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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
G	Gehbehindert (mobility impaired)	Restriction of movement ability in traffic
aG	Außergewöhnlich gehbehindert (severely mobility impaired)	Wheelchair user, can only move with external assistance
B	Begleitperson nötig (companion required)	Companion travels free on public transport
H	Hilflos (helpless)	Requires constant assistance in daily life
Bl	Blind (blind)	Blind or severely visually impaired
Gl	Gehörlos (deaf)	Deaf or profoundly hard of hearing
RF	Rundfunkgebührenbefreiung (broadcasting fee exemption)	Broadcast fee reduction
TBl	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
Bl, H	€7,400

Mobility

• **Free/reduced public transport** — with designations G, aG, Gl, Bl (ticket worth €91/year or free with social welfare/citizen benefit)

• **Disabled parking space** — with designations aG or Bl

• **Vehicle tax reduction** — 50% with G/Gl, 100% with H/Bl/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