- Potential assignments include departments and stations in every campus.
- The welcome team presents employees to the leadership and nursing teams prior to their first assignment, using their CVs, as well as advising them as to suitable integration and orientation measures.
- The welcome team provides assistance for the station and for international employees throughout the process.

Experience has shown that the integration and adjustment process works especially well in stations which have already gained expertise in the past in connection with guiding international nursing employees and which have a strong interest in intercultural cooperation and instruction.

### To this end, Charité has established welcome stations for international nursing staff:


- Welcome stations for international nursing staff serve to provide practical guidance for employees undergoing the adaptation procedure.
- These stations include employees with skills associated with providing guidance for international nursing staff, as well as employees with intercultural experience, and these skills and experience are used to provide international nurses with professional guidance during the adaptation procedure and to help them develop the necessary language skills.
- A welcoming culture is established.
- Creation of the welcome stations in the interest of fostering a welcoming culture is an indication of our appreciation for our colleagues, as well as making the nursing profession more attractive.
- Careful onboarding of new employees promotes the long-term retention of highly qualified workers at Charité.

Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 12 von 18
		Geprüft: Welcometeam	
Freigabe am: 01.09.2021	Nächste Überprüfung: 01.09.2023	Freigegeben: J. Heepe	

<b>D</b>	<b>Integration Management Concept</b>	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

- Conveying information about the structures of the health care system within the protected sphere of the welcome stations goes a long way towards facilitating the integration process. The experience which employees gain at these stations can be put to use later on in the course of their work routines at their assigned stations.
- This takes pressure off of the subsequent orientation process in their eventual work station, as well as shortening the process.
- Experience has shown that verbal communication, both with other nurses and with patients, is especially important.
- This can be practiced at the welcome stations, ensuring that international nursing staff are not marginalized because of their inadequate language skills.
- The welcome stations give new employees the space and opportunity to get to know other health care providers and to establish themselves in an interdisciplinary manner within our health care system.
- The intercultural setting, in turn, positively impacts the whole team's ability to care for patients from different cultures.
- The practical aspects of the adaptation period are handled exclusively at the welcome station.
- The adaptation period concept for international nursing staff at Charité University Hospital in Berlin and the associated guidance checklist serve as the basis for the practical portion of the adaptation period and must be successfully completed by international colleagues.
- The welcome stations enable close and individualized supervision and guidance of new employees by trained partners with intercultural skills and experience as practical instructors.
- This arrangement ensures that new employees have the opportunity to practice nursing in a supervised setting, with subsequent time for reflection, allowing them to acquire professional skills at Charité.
- This is accomplished through short practice sequences and the acceptance of at least 6 certificates of completion in general-practice and specialized nursing.
- Another focus is on developing language skills until the B2 level is reached. A certificate is issued at the end of the adaptation period to certify that the employee has reached this level.
- Accordingly, the employees need to attend language classes in their free time, made possible by a coordinated work schedule.
- The welcome team is available to provide advice in order to facilitate the adaptation process at the welcome station.

Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 13 von 18
		Geprüft: Welcometeam	
Freigabe am: 01.09.2021	Nächste Überprüfung: 01.09.2023	Freigegeben: J. Heepe	

D	Integration Management Concept	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

## 8. Managing Teambuilding

Integrating new employees and teambuilding are routine tasks in human resources management.


But when new colleagues are recruited from other countries, the teambuilding process merits particular attention.

In this way, misunderstandings and team conflicts can be addressed early on and the new situation can be exploited in order to facilitate team development and make the company a more attractive place to work.

### Keeping the whole team in mind

- International colleagues are assigned exclusively to welcome stations at first.
- The team decides together whether a station should apply to become a welcome station, visualized by a joint application.
- The welcome team assists the team and the new colleagues during the recognition process.
- Charité offers a range of coaching, consulting, mediation and supervision services.
- These services are provided by trained nursing coaches.
- These offerings are available free of charge to all nursing employees and other medical personnel.

Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 14 von 18
		Gepüft: Welcometeam	
Freigabe am: 01.09.2021	Nächste Überprüfung: 01.09.2023	Freigegeben: J. Heepe	

D	Integration Management Concept	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

## 9. Developing Skills

### Diversity as a resource for a welcoming culture

International recruitment of nursing professionals improves nursing quality and takes pressure off of the rest of the nursing team.

### Intercultural openness as a cross-sectional task

#### Supplementing the advanced training program


In order to allow a welcoming culture to grow throughout the company, efforts to promote this culture should be directed not only towards nurses but should include other professional groups as well.

- Charité offers an advanced training series dedicated to interprofessional and intercultural work in medicine, nursing and social services.
- The series includes 6 modules.
- The teams at the welcome stations receive training in intercultural skills from a specialized consultant/trainer.

### Opening career paths at an early stage

- At Charité, all employees meet with supervisors once a year to agree on performance targets and for analysis of their potential.
- The employee's individual personal development is discussed and promoted at these meetings.
- The company also helps employees develop their language skills up to the C1 level; this measure is free of charge for employees.

Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 15 von 18
		Geprüft: Welcometeam	
Freigabe am: 01.09.2021	Nächste Überprüfung: 01.09.2023	Freigegeben: J. Heepe	

D	Integration Management Concept	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

## 10. Managing Conflicts

### Conflicts are a part of life: what's important is how we deal with them

Differences of opinion, tension and conflicts are part of everyday work life. Each company needs to find ways to deal with them.

International nursing staff will also become involved in conflicts.

- Charité offers coaching, consulting, mediation and supervision services.
- These services are provided by trained nursing coaches.
- These offerings are available free of charge to all nursing employees and other medical personnel

### Developing language skills


Experience has shown that difficulty in understanding someone's speech is often misinterpreted as inadequate professional expertise or as general weakness.

Employers who are looking to help employees who have only just begun to live and work in Germany should therefore consider how they can promote the development of German language skills even after they pass the B2 language test, e.g. by paying for additional language courses.

- Charité provides assistance for language development through the C1 level; this measure is free of charge for employees.
- Starting in September 2021, the welcome team will offer a course in conversational German at all three locations in order to contribute further to active language development.

Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 16 von 18
		Geprüft: Welcometeam	
Freigabe am: 01.09.2021	Nächste Überprüfung: 01.09.2023	Freigegeben: J. Heepe	



D	Integration Management Concept	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

## 11. Social Engagement

### Why is social engagement important?

The length of time for which international nursing professionals stay in Germany depends not only on their employment situation but also on the degree of their involvement in social life.

Social engagement is about people's ability to understand and experience our constitution, our legal system and our social order. It's about their ability to follow and shape social discourse in Germany and participate in everyday public life, as well as having a secure sense of being welcome and belonging.

It's about friendships, good neighbors and local and regional connections. This is an area where companies which recruit international employees can help their new employees.

### Promoting social engagement

The employer can promote social engagement on the part of international nursing staff by providing information:

The federal government's Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration:

- <https://www.integrationsbeauftragte.de/ib-de>


The Berlin Senate's Commissioner for Integration and Migration

- <https://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/>

### Supporting offerings from the welcome team

- Organizing cultural events such as museum visits, art exhibitions, athletic activities, etc.
- A focus in these events is on creating **shared experiences** (between German employees and employees from other countries)

Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 17 von 18
		Geprüft: Welcometeam	
Freigabe am: 01.09.2021	Nächste Überprüfung: 01.09.2023	Freigegeben: J. Heepe	

D	Integration Management Concept	Campus: CCM, CVK, CBF	
		Geltungsbereich: Pflege- und Funktionsdienst	

## 12. Handling Terminations and Departures

### In case of termination

For companies which recruit international nurses, the goal is of course to retain these people within the company for as long as possible. But every now and then, an international recruit will cancel the process before arrival or in the first few months after arrival.

International recruitment of nursing staff can be managed strategically on an ongoing basis ...

### What are conditions like within the company?

How attractive is the employer really for nurses coming from abroad, even after an intensive recruitment and integration process?

- Charité is a forward-looking and cosmopolitan company.
- We offer many opportunities for personal development, which we actively promote and facilitate.

### Were expectations and options clearly communicated and addressed?

- The welcome team regularly visits colleagues in their departments and actively solicits feedback

### Did the employee reveal his or her reasons for terminating the employment relationship?

- Discussions are held to evaluate the employee's motivations.
- Efforts are made to signal openness in the course of these discussions.

### Was the working environment attractive for the recruited employee?

What long-term career and pay opportunities can you offer as an employer?

- Charité has a job and career model.

### What is the infrastructure like?

- Charité's three locations offer excellent access to the public transportation network.
- Charité has a steadily growing community of colleagues from other countries. The company actively promotes exchanges between colleagues and efforts to get to know each other, e.g. through joint events.

Version: 0	Letzte Überprüfung:	Erstellt: P. Schwarz	Seite 18 von 18
		Geprüft: Welcometeam	
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