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## Schwerbehindertenausweis — Application, GdB and Benefits

How to apply for a Schwerbehindertenausweis, what GdB means, and what benefits you receive.

**Deutsche Begriffe:** Schwerbehinderung | GdB | Schwerbehindertenausweis | Nachteilsausgleich | Gleichstellung | Versorgungsamt

### What does "schwerbehindert" mean?

In Germany, people are considered **schwerbehindert** if their **Grad der Behinderung (GdB)** is at least **50** (§ 2 SGB IX). The GdB is determined in increments of 10 from 20 to 100.

A **disability** exists when physical, mental or psychological functions **persist for longer than 6 months** deviating from the state typical for the person's age and restrict participation in social life.

### Who can apply?

Anyone living in Germany — **regardless of nationality**. Foreign nationals with residence permits, temporary suspension of deportation or provisional permission can also apply for a Schwerbehindertenausweis.

### Grad der Behinderung (GdB) — Examples

Condition/Disability	GdB (typical)
Diabetes (insulin-dependent, well-controlled)	40

Condition/Disability	GdB (typical)
Diabetes (difficult to control)	50-60
Depression (moderate)	30-40
Depression (severe)	50-70
Hearing impairment (bilateral, moderate)	40-50
Blindness (one eye)	30
Blindness (both eyes)	100
Heart disease (with reduced capacity)	30-80
Spinal damage (with functional restrictions)	20-60
Cancer (remission monitoring)	50-80
PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder)	30-50
HIV infection (asymptomatic)	10
HIV infection (with symptoms)	50-100

**Important:** With **multiple disabilities**, GdB values are **not simply added together**; instead, an **overall assessment** is made (total GdB).

## How do I apply for the certificate?

### Step 1 — Submit application

Submit your application to the **Versorgungsamt** (depending on the state, also called: Amt für soziale Angelegenheiten, Landesamt für Gesundheit):

- **Online** — possible in many states (e.g., ELSA online application)
- **In writing** — form available on the Versorgungsamt website
- **In person** — at the office or through advisory services

### Step 2 — Submit documents

- **Medical reports** — from all treating physicians
- **Hospital reports**
- **Rehabilitation reports**
- **Medication plan**
- **Psychological evaluations if applicable**

**Tip:** The more **documents** you submit, the faster and more accurate the processing. Otherwise, the office will obtain reports itself — this takes longer.

### Step 3 — Determination of GdB

- The Versorgungsamt reviews your documents (possibly its own assessment)
- **Processing time:** 1-6 months (depending on the state and workload)
- You receive a **decision notice** with the GdB

### Step 4 — Receive the certificate

Starting from GdB 50, you receive the **Schwerbehindertenausweis:**

- Credit card format, **free of charge**
- Valid for **5 years** (in some cases indefinitely)
- Contains the GdB and possibly **special designations**

## Special Designations — Additional Benefits

Designation	Meaning	Example
<b>G</b>	Gehbehindert (mobility impaired)	Restriction of movement ability in traffic
<b>aG</b>	Außergewöhnlich gehbehindert (severely mobility impaired)	Wheelchair user, can only move with external assistance
<b>B</b>	Begleitperson nötig (companion required)	Companion travels free on public transport
<b>H</b>	Hilflos (helpless)	Requires constant assistance in daily life
<b>Bl</b>	Blind (blind)	Blind or severely visually impaired
<b>Gl</b>	Gehörlos (deaf)	Deaf or profoundly hard of hearing
<b>RF</b>	Rundfunkgebührenbefreiung (broadcasting fee exemption)	Broadcast fee reduction
<b>TBl</b>	Taubblind (deaf-blind)	Deaf and blind simultaneously

## Nachteilsausgleiche — Your Benefits

## At the workplace

- **5 days additional leave** per year (for 5-day week)
- **Special dismissal protection** — requires consent from integration office
- **Exemption from overtime** — upon request, no obligation for extra hours
- **Preferred employment** in civil service (with equal qualifications)

## Taxes

GdB	Annual allowance
20	€384
30	€620
40	€860
50	€1,140
60	€1,440
70	€1,780
80	€2,120
90	€2,460
100	€2,840
BI, H	€7,400

## Mobility

- **Free/reduced public transport** — with designations G, aG, GI, BI (ticket worth €91/year or free with social welfare/citizen benefit)
- **Disabled parking space** — with designations aG or BI
- **Vehicle tax reduction** — 50% with G/GI, 100% with H/BI/aG

## Other benefits

- **Broadcast fee reduction** — with designation RF: €6.12/month instead of €18.36
- **Telephone social tariff** — reduced rates from some providers
- **Reduced admission** — to museums, swimming pools, events
- **Early retirement** — from GdB 50: pension **2 years earlier** (with reductions) or **5 years earlier** under grandfathering rules

## Gleichstellung (GdB 30–40)

With a GdB of **30 or 40**, you can request **equalization** if you cannot find suitable employment due to your disability or risk losing your job.

### **Benefits of equalization:**

- Special **dismissal protection** (as with GdB 50)
- Subsidies for the employer through the integration office
- **NOT:** additional leave, tax allowance, free public transport

Apply to the **Agentur für Arbeit**.

## Appeals and lawsuits

If the determined GdB is too low:

- 1. Appeal** — within **4 weeks** of receiving the decision
- 2. Lawsuit** before the **Social Court** — within 4 weeks after appeal decision
- 3. Free of charge** — proceedings before Social Court are **fee-free**
- 4. Advice:** VdK (social association), SoVD, disability advisory services

**Tip:** Get advice when filing an appeal — VdK and SoVD help members for free.

## Tips for foreigners

- 1. Know your rights** — you have a right regardless of nationality
- 2. Bring medical reports** — also from your home country (translation recommended)
- 3. Use advisory services** — migration counseling, Caritas, Diakonie help with applications
- 4. No negative impact on residence status** — a Schwerbehindertenausweis has **no negative impact** on your residence status
- 5. Use the tax benefit** — claim the allowance in your tax return