



Applying for a job

From the application to the job interview – this is how you ideally prepare yourself for the application process in Germany.

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Your application

Did you find an exciting job advertisement? Then it is time to send in your application. In Germany, documents are usually sent in a **PDF file within an email**, or they are uploaded directly to the company's career website. Applying by post with a special **application folder** is rarely required.

Read the job advertisement carefully: there might be a sentence at the end about what kind of application is required and what documents must be submitted. These usually include a cover letter, a CV and additional references.

Cover letter/motivation letter

The cover letter gives the company a first impression of you. You should introduce yourself, explain why you are interested in the job and describe your own strengths. Use examples from your previous jobs. Try to express yourself convincingly and present yourself in a way that distinguishes you from others. What makes you stand out? Why are you the right person for this job? Moreover, write about why you want to work for this company in particular.

You can read about the formal requirements of a [cover letter](#)  on the Europass website.

Curriculum vitae

In the curriculum vitae (CV) you give an overview of your personal and professional career. The CV typically has the format of a table. In Germany, applicants are often expected to include a photo in their CV – however, there are major differences between professional industries in this regard.

The following categories belong in the CV:

- **Personal data:** name, address, contact details
- **Work experience:** which companies did you work for? What was your position there, and what tasks did you complete? This information should be listed antichronologically – most recent job first.
- **Education:** all information on school, vocational training, studies and [further training](#) is to be listed antichronologically. List the name of the schools and universities, your courses of study and your final grades, starting with the degree you acquired the most recently.
- **Language skills:** which languages do you speak, and how well do you speak them? Use the standards of the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#) (CEFR) as a guide, for example: “English: C1”.
- **Unique skills and interests:** do you happen to have any extraordinary computer skills or private interests that are important for your job? Have you been socially or politically active?



Tip

On the [Europass](#)  website, you will find helpful information on the formal design of your CV and cover letter, and you can create your CV online according to a standardised format in [German](#)  or in [English](#) . However, companies in Germany usually appreciate an individual design for your application; hence, you can use the Europass CV as a guide and then adjust it to your individual style.

Your official partner for job placements in Germany

Are you considering working in Germany? The Federal Employment Agency (BA) can support you with their free-of-charge comprehensive advisory services. The BA's international experts are at your side – from the beginning of your application, right up to when you start to work and live in Germany. Let us guide you through your opportunities on the German job market.

[Learn more](#)

Certificates

Finally, add the most essential certificates to the application documents. These may include certificates from vocational training as well as your school and university diplomas. [Here](#) you can find more on the topic of “Recognition of qualifications”. If you have any references or letters of recommendation from previous employers, attach these as well.



Please beware

It is best to have your certificates translated into German or English, so that the company is able to understand your achievements. Allow enough time for the translation process, so that you do not miss the deadlines.

Interview

Congratulations, you sparked the company's interest with your application, and they have invited you for an interview. The interview is a chance for you and the company to get to know each other. You will usually meet a manager from the department you would like to work in and one from the HR department.

They will most likely ask questions about your CV, your expectations for the job and the salary, as well as your skills and interests. They may also want to see how well you speak German or English or give you a practical task. Some might ask why you would like to work in Germany and what you expect from your life in Germany.

Preparation

To prepare for the interview, you should read up on the company beforehand, e.g. in which countries it is active or who their target group is. Make sure to prepare some answers about your skills, strengths and weaknesses. In addition, think about questions you could ask your interviewer to show your interest.

Aside from the content of the interview, a few standards are crucial: Be on time and switch off your smartphone. Dress appropriately, for example in a suit. However, since the dress code is slightly different in every industry, you should inform yourself well beforehand.

The Assessment Center

Companies often hold Assessment Centers for higher positions. This is a special kind of selection procedure that takes longer and is more elaborate than an interview. Several applicants complete certain tasks together: For example, you may be asked to take part in group discussions, role plays or presentations. In this way, the company wants to find out how you approach problems, deal with stressful situations and use your soft skills.

You do not live in Germany?

If you get an invitation for a face-to-face interview, clarify the question of travel costs. Explain to the company that you are travelling from abroad and ask whether you will have to pay for the tickets and hotel yourself or whether the company will cover the costs. You can also ask if you can alternatively conduct the interview on the phone or via a video conference platform. Keep the time difference in mind!

Non-EU citizens should also check which entry regulations apply to them if you are entering the country at short notice for an interview. The job search opportunity card gives you the opportunity to come to Germany for up to one year to look for work. Any costs incurred must be borne by you.

Information on the web

Federal Employment Agency

[Tips for the job interview](#)

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

[Checklist for your application documents](#)

Information on Europass

[The Europass CV for applicants](#)



Do you have any questions?

Let us advise you on your opportunities to work and live in Germany. Our experts will support you with questions regarding job search, visa, recognition and learning German.

You can find out more about the various contact options by clicking on one of the icons in the bar below.



E-Mail



Hotline

FAQ

FAQ