




Bundesamt
für Migration
und Flüchtlinge

Concept for a Nationwide Integration Course

Revised new edition

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Concept for a Nationwide Integration Course

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Introductory remark

The new Immigration Act went into effect on 1 January 2005. As result of this act, state-run integration services for immigrants will be regulated by law for the first time. The core of the state-run integration measures and efforts is made up of the integration courses, which consist of a language course to teach adequate language skills as well as an orientation course that teaches about the legal system, history and culture of Germany.

The objective of the integration course is to promote the integration of immigrants with regard to social participation and equal opportunities. Furthermore, examining the culture, history, political values of the constitution, the legal system and the political institutions of the democratic constitutional state helps to promote a positive association with the new environment.

Good German language skills and knowledge of the legal and social system are essential tools for achieving equal participation and equal opportunities. Good language skills increase one's chances for integrating into the labour market and are the foundation for a successful educational career. The integration course thus aims to teach adequate language skills at the B1 level – the first level of independent language use – as described in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The teaching of language in the integration course in a way that relates to everyday life thus forms a good foundation for integration into the workforce.

Knowledge of the basic values of society as well as knowledge of the legal system, history, culture and the political institutions in Germany makes it easier for immigrants to acclimate to the new society and creates opportunities for identification. The integration course thus also makes an important contribution to social and cultural integration.

The integration course is geared towards the prior circumstances and existing knowledge of immigrants who are no longer of compulsory school age. It thus uses

the same methods that are generally used when teaching German as a second language in adult education. If particular didactic methods are required and/or the required level of support is greater than normal, integration courses may be set up for particular target groups (youth integration courses, parent and women's integration courses, integration courses that include literacy skills, remedial courses). For immigrants who learn particularly quickly, intensive integration courses may be offered.

A framework curriculum for the integration courses has been developed by the Goethe Institute with the academic support of Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich (LMU) and Friedrich Schiller University in Jena (FSU) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI). This framework serves as an orientation guide for institutions and course planners. It also helps to develop teaching and learning materials as well as tests, e.g. "Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer" ("German Test for Immigrants"), and is part of the quality assurance and development measures.

Revision of the concept

In 2006, on behalf of the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI), the integration courses were comprehensively evaluated by Rambøll Management. The final report issued in January 2007 emphasised that the integration courses carried out since 01/01/2005 "demonstrate a significant qualitative improvement in German integration policy" and "deficits and shortfalls in promoting language acquisition for immigrants have been removed". Nonetheless, the company presented a number of recommendations for improvement and further development.

Together with the recommendations issued by the work group "Integrationskurse verbessern" ("Improving integration courses") within the scope of the National Integration Plan (NIP) of 12/07/2007 and the changes to the German Residence Act (AufenthG) resulting from the Guidelines Implementation Act of 28/08/2007, these form the basis for the new Ordinance on Integration Courses (IntV) of 05/12/2007, which in turn forms the basis for the revision of the most recent "Konzept für einen bundesweiten Integrationskurs" ("Concept for a Nationwide Integration Course"). The Federal Office hereby submits this revised concept.

The Federal Office will draw up separate concepts for the youth integration courses, the parent and women's integration courses, the integration courses including literacy skills, the remedial courses as well as the intensive courses.



Integration course

1. Scope of the course

Per participant, the integration course consists of no more than 645 teaching units (TUs) lasting 45 minutes each and forms an entity consisting of the following components:

- Language course with 600 TUs (teaching units)
- Orientation course with 45 TUs (teaching units)

The language course consists of the basic language course with 300 TUs and the intermediate language course, also with 300 TUs. Basic and intermediate language courses consist of three course modules with 100 TUs each.

As a rule, participants without prior language skills attend the entire course starting from the first module, taking advantage of all 600 TUs. Participants with prior language skills, who are placed in a higher level language course as a result of the assessment test, may – if they do not achieve the learning target “ausreichende Sprachkenntnisse” (“sufficient language skills”) (Bl, cf. § 3 Para. 2 IntV) more quickly – take advantage of all 600 teaching units. Examinations taken prior to the completion of the full funding allotment of 600 TUs are taken at the participant’s own risk. Once the maximum funding period is over, individual modules may be retaken or the course may be continued at the participant’s own expense.

In individual cases, the number of funded TUs may be reduced. This may be the case if the participant

- enters a higher level course module (at the beginning of the course)
- takes part in an intensive course
- skips a course module upon approval of the course provider

Retaking 300 TUs of language instruction

Eligible participants who have participated in the language course and taken the final “Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer” (“German Test for Immigrants”) in accordance with the requirements, may apply for an additional 300 TUs of language instruction if they have not achieved the B1 language level.

The orientation course consists of 45 TUs for all participants

2. Participants

Participants in the language course are immigrants without sufficient language skills, i.e. language skills that are below language level B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Participants in the orientation course are persons who have completed the language course or immigrants with sufficient language skills.

The participants greatly differ with regard to their individual learning circumstances and prior knowledge of the German language.

On the one hand, participants differ with regard to their individual learning circumstances, which are determined by:

- their previously achieved level of education and any prior educational experience
- their motivation
- their age
- their country of origin
- the degree to which they have mastered their native language
- their learning traditions
- their knowledge and skills in their native language and other foreign language
- their socio-cultural background
- their gender
- their immigration experiences
- their reason for entering the country (such as subsequent immigration of dependent family members, escape, work)
- their living conditions (housing conditions, number of family members, particular strains – such as caring for family members)
- their access to the written word and written cultural resources
- the role they occupy in the new society
- the availability of an existing infrastructure in Germany (other family members, their own ethnic/religious community or established religious or cultural institutions)

On the other hand, participants differ with regard to their prior knowledge of German:

- Immigrants without prior German language skills.
- Immigrants with German language skills of varying degrees.
- Immigrants with German language skills that are at a level that cannot be further improved through participation in an integration course (B1 level and above).

Modular course system according to language proficiency

Participants are placed in the appropriate course and the appropriate course module using the standardised assessment procedure “Einstufungssystem für die Integrationskurse in Deutschland” (“Assessment System for Integration Courses in Germany”), which was developed by the Goethe Institute.

Depending on the immigrant’s existing language skills at the time of the assessment, he/she is assigned to a particular course module: either the basic language course or the intermediate language course.

In addition to providing the right assessment for each participant, the modular course system is also very flexible and transparent: on the one hand, participants are able to easily change courses from part-time to full-time and vice versa (for instance when starting a job) or – in the case of a move or course interruption – move from one course provider to another. On the other hand, the course structure creates transparency with regard to the learning process to be completed, which is monitored and funded by the Federal Office for each participant and TUs.

Special target groups

Courses for special target groups may be set up if there is a sufficient number of people to attend the course. In particular, this concerns courses for parents and women, courses for young people and young adults (immigrants who are no longer of compulsory school age, are not currently in an apprenticeship training programme and who are under 27 years of age) and courses for immigrants who have lived in Germany for some time and require special language training. Special language courses that include literacy skills are also available if required.

Separate course concepts will be drawn up for target group specific integration courses.

3. Objectives

The language course serves to teach German language skills in accordance with the legally stipulated integration objectives. Via the basic and advanced courses, the language course leads to level B1, which is described as the first step of independent language use by the CEFR.

The orientation course teaches immigrants about the legal system, the culture and history of Germany, in particular also the values of the democratic political system of the Federal Republic of Germany as well as the principles of the constitutional state, equal rights, tolerance and freedom of religion. This is designed to help participants acclimate themselves in society and promote a positive attitude towards their new living environment.

4. Contents

The integration course consists of a 600-hour language course, which, via levels A1 and A2, eventually leads to level B1 in accordance with the CEFR. The objective of the course is to teach immigrants about the language and “the circumstances in Germany such that they are able, without the help or mediation of third parties, to deal with all day-to-day matters independently” (§ 43 Para. 2 Clause 3 AufenthG).

The focus of the language course is thus on day-to-day orientation and the teaching of everyday knowledge. The integration course also includes a 45-hour orientation course that teaches about the legal system, culture and history of Germany. The language course should also prepare participants for these topics.

5. Methods

The methods are based on the principles of adult education. They are characterised by

- the use of forms of teaching and learning that are suitable for adults and allow participants to participate in the educational process
- partnership-like interaction between all those involved in the course
- participant orientation, which ensures that the needs of learners determine the educational process and that the content is geared towards their circumstances, thus ensuring that the courses are relevant and make sense in the context of the participants' lives
- the participants' taking personal responsibility for their learning process
- a teaching method enables individual learning and takes individual strategies of acquiring knowledge into consideration

Participant orientation means focussing on the wishes, interests and needs of the participants in the educational process. Participants are involved in course planning and in choosing topics, methods and media. They are involved in shaping the learning experience.

According to the principle of practical relevance, information is retained better if it is relevant to the participants' circumstances and if what has been learned can be applied to their everyday lives.

The principle of personal responsibility implies the participants' willingness to actively get involved in shaping the group-oriented and individual learning processes as well as a commitment to making appropriate efforts to achieve competence in the German language.

According to the teaching methods used in the integration courses, there is no one methodological way that fits every learner and every learning situation, rather the teacher is the organiser of a process that facilitates learning according to each participant's individual abilities and prior knowledge and circumstances. The teacher must thus be able to promote and organise such learning – individually as well as within a group.

Teaching material

The language course uses key textbooks and materials approved by the Federal Office. Supplementary teaching materials that support the learning process may also be used.

6. Assessment test

Before the beginning of the course, all immigrants eligible to participate in the course will take part in an assessment process entitled "Einstufungssystem für die Integrationskurse in Deutschland" ("Assessment System for Integration Courses in Germany"). The process is intended to find the right course module for participants depending on their prior knowledge and skills as well as to determine the need for literacy training. The test also determines whether an integration course for special target groups is recommended in accordance with § 13 IntV.

If, according to the results of the assessment test, an eligible participant is assumed to have language skills that cannot be further improved by attending the course, that is, if the authorised participant is assumed to have language skills at least at the

B1 level, that person is initially no longer eligible to participate in the course. He or she is, however, authorised to take part in the final language test “Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer” (“German Test for Immigrants”). If the B1 language level is not achieved in the “Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer” examination, a suitable module of the integration course will be selected for the immigrant.

This does not affect one’s eligibility to participate in the orientation course.

Test Description: Assessment System for Integration Courses in Germany

The assessment process consists of three components:

- One component to determine verbal linguistic competence
- One component to determine written linguistic competence
- One component to determine the need for literacy training

The assessment process is divided into six individual steps:

1. Verbal component: interview (compulsory)
2. Verbal component: conversation (if required)
3. Verbal component: images (if required)
4. Written component/alternative: literacy component
5. Learning counselling
6. Course assignment

Steps 1 - 4 may be conducted in any order according to the suggestions in the “Handreichung für Einstufende” (“Handout for Assessors”), p. 6, which is enclosed with the test documents. Those responsible for the tests and teachers making the assessments should consult this handout, which forms the basis of the assessment procedure.

While the interview also serves to gather data on the participants as well as their prior knowledge and circumstances, the optional parts of the verbal component and the written component determine the immigrant’s German language skills in ascending order from poor to good.

The verbal component comprises levels A1 to B1 and consists of three tasks, only two of which will be implemented as needed. The written component comprises levels A1 to B1 consisting of ten contextualised tasks on vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension with a total of 65 items. The literacy part of the test contains an analysis and ten tasks. If necessary, this test will be used as an alternative to the written component if there is indication that the participant has insufficient written skills.

Learning counselling and course assignment make up the final part of the assessment procedure. Part of the learning counselling is to determine whether attending a target group-specific integration course should be recommended.

The evaluation of the individual test components follows the specifications in the “Handreichung für Einstufende” (“Handout for Assessors”). The course provider will document the overall result for each participant on a results sheet and archive it for the duration of one year.

7. Final test

A passed final test is proof of successful participation in an integration course. The test consist of two components: the scaled language test “Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer” (“German Test for Immigrants”) for levels A2 to B1 of the CEFR as well as an orientation course test, which is standard throughout the country and tests the areas of “Politics in a democracy”, “History and responsibility” and “People and society”. Until these tests are introduced, the transitional arrangements as specified in § 22 Para. 1 of the Ordinance on Integration Courses from 05/12/2007 apply.

Retaking the final test free of charge

A retake of the final language test “Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer” (“German Test for Immigrants”), once 300 TUs of language instruction have been retaken, is free of charge. A retake may be applied for if both the language course has been attended and the final test “Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer” (“German Test for Immigrants”) has also been taken in accordance with the rules, but the B1 language level was not achieved.

A. Basic language course

1. Scope of the course

The basic language course comprises 300 teaching units (TUs), consisting of three course modules with 100 TUs each. The first module for immigrants with no or very limited German language skills (100 TUs) is followed by two further modules of equal length, which will gradually lead to level A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

2. Participants

Participants in the basic language course are immigrants who have been assigned to course modules 1-3 after participating in the assessment process. An immigrant will attend the basic course if he or she achieved a test result of 30 points or below (indicates language skills below level A2).

3. Objectives

The objective of the basic language course is for participants to acquire skills and knowledge within 300 TUs, which the CEFR defines as level A2. According to the CEFR, the A2 language level describes elementary language use that includes the following basic skills:

- The participant can understand sentences and common expressions of everyday use (for example “your own person and family”, “shopping”, “work”, “immediate environment”).
- The participant can communicate about simple and routine situations, which concern the simple and direct exchange of information and are about familiar and everyday things (for example “directions”, “flat”, “café”, “current occupation”).
- The participant is able to use simple language to describe “his or her own origin” and “education” / “profession”, his or her direct environment and things that have to do with his/her immediate needs.

As part of these objectives, listening, reading, speaking and writing are developed and integrated in equal measure.

In accordance with these four categories, at the end of the basic language course the participant is able to do the following:

- in the “listening” category: the participant will be able to understand the most common words and the gist of short, clear and simple items of communication (that are of direct significance for him/her).
- in the “reading” category: the participant will be able to read and understand short, simple texts and personal letters and be able to find specific and predictable information in everyday texts.
- in the “speaking/interaction” category: the participant will be able to describe his/her immediate environment using a number of short sentences and simple language as well as be able to communicate in routine everyday situations and exchange information about familiar topics or have a brief contact conversation.
- in the “writing” category: the participant will be able to write short and simple notes and messages and simple personal letters.

The “will be able to” descriptions according to the CEFR are listed in greater detail in the Goethe Institute’s framework curriculum, pp. 116-122.

4. Contents

The basic language course lays the foundation for the growing linguistic independence of the participants. This allows immigrants to deal with everyday situations, thus shaping their immediate environment and providing initial orientation in everyday life. The necessary linguistic resources of

- vocabulary
- grammar
- topics/situations/speech action patterns

for the level of the basic language course (A1 and A2) are described in detail by the CEFR, in the “Rahmencurriculum für Integrationskurse – Deutsch als Zweitsprache” (“Framework Curriculum for Integration Courses – German as a Second Language”) developed by the Goethe Institute, as well as through the defined testing objectives and inventories in the handbook for the scaled language test “Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer” (“German Test for Immigrants”).

The focus of the framework curriculum is the immigrants’ ability to act using language. The contents were chosen based on a needs assessment (cf. Framework Curriculum, pp. 2-9). The framework curriculum describes five fields of action of overall

communication that reflect the basic needs of people in general and of people with a migration background in particular. The contents go through all topics that come up in many different contexts and have to be dealt with using language:

- Dealing with the migration situation
- Expressing feelings, attitudes and opinions
- Dealing with dissent and conflicts
- Making and maintaining social contacts
- Dealing with one's own language learning

The topics dealt with in the basic language course – to varying degrees of depth in levels A1 and A2 – correspond to the most important areas of everyday life:

- Offices and authorities
- Job and profession
- Training and further training
- Caring for and raising children
- Services/banks/insurance
- Shopping/trade/consumption
- Food and drink
- Leisure time
- Health and hygiene /the human body
- Media and media use
- Places/mobility and traffic
- Nature and the environment
- About oneself/social contacts
- Lessons
- Living

5. Methods

The main factors of second language acquisition: external factors

Motivation for second language acquisition is derived through:

- Social integration and integration at work
- Communicative needs and requirements
- Residence status
- Cultural disposition and education within the family (and in educational establishments)
- Attitude towards the target language and the German environment
- Attitude towards the first language (also: social status of the first language) and towards multilingualism
- Access to the second language
- Input of the second language (quality, quantity, affective surrounding circumstances etc.)
- Communicative opportunities (such as living environment, opportunities for encounters, media use)

The main factors of second language acquisition: internal factors

- Available knowledge about language/s
- Language proficiency in the first language (concept formation, written language acquisition etc.)
- Experience with language acquisition
- Language learning strategies

The methods must take into consideration the learning conditions of adults and the basic factors of second language acquisition. The choice of methods depends on learning goals and content and is also significantly shaped by the specific target group's prior circumstances and skills (socio-cultural factors, gender, age, attitude towards learning, prior knowledge, proficiency in the native language etc.). The decision is made by the teacher who thus assumes an important role in choosing the type of teaching method. The teacher's repertoire must include a wide range of work, social and exercise forms as well as the ability to employ these methods during the lessons in a goal-oriented manner.

Lessons should be activity-based (simulation, role-play), take into consideration the needs of the target group (equal treatment of all communicative skills, use of learning and teaching materials, both specifically developed to be used in lessons and

authentic ones) and be inter-cultural. The Federal Office will make arrangements for all teaching staff without a degree in German as a Foreign Language or German as a Second Language to acquire additional qualifications.

6. Interim tests

At the end of the basic language course and 300 TUs, the course provider must check the participants' language proficiency. This is done using a test to measure language level A2 in accordance with the CEFR. During the basic language course, a test may be given to test language level A1. For participants and the heads of the course, these tests show the achieved level of proficiency to date and serve to monitor the learning strategy and progress.

Unofficial tests developed by the Goethe Institute and by TELC GmbH, Start Deutsch 2 and Start Deutsch 1, may be used for levels A2 or A1 respectively. The Federal Office will make these tests available to course providers on CD-ROM. For target group-specific integration courses, these interim tests will be devised using the relevant target group-specific concepts.



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B. Intermediate language course

1. Scope of the course

The intermediate language course comprises 300 teaching units (TUs), consisting of three course modules with 100 TUs each, which are designed to lead to level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

2. Participants

Participants in the advanced course will either have taken part in the basic language course or are already at level A2 according to the CEFR and will thus be directly assigned to a specific course module in the advanced course.

3. Objectives

The objective of the intermediate language course – based on existing basic skills (A2 language level) – is for participants to acquire knowledge and skills within 300 TUs, which are defined by the CEFR as level B1. According to the CEFR, the B1 language level describes the first stage of independent language use that includes the following basic skills:

- The participant can understand the main points when clear, standard language is used and when it is about a familiar topic such as work, school, leisure time etc.
- The participant is able to cope with most everyday situations that he/she will encounter in German-speaking areas.
- The participant is able to talk about topics such as family and work and topics of personal interest to him/her in a simple and coherent manner.
- The participant is able to talk about experiences and events, describe goals and wishes and give brief reasons and explanations on plans and points of view.

As part of these objectives, listening, reading, speaking and writing are developed and integrated in equal measure.

In accordance with these four categories, at the end of the intermediate language course the participant is able to do the following:

- in the “listening” category: the participant will be able to understand the main points if the topic is familiar and standard language is used and understand the gist of radio and television programmes on current affairs and on topics from his/her job or area of interest if people speak slowly and clearly.
- in the “reading” category: the participant will understand texts that mainly use everyday, official and work-related language as well as private letters talking about events, feelings and wishes.
- in the “speaking/interacting” category: the participant will be able to describe experiences and events and talk about his/her hopes, dreams and goals in simple and coherent sentences and deal with everyday situations. He/she will also be able to cope with most every conversations and, without preparation, take part in conversations about familiar topics or those that interest him/her and everyday topics (such as family and work).
- in the “writing” category: the participant will be able to write simple and coherent texts about familiar topics or those that are of interest to him/her as well as write personal letters talking about his/her experiences and impressions.

The “will be able to” descriptions according to the CEFR are listed in greater detail in the Goethe Institute’s framework curriculum, pp. 116-122.

4. Contents

The advanced course is designed to further develop and strengthen immigrants’ independent language use.

The necessary resources, i.e.

- vocabulary
- grammar
- themes/situations/speech action patterns

for the level of the intermediate language course (B1) are described in detail by the CEFR, in the framework curriculum developed by the Goethe Institute and through the defined testing objectives and inventories in the scaled language test “Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer” (“German Test for Immigrants”).

The description of the five fields of action of general communication in the “Rahmencurriculum für Integrationskurse – Deutsch als Zweitsprache” (“Framework Curriculum for Integration Courses – German as a Second Language”) also applies to intermediate language courses:

- Dealing with the migration situation
- Expressing feelings, attitudes and opinions
- Dealing with dissent and conflicts
- Making and maintaining social contacts
- Dealing with one’s own language learning

The advanced course will again go over and expand on the topics of the basic language course:

- Offices and authorities
- Job and profession
- Training and further training
- Caring for and raising children
- Services/banks/insurance
- Shopping/trade/consumption
- Food and drink
- Leisure time
- Health and hygiene /the human body
- Media and media use
- Places/mobility and traffic
- Nature and the environment
- About oneself/social contacts
- Lessons
- Living

In addition, the advanced course will also cover the following three topics:

- Modern information technology
- Society/state/international organisations
- Relationship to other people, cultures and worldviews

5. Methods

The methods of the intermediate language course are the same as the methods for the basic language course. The intermediate language course helps participants learn the German language in project-based instruction under the guidance of the teacher. Project-based instruction may take the form of excursions, such as a visit to a library. Plenty of notice must be given to the regional coordinator in charge of project classes and excursions that take place outside the classroom. In order to apply the teaching material, the language course provider may include job-oriented internships outside of the course and the scheduled number of hours. Such a course in-termission must be agreed upon with the Federal Office before the course is planned.

6. Practice test

In order to suitably prepare participants for the final language test, a practice test is given towards the end of the intermediate language course. This allows participants to once again assess their own standard of proficiency; they will also become familiar with the test procedure and get the chance to practice solving the tasks. A sample test that is part of the real test is used for the practice test.



C. Orientation course

1. Scope of the course

The orientation course consists of 45 TUs.

2. Participants

Participants in the orientation course are immigrants who have completed the language course or who have sufficient German language skills without having attended the language course.

3. Objectives

Developing an understanding of the German political system

Immigrants bring with them certain experiences with the political system from their country of origin. Making them familiar with the German political system (federalism, social statehood, the party system) is an important objective of the orientation course. This also involves an understanding of the institutional environment of immigrants (immigration office, city council) and the development of competent judgement with regard to the political processes in the new country.

Developing a positive assessment of the German state

Teaching about the basic values of German society, the political system and the legal system in the Federal Republic of Germany is designed to promote a positive assessment of the German state by the immigrants and create opportunities for identification.

Teaching about the rights and obligations as a resident and citizen

An important prerequisite for integration is that immigrants know about their rights. At the same time, it has to be made clear that each resident or citizen has certain obligations towards the general public.

Developing skills that help with further orientation

The orientation course provides basic information on the above-mentioned topics. In addition, the ability to independently acquire knowledge is of great importance. The orientation course reveals opportunities to independently acquire knowledge once the integration course has been completed.

Enable immigrants to participate in community life

A precondition for successfully participating in community life is that immigrants get to know common behavioural patterns in Germany and their backgrounds as well as basic values and points of view, that they reflect on them and are able to deal with them. Opportunities for participation should be identified.

Acquiring intercultural competence

This skill is important for all residents. Intercultural competence makes life easier in new cultural contexts. At the same time, it helps to reflect on your own culture and to maintain your cultural identity.

4. Contents

The orientation course teaches everyday knowledge as well as about the legal system, history and culture in Germany. Special emphasis is placed on knowing about the values of the democratic political system of the Federal Republic of Germany and the principles of the constitutional state, equality, tolerance and freedom of religion. This is based on the “Curriculum für einen bundesweiten Orientierungskurs” (“Curriculum for a Nationwide Orientation Course”), which specifies learning objectives and contents and makes recommendations with regard to the number of hours to be taught.

The orientation course will deal with the following topics:

Module I: Politics in a democracy

- The structural principles of the German state
- Basic rights and civic obligations
- Constitutional bodies, parties and state symbols
- The social state
- Political participation

Module II: History and responsibility

- National Socialism and its consequences
- Important milestones in the history of Germany since 1945
- Life in a reunified Germany and in Europe

Module III: People and society

- Living together in a family and in other communities
- Upbringing and education in Germany
- Intercultural interactions
- Religious diversity

Depending on the interest of the participants, these topics may be dealt with in greater depth or other topics may be included.

5. Methods

Generally, the orientation course employs the methods of adult education that are also employed in the basic and intermediate language courses. The goals and contents of the orientation course, however, require additional methods that are described in the “Curriculum für einen bundesweiten Orientierungskurs” (“Curriculum for a Nationwide Orientation Course”).

The principle of participant orientation is of great importance in order to introduce participants to topics and facts that touch on their own personal convictions, norms and values. When introducing these topics, participants’ experiences must be taken into account and used as a foundation.

Although a large part of topics dealt with are highly abstract, they should be dealt with in a practical way using real-life examples (principle of practical relevance). By using various kinds of media (such as visual, audio, computer-assisted media) the lessons should be as lively and descriptive as possible, thus leaving a lasting impression.

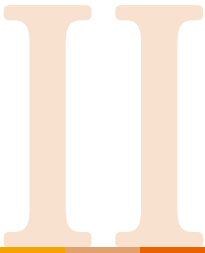
Many different work and social forms ensure that participants are partners in the learning process and are able to be actively involved in the learning process.

Teaching material

The orientation course uses textbooks and materials approved by the Federal Office. Supplementary teaching materials that support the learning process may be used.

Test

Part of the teaching of the orientation course is the preparation for the nationwide orientation course test.



Final test

1. Participants

As a rule, participants taking the final test are those who have completed the integration course. The language test “Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer” (“German Test for Immigrants”) may also be taken without prior attendance of the language course. The same applies to taking the orientation course test.

Taking the final test once is free of charge for all persons eligible to participate.

2. Objective of the test

By passing the test, participants show that they have achieved the learning objectives of the integration course. In accordance with the learning objectives of the language course, this signifies a B1 language level according to the CEFR. The objective of the scale (A2 to B1) is to document the actual language proficiency achieved with regard to receptive and productive language competence.

Furthermore, passing the orientation course test means that the participant has achieved its learning objectives.

3. Contents

The final test consist of two parts: the first part consists of a scaled language test on the levels A2 to B1 according to the CEFR, the “Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer”¹ (“German Test for Immigrants”). The second part consists of the nationwide standard orientation course test.

Test description: German Test for Immigrants

The final language test “German Test for Immigrants” consists of a written and a verbal section testing the actually achieved language proficiency of each participant in competence levels A2 and B1. It was specifically developed for immigrants based on the framework curriculum and is based on the communicative and action-oriented approach to learning and teaching, i.e. the test participants as linguistics actors deal with communication tasks in the four skill areas of reading, listening, writing and speaking.

Test description: nationwide orientation course test

The standard nationwide orientation course test is a multiple choice knowledge test. Participants must fill in a questionnaire with 25 tasks, which presuppose proficiency at language level A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Each question has four possible answers, only one of which is correct. Participants who have answered at least 13 questions correctly within 45 minutes have passed the test. All questions were scientifically developed by the Institute for Education Progress (Institut zur Qualitätsentwicklung im Bildungswesen – IQB) based on the curriculum for the orientation course and are based on the general topics of “Politics in a democracy”, “History and responsibility” and “People and society” with regard to their contents and weighting.

- 1 Until the new language exam is introduced in 2009, the competence level B1 „German Certificate“ will be used as the final language test for the integration course. If, as a result of his/her individual learning speed, the participant has not yet reached competence level B1 and, therefore, is unlikely to be able to successfully complete the „German Certificate“ language exam, they can complete the exam „Start German 2“, level A2, during the transition period. However, this would mean that participation in the final exam and, therefore, the integration test have not been completed successfully. The decision, as to whether exam A2 can be taken at the end of the integration course instead of exam B2, is made in agreement with the course provider.

4. Conducting the test

The final test is part of the integration course and is conducted by authorised providers.

Once a participant has passed the final test, the Federal Office will issue him/her a “Zertifikat Integrationskurs” (“Integration Course Certificate”) certifying successful participation in the course. This certificate may be produced as proof of sufficient German language skills to the immigration and naturalisation authorities and serve as proof for the immigration office that the immigrant knows about the German legal system and social order and the country’s general living conditions.

If participation in the course was not successful, a statement detailing the achieved results will be issued.





Retakes

1. Retaking language course modules

If language level B1 is not achieved in the final language test, an application may be submitted to the Federal Office to retake of up to 300 hours of language instruction. If an immigrant wishes to take advantage of this additional funding, he/she must have fully taken part in the language course in accordance with the regulations.

The retake option does not depend on the type of integration course taken and may be done in either a general or a specific integration course. It is also possible to retake the teaching units as part of a separate retake course. When choosing a retake course, it is crucial that the participant will be improving his/her language proficiency with the objective of achieving level B1.

2. Retaking the final language test

For participants who have been authorised by the Federal Office to retake the test, the retake is free of charge once the retake lessons have been successfully completed.

IV

Evaluation commission

An evaluation commission has been set up for the further development and quality assurance of the integration courses. The commission consists of experts from academics, administration and practice. The tasks of the evaluation commission are:

- the development of the integration course concepts
- the development of quality control processes
- the evaluation of learning and teaching materials
- the evaluation of concepts and syllabi
- the evaluation of tests

The members of the evaluation commission are appointed by the Federal Ministry of the Interior for the duration of three years.

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