

A German administrative court has called on the country's Federal Constitutional Court to decide whether the *numerus clausus* entry restrictions for medicine at universities are unconstitutional.

Germany's health system is suffering from a lack of physicians for patient care, especially in rural areas. More doctors are being recruited from abroad. There are various reasons for the insufficient number of physicians available to the health system. While Germany has never had so many medical graduates before, many of them seek to pursue a career in industry, above all in the pharmaceuticals branch, or prefer to engage in research. Growing numbers of women graduates have resulted in an increase in the share of part-time work in the health sector. Also, doctors are having to cope with an ever-greater administrative work burden. Finally, many graduates look for better pay and better working conditions in other countries. So having more medical graduates does not necessarily benefit the patient.

Whereas places to study are rising slightly each year, they cannot keep pace with the growing number of applicants. More than 43,000 young people competed for a total of just 9,200 places to study medicine at universities this winter semester.

Applications are submitted to the *Stiftung für Hochschulzulassung*, an agency that cooperates with the Federal Employment Agency and is responsible for the allocation of study places in entry-restricted subjects.

The *numerus clausus* system is based on the average of marks in the *Abitur* certificate of higher secondary education, with 20% of study places allocated to those with at least an excellent average mark. A further 20% go to those who applied in the past and have waited long enough. Universities are free to decide to whom they give the remaining 60%.

A ruling by the Federal Constitutional Court would also affect other subjects with entry restrictions, such as pharmacy, dental medicine and veterinary medicine. However, it could take several months for the court to decide on the matter. (Fonte: M. Gardner, [universityworldnews.com](http://universityworldnews.com) 06-10-17)