Qualification for a professorship

The legal prerequisites for professors are regulated by the states' laws of higher education (Hochschulgesetze der Länder). You can find these laws here. The Framework Act for Higher Education (Hochschulrahmengesetz) can offer you a basic orientation. Concrete requirements are listed in each job posting for a professorship. For a university professor, typically a minimum of a "habilitation or work experience equivalent to a habilitation" is listed as a qualification for employment.

University professorships

For Information regarding the W1 professorship (Junior Professorship, Tenure Track Professor W1, Qualification professorship W1), please see here.

In order to become a university professor, "additional scholarly achievements" (in addition to a PhD) must typically be demonstrated. In Germany, this is traditionally shown via a habilitation. Due to internationalisation, as an alternative to a habilitation, "work experience equivalent to a habilitation" is typically also acceptable. Another possibility to demonstrate "additional scholarly achievements" may be the so called Junior Professorship. In job advertisements, both possibilities are usually mentioned.

"Work experience equivalent to a Habilitation" includes additional academic publications written after the PhD has been finished. This means publications that could meet the Habilitationsordnung. Criteria regarding the adequacy of a habilitation are somewhat flexible. Each hiring committee is responsible for deciding whether your own work can be viewed as acceptable or equal to a habilitation.

Legally, it is possible to complete position prerequisites through a junior professorship or as the head of a junior research group, even without a habilitation or exam that proves that your performance is equivalent to that of an individual with a habilitation. In job advertisements for professorships though, usually either "habilitation or work experience equivalent to habilitation" is requested. In this case, commissions will check to see if junior professors and heads of junior research groups have a habilitation or work experience equivalent to a habilitation.

When deciding for or against a habilitation, you need to do more than decide whether you fulfil the formal prerequisites for a job, but also how you can lead the pack of applicants. The same is true when you apply for a junior professorship or head of a junior research group.

Depending on the culture in different subject areas, there are different customs. You can find out about these customs by asking researchers/from those in your subject. In addition, due to the states' laws of higher education (Hochschulgesetze der Länder) and at the local level, there are local customs. If you are a member of the German Association of University Professors and Lecturers (Deutscher Hochschulverband), you can receive additional consultation there.

General information about the path to a professorship is available through Academics (in German), the German Academic Exchange Service DAAD and the German Association of University Professors and Lecturers (in German).

Professorship (University of Applied Science)

In order to receive a professorship at a University of Applied Sciences, you must typically hold a PhD and have five years of work experience (a minimum of three years outside the institute of higher education) in the "use or development of academic knowledge and methods" ("Anwendung oder Entwicklung wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnisse und Methoden") (see HRG §44.1.4c and the Hochschulgesetze der Länder).