

How do I convert my (non-EU) driving license into a german one?

Frequently Asked Questions

“Wiesloch” is used as an example for all of you that live here...

Application procedure and approval process

For how long am I allowed to drive on german roads with a valid driving license of my home country?

Normally for 6 month from the day of your permanent residence.

Only if your permanent residence doesn't last longer than 12 month, you can submit an application to the Landratsamt Heidelberg/“Fahrerlaubnisstelle” in Wiesloch for using your license up to that 12 month.

What is necessary to get my conversion? (very short version!)

- an original and valid license of your home country (reviewed by Landratsamt Heidelberg/“Fahrerlaubnisstelle”) (An “International driving license” or “Learning license” is not adequate and therefore not accepted!)
- a state permission (permitted by Landratsamt Heidelberg/“Fahrerlaubnisstelle”)
- some learning materials in order to prepare yourself for your theory exam (sold by your driving school; an app, f.e.)
- a contract with your driving school in order to get some driving coaching in preparation for your driving exam
- a passed theory examination (performed by TÜV)
- a passed practical/driving examination (performed by TÜV)

How can I get the state permission (very short version!)?

Make an application with an official form and get it approved by “Fahrerlaubnisstelle”/Landratsamt Heidelberg. The official name of the form is “Antrag auf Erteilung einer Fahrerlaubnis” (see appendix).

Where can I get the official form?

- at our driving school (with a stamp that contains name and address of our school for a clear allocation at a later time)
- at Landratsamt Heidelberg/“Führerscheinstelle” (you have to enter the name of the school for yourself!)

What are the annexes to my application?

In principle, that depends on the country you come from. In this document we don't talk about EU-States and not of those countries mentioned in the so called “Anlage 11”/“Attachment 11” (= Switzerland, Israel, Canada, Australia and many US federal states). For all other countries in the world applies this:

- A **registration card** by the registration office which confirms the date you moved to Germany and the registration of your first residence.
- **Copy of your original driving license**
- **Translation of your original driving license** (only if necessary)
- **Participation confirmation for the visited “first-aid-course”**
- **Confirmation of an eye-test**
- A biometric **passport photo**

Is there anyone that may help me filling out the form?

Our driving school as well as the “Fahrerlaubnisstelle”/Landratsamt Heidelberg will help you if necessary.

Where can I get a translation (and classification) of my driving license?

- “ADAC” in Heidelberg-Kirchheim
- translation office in the region with the suffix: “publicly appointed and sworn certificate translator”/ “öffentlich bestellter und beeidigter Urkundenübersetzer” (you have to search for yourself)

Where I have to give off my application (combined with the necessary attachments)?

- please visit the citizen's office/"Bürgerbüro" of your town office/Stadtverwaltung Wiesloch
In general: always the town office/citizen's office in the town of your first residence; in our example = Wiesloch
- submit your signed request („Antrag auf Erteilung einer Fahrerlaubnis“) combined with all attachments as mentioned above.
- bring along these supplementary things:
 - your valid ID card (Passport, residence permit)
 - the fixed charge

What will happen with my original driving license of my home country?

After a while you'll receive a letter by the LRA HD/"Fahrerlaubnisstelle" Wiesloch; they'll invite you to drop off your original driving license from your homeland. They'll withhold your licence and within the first 6 months of being in Germany you'll get a replacement document that you may show if necessary, f.e. in case of a police control. Your original license will be checked if it is truly an original one, if it is still valid, etc. After the validation process your original license will be retained by Führerscheinstelle and sent back to the competent authority of your home country or been placed under official detention by Führerscheinstelle.

What is the consequence if I forgot something to deliver?

No problem, if any attachments or informations are missing, the "Fahrerlaubnisstelle" will send you a letter in which you'll be informed what to do next or to bring in personally.

How will I know that my request has been approved?

After you made your application you have to wait more or less long (from a few weeks to a few months) until you get a bill from Landratsamt Heidelberg/"Fahrerlaubnisstelle" Wiesloch by post. They'll invoice the service fee and give you information, that your application has been approved (at best).

My request has been approved - what does that mean in detail?

The approval allows you to make your theory exam and after passing that, your driving exam, too (only in this order!) Furthermore the TÜV is informed and instructed to offer these exams for you. And finally, our driving school will be informed, about that permission. In the course of this your name and license details appear in our online TÜV-booking-system. Then we are ready to offer you some exam dates.

So far, you only told me about my application - when do I have to enter into an education contract?

At the latest now! Therefore, please visit our driving school (once again) and enter into an education contract with us. A contract is the necessary condition for making appointments for your exams and coaching you by driving lessons. Please make your advance payment as mentioned in our contract. Later, please pay step by step depending on your training progress. We ask you kindly for fees in advance. Thank you!

What can be reasons for a notice of rejection?

- you have no license of your home country at all
- you don't have an original license, but only a copy
- your license is not or no longer valid (in a minority of cases there might be few and well-founded exceptions)
- of course, there might be further reasons, but we don't know all of them at present;
in any case you will be informed - if there are any reasons - by "Fahrerlaubnisstelle"/Landratsamt Heidelberg

What would be the consequence if I get a notice of rejection?

In this case you have to finish a regular education as like as you were a beginner. Unfortunately this generates more time and more money! But the description of this is not part of this document.

Acquisition of theoretical knowledge and theory exam (written test)

I received a letter from TÜV that carries the heading “Kostenvorschuss” - what does that mean to me?

“Kostenvorschuss” stands for “invoice”; the TÜV wants you to pay the cost for your examinations.

You are allowed to pay by bank transfer or cash in one of the stores mentioned in that letter.

In case of bank transfer you have the opportunity to pay the different costs separately (theory/practical exam).

Important to know: no payment means only a reservation of your appointment. It only changes into a fixed booking up to the day of your payment. If you don't pay in time your reservation will be cancelled a few days before the examination day and an exam is only hardly possible...

How can I prepare myself for the theory exam?

By autonomous learning using our helpful learning material. You can buy (only cash!):

- a learning book in German (always available), Arabic, English, Turkish and Russian language as well (books in a foreign language we're able to order within 2-3 days, but only if paid in advance!)
- an unique smartphone app (Android or iOS) which translates the menu navigation as well as the explanations into all of the 12 foreign languages that are officially approved!
- teaching lessons in our driving school are not officially required in the case of a conversion
- on the other hand, if you have any problems and you need special support by our driving school, you can book some single teaching lessons with separate cost (look for “Extra Theorie-Stunde” in our education contract)

I don't speak German - is it possible to learn and take a test in another (my) language?

At present you can take your theory exam in 12 foreign languages that are officially approved:

Arabic (modern standard), Croatian, English, French, Greek, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Rumanian, Russian, Spanish and Turkish (listing in alphabetical order!).

How many questions are there in total?

More than 1.100 at present divided into several chapters.

Is there something special to observe while learning with an app?

Yes it is. As we all know, we tend to learn by heart using our photographic memory. But such an important stuff should be really understood and reminded in our daily practice. Therefore they invent some “tricks” in order to avoid “stupid” learning by heart:

at the same question, picture details may change (colours or seasons for example), the answer order is changing or the false answer options were varying. Of course, only the true answer(s) remains the same. In all that cases the subject is always the same and if you learned your parts well, you will understand and find the right answers! Even during the official exam; because the official variations are secret/hidden. It is only possible to train with the variations offered by the app-provider. Those that were used during the official exam are different from that!

How will I know whether I am well prepared for my theory exam?

- you've given the right answer to all of the questions immediately during the last 2 to 3 runs
- you've passed plenty of sample tests by using your application (a minimum of 10 exams in a row!)

I am well prepared for my theory exam - who will make an appointment for my exam?

Your driving school - using an electronic online booking tool, but only if you already entered into an education contract with our driving school.

What are the days and times for theory exams in general?

In Wiesloch always on Mondays, most of the time from noon to 3 p.m. in steps of 45 minutes.

What a pity, I never have time on Monday afternoon - are there exist alternatives?

Of course, there are. We can make appointments in the whole regional responsibility of the Landratsamt Heidelberg; that means we can make an appointment even in other towns on other days and daytimes (f.e. Sinsheim, Heidelberg, Hockenheim and much more).

What do I have to do on the day of my exam?

We beg you not to continue learning during the day of your exam, especially not directly before your appointment. Why? In our experience this will make you confuse. You should have been well prepared, well rested and relaxed. It is sufficient to arrive at the TÜV about 5 minutes before your appointment. First of all your identity will be checked by means of your ID card. Then please ask the examiner in which language you want to make your test. Wait, until the examiner instruct you where to sit. His general information usually will be in German! Don't matter - you know what to do! :-)

How will the test be done?

You will sit in a room together with 11 other examinees. You will use a tablet for answering the questions. The examiner is able to change language if asked for that; he helps you if there may be any technical problems with your tablet and he can see the result of your exam on his master screen.

How many questions I have to answer in the theory exam?

Only thirty questions. 20 questions from that refer to basic knowledge (for all road users), the other 10 to special knowledge, esp. for car drivers.

How many mistakes am I allowed to make?

There is no counting only of the wrong answered questions: each question has a value from 2 to 5. That depends on the relevance for the public traffic. Now, you are allowed to "collect" up to 10 points. If you have more you fail the exam. You even fail, if you answer two questions with value 5 incorrectly!

When do I get the information whether I passed or not?

Directly after you've completed your exam. And - you will get a participation confirmation with the result of each chapter. Please give it to your driving school.

I failed the theory exam - what is the consequence? What do I have to do next?

Don't worry, maybe you had a bad day... Then you can repeat the exam after two weeks - as often as it's necessary. Disadvantage: you lose time and money, because you have to pay all cost once again. In this case - please pay attention for paying your fee by TÜV as soon as possible (as already mentioned above)!

I am a good driver - that's exactly why I'm asking if it is allowed to take my driving exam first and my theory exam at a later time?

No - first of all you have to pass your theory exam, only then it is allowed to take your practical exam.

Acquisition of practical knowledge and practical/driving exam

How do I arrange my driving lessons?

Please call Mr. Orschel or visit the driving school office during our opening hours and make appointments with him for your driving lessons:

- he offers you driving lessons once, twice or three times a week, even more than the regular 45 minutes, if wanted
- for that we knew, that you are already a car driver we want to show you important rules, behavior, etc. which are necessary for passing your practical exam
- please, don't be shy and ask him as much as you want!
- please, don't be angry, if he's telling you, that you are in need of some more lessons; we are not interested in making a pile at any cost but we are very interested in your physical health, the protection of your life and that of other traffic participants and finally in a good preparation in order to pass your exam hopefully in the first attempt. THIS saves costs!

Are there any lessons legally required?

No, but in a certain way also "yes"!?! Because: during the driving lessons you have to prove that you know all the important rules in traffic and that you are able to apply it while driving!! Therefore a few lessons are necessary; how many at the end depends on your skills in the way you drive! Also notice the next question/answer!

How will I know whether I am well prepared for my practical exam?

Your driving teacher will tell you if so. He is legally bound to ensure that you are fit for German road traffic. He has a lot of experience and knows the high demands on a practical examination performed by TÜV. It is our conviction out of our experiences during years that you'll save money and nerves if you invest a bit more in a good preparation in order to pass the exam the first time than saving at the wrong place and fail. It's not for the purpose of making money. Please, have trust in us. Thank you!

I am well prepared for my driving exam - who will make an appointment for my exam?

If your driving teacher is convinced, that you have sufficient abilities for a safe passing of your exam, he'll book an appointment, if it is your desire, too.

How will the practical exam be done?

- in most of the cases you will have a warm-up-ride with your driving teacher, only a few minutes to be focused
- the driving exam itself takes 45 minutes
- during that time a TÜV-examiner is sitting in the back of the car a gives you different instructions what to do next
- your driving teacher is sitting beside you as in a coaching before, but he is not allowed to step in except in cases of danger ahead!
- during the 45 minutes YOU are always the only person that is responsible for what you are doing!
That means: if you think that an instruction of the examiner is unclear - please ask/tell him. If you think his instruction would be against the law, so don't follow that instruction; but you should be ready to explain your decision afterwards!

My German isn't that good - will the practical exam may be in English?

No - the driving exam is always in German language! It is up to you learning a few words and expressions that are necessary to understand as: "please, turn to the right at the earliest possible occasion" or "Would you please drive back into the parking space" or something else like that...Please use for this also our coaching lessons.

I passed my practical exam - when and where do I get my new German driving license?

After passing your practical exam you'll receive a verification of that.

With that verification please visit again "Führerscheinstelle" and submit that document. Then you'll get your new license.

What about costs?

Driving school:

Please make your advance payment as mentioned in our contract. Later, please pay step by step depending on your training progress. We will send you a protocol which informs about the improvement of your education, your payments and your outstanding amount.

We ask you kindly for fees in advance. Thank you!

Others:

Please have a look on the next pages.

Conversion: Overview/checklist where to go, what to get and cost in a procedural order

office, store, location, options...	keywords	cost	variable, fixed?	done/ got it
driving school	- smartphone learning app - learning books - application form - education contract (form)	20 € 30 - 80 €	fixed depending on the language	
first-aid-course	- participation confirmation - passport photo and eye test maybe offered, too	about 29 - 36 €	variable	
optometrist/optician store	eye test	6,90 €	fixed	
photographer's studio / store	biometrical passport photo (officially recognised)	about 7 - 25 €	variable	
registration office	Certificate of the date you moved to Germany and the registration of your first residence	?	?	
„Fahrerlaubnisbehörde“/LRA HD (office)	- translation of your original DL needed? - application form (name your driving school!)			
ADAC HD or...	- translation - classification	55 / 89 € 30 € for non-members	fixed (ADAC)	
publicly appointed and sworn certificate translator	- translation	?	?	
citizen's office at the town office	- administrative charge (cash!) - submission of your request + attachments:	5,10 €	fixed	
	copy of your original driving license			
	translation of your original license (?)			
	participation confirmation of the first-aid-course you visited			
	result/confirmation of an eye test			
	biometrical passport photo			
	registration card by the registration office			
	ID card			
send by "Fahrerlaubnisstelle"	letter1 : - drop off your original driving license for validation check! - replacement document			
	letter2: - fee for administrative charge - allowance of your exams	37,50 €	fixed (maybe more for other reasons)	

send by TÜV	Kostenvorschuss/bill - service charge theory exam - service charge driving exam	22,49 € 91,75 €	fixed (even for the repeat examinations!)	
driving school	- conclusion of education contract	for school services: see our contract	fixed price per unit but variable total fee	
driving school	- appointment for theory exam			
TÜV (building)	- theory exam - participation confirmation with result			
driving school	- participation confirmation of your theory exam			
driving school	- driving coachings			
driving school	- appointments for driving exam			
driving school	- driving exam: short warm-up and accompaniment			
„Fahrerlaubnisbehörde“/LRA HD (office)	german driving license			

Summary of the process participants, their addresses, internet-links and tasks

Fahr-O.K.-Schule (driving school) Bahnhofstraße 43, 69168 Wiesloch

Christian Orschel (business owner) Phone: 0 62 22 - 40 23

http://fahrschuleok.de/redaxo4_7_3/index.php

- spends applications and contracts / - concludes education contracts
- your shop for different kinds of learning stuff: you can buy (only cash!) learning books, even in some foreign languages (arabic, english, turkish, russian and training apps)
- practical/ driving-education/coaching
- responsible for making electronic appointments for your theory and practical exam
- we will accompany you to your practical exam

„Fahrerlaubnisstelle“ (official name) or **„Führerscheinstelle“** (colloquial expression)

belongs to the **„Landratsamt Heidelberg“** (short form: „LRA HD“)

Adelsförsterpfad 113, 69168 Wiesloch

<https://www.rhein-neckar-kreis.de/,Lde/start/service/fuehrerscheine.html>

- spends application forms (only blanco)
- is responsible for all topics around “driving license”
- decides whether you need a translation of your driving license or not
- translates your license in some cases
- decides whether you are allowed to convert your foreign license into a German one
- decides whether you are allowed to make an appointment for your exams

ADAC Heidelberg Pleikartsförster Str. 116, 69124 Heidelberg

<https://www.adac.de/der-adac/regionalclubs/nordbaden/adressen-service/geschaeftsstellen-reisebueros/>

- offers a translation and classification of your driving license, but only in some languages

<https://www.adac.de/der-adac/regionalclubs/nordbaden/adressen-service/fuehrerscheinuebersetzungen/>

Translation office for all other languages

Important: with the suffix: “Publicly appointed and sworn certificate translator”!

You have to search for yourself. This address may help you (special knowledge data base with search function):

<http://suche.bdue.de/>

Citizen’s office/“Bürgerbüro“ that belongs to your **town office/Stadtverwaltung** (Wiesloch, for example)

Marktstraße 13, 69168 Wiesloch

<https://www.wiesloch.de/pb/,Lde/Home/Rathaus/Kontakt.html>

- receives your application together with all its attachments
- checks especially your personal details/your place of residence
- leads your application to the Landratsamt Heidelberg (Fahrerlaubnisbehörde)

TÜV (long form: „Technischer Überwachungsverein“, freely translated: „Association for technical reviews“)

Walldorfer Str. 3, 69168 Wiesloch, near the biggest REWE supermarket in Wiesloch and Toyota Oswald

<https://www.tuev-sued.de/tuev-sued->

[konzern/standorte/europa/deutschland/wiesloch?WOASlocationId=1340939012415143294188](https://www.tuev-sued.de/tuev-sued-konzern/standorte/europa/deutschland/wiesloch?WOASlocationId=1340939012415143294188)

- is responsible for the performance of your exams
- sends an invoice containing the costs of your exams
- finally decides, if you pass or fail your exam

Providers of first-aid-courses: http://fahrschuleok.de/redaxo4_7_3/index.php?article_id=22

Disclaimer

This is not an official document and therefore without guarantee and under exclusion of liability!
Therefore it is still your responsibility to follow the instructions of the state authorities.

This paper rather was produced voluntarily by our driving school in order to guide you through the jungle of german bureaucracy. It will give some insight into the complexity of the conversion of your driving license, but does not claim to be 100% complete or up to date in all cases although it is our sincere effort. It is based on our current level of knowledge in all conscience.

Therefore we are hopeful that it gives you an overview, saves a little bit of your expensive time and keeps the procedure more stressless for all persons involved in the process. No more - no less!

If you become aware of something wrong or missing, please give us feedback. Thank you very much!

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