

# KICK-START YOUR CAREER

A JOB APPLICATION GUIDELINE





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# INTRODUCTION

You want to apply for a job or an internship in Germany but during your search for positions you notice that you don't really know how to put together a suitable application?

Our daily work at the Career Service gives us the necessary background knowledge to support you during your application process. This guide brings you closer to a job offer because it gives you a lot of essential information on the layout of your application, the content and talks you through some typical mistakes. We also provide you with helpful tips on job interviews, job fairs, German work culture and work permit regulations.

**Enjoy reading and good luck with your application!**

# 1. SEARCHING FOR JOBS

Finding the right job position is a challenge for many. How and where to search? It helps to take notes to visualize what you want your new job to be like. Otherwise, you don't even know what you are searching for. Take some time to reflect on your motivation, expectations and wishes. A lot of factors can be taken into account such as career opportunities, salary and proximity to your profession. Try to be as detailed as possible while writing down these things. Where can you be flexible and what things can't you go without? Start your job search process approximately six months before you finish your degree. Use opportunities like career fairs and networking events to get an overview of possible employers in your desired area. Searching for suitable job advertisements can take a lot of time. It's important that you don't lower your standards just because you don't immediately find a suitable employment

ad. Be patient and keep on searching – sooner or later you'll be able to find a position that makes you happy and that you feel comfortable with.

Nowadays, most students use online job search portals to search for suitable job ads. Filters help you to narrow down your search results. However, you can also search for positions on companies' websites directly - they usually have a career page. Most Career Services of universities also offer job boards, which is very well adapted to graduates and students. If you need information from peers, use the alumni network of your German university. Graduates of the same university are generally happy to provide information about their current jobs and employers. Sometimes you also find job ads in the newspaper or if you need extra help you can contact an employment agency.

## UNSOLICITED APPLICATION



If you want to apply for a job that isn't advertised, you can send an unsolicited application. Make sure you apply specifically for your desired position or department and tell the company what you want to do. A big advantage is that you have very few competitors. To write a good unsolicited application you need to create a possible job profile, which you are the perfect fit for. Check out [Berufenet.arbeitsagentur.de](https://berufenet.arbeitsagentur.de) for job descriptions made by the federal employment agency.

You want to convince with your personality, enthusiasm, commitment and interest in the company and the position. Even if the job isn't available, you could still be invited to an interview and offered another position - one that is also not advertised. Your chances of success depend heavily on the economic conditions. In certain regions, small and medium-sized enterprises often find it difficult to take unsolicited applications into account. In economically strong regions, companies mostly have more room and are usually more open to them. If you limited yourself to only focusing on job vacancies, this is your chance to expand the search.

## 2. UNDERSTANDING JOB ADS



If you've found the job you are looking for you should start your application process by analyzing and understanding the job ad.

It often appears that companies are looking for a superhero-like candidate - don't let that unsettle you. Firstly, you should read the job ad several times, slowly and attentively in order to get an impression whether the job suits you at all. The amount of effort the company has put into formulating the information in an under-

standable way already reveals a lot about the corporate culture. If there is a lack of important information in the job ad it could be an indicator that the company doesn't take the search very seriously and it can indicate the importance of the position itself.

Ideally, the job ad reflects essential information about the company, conditions, the position, requirements, tasks and benefits. Commonly, job ads are structured in the following way:



### **COMPANY PROFILE**

The company introduces itself briefly. You get an idea of their philosophy and services.



### **POSITION**

The title of the position gives you a vision of the role you will play in the company.



### **TASKS**

The description of what you would have to do. Filter these for the core tasks of the advertised position and use them as central points in your motivation or cover letter.



### **REQUIREMENTS**

This section lists the qualifications listed you need to have for the position, mostly academic qualifications and soft skills. There are must-have qualifications you need to fulfill for the position and additional qualifications the company would like you to have but are not strictly necessary. The requirements are usually ordered by priorities, which means that the top ones are the ones you should definitely bring along and the ones below are desirable but no need. Job ads are often particularly vague regarding the job requirements. Look for keywords which correspond with your portfolio.

Don't be put off if you can't meet every single requirement. It might still be worth applying but be aware that other applications might appear more suitable to the company.



### **BENEFITS**

It is always worth noticing the benefits a company offers you, such as further training, social benefits, bonuses and career prospects.



### **CONDITIONS**

In this section you can find information on salary, the date of entry and the place of deployment.



### **CONTACT**

Here you can find information to whom you should address the application to as well as the address and e-mail address of the company.

Is there information missing from the job ad and you found it on the website? Give them a call to verify?

## 2.1. EXAMPLE JOB AD

Green Energy is our passion and, in our eyes, the energy supply of the future. At Next Step, we work with conviction and commitment to set the standards for tomorrow. For this reason, we produce various components for facilities which generate green energy. You can find more information and other job offers on our website.

**For our location in Chemnitz we are looking for a Sales Manager (m/f/d) starting 01/10/2020**

### YOUR PROFILE:

- Completed master's degree with an economic or similar orientation
- Safe handling of standard computer programs such as Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint, as well as databases/CMS
- SEO knowledge for the creation of product descriptions
- Very good German and English language skills in speech and writing
- Team player with a positive attitude, fast comprehension and thorough and independent working methods

### YOUR TASKS:

- Operational and administrative support of worldwide sales activities
- Communicating with our international customers
- Maintenance of our customer data system
- Organisation and coordination of international meetings and business travel
- Preparation of offers and contracts

### WE OFFER:

- A modern, future-oriented and family-like working environment, a young company management where new ideas are welcome
- The possibility to accompany projects over different phases and to take over responsibility for your tasks from the beginning
- The opportunity for further education
- An attractive salary and flexible working hours

Have we sparked your interest?

Then we look forward to receiving your expressive application via e-mail (PDF max. 3MB) to:

**Next Step GmbH.**

Your contact person:

**Dr. A. Schmidt**

**personal@nextstep.de**



## 2.2. WHAT ELSE TO KNOW ABOUT JOB ADS



Not every job ad is reliable. Companies sometimes advertise jobs even though they are not looking for new employees. These ads are called “phantom-” or “fake job advertisements”. There are various reasons for this: Some employers are obliged to advertise all positions publicly, even if the right candidate has already been found. As a marketing instrument, false job advertisements on the one hand help to promote the company; on the other hand, employers also recognize how attractive the offer is and whether their external presentation should be improved. They are also used to signal economic strength to potential competitors or investors.

If important information such as a precise job description, contact details or requirements are not listed, the job advertisement is usually dubious and you should continue searching.

A very detailed advertisement, however, can be an indication that the candidate for the position has already been found company-internally. Most of the time, the requirements are directly tailored to their CV.

If you become aware of recurring adverts, this can be a sign for that it is fake or that the company has a high turnover of staff.

**No reply? Unfortunately, nowadays it is customary not to receive a response on whether the application was received or not. Therefore, you can't draw any conclusions about the authenticity of the ad just from that.**

# 3. THE CLASSICAL STRUCTURE OF AN APPLICATION

This chapter will guide you on how to write a standard German application by giving you key pointers on form and content. Both of these factors should be in sync in order to convince the potential employer with your application.

## THE RECOMMENDED ORDER OF YOUR APPLICATION IS THE FOLLOWING:



1. COVER PAGE
2. COVER LETTER OR LETTER OF MOTIVATION
3. CURRICULUM VITAE
4. ATTACHMENTS

## 3.1. COVER PAGE

A cover page serves as a nice introduction to your application but it's optional. We recommend you to use it if:

- You have an appealing application photo in wide or portrait format
- The application will be sent bundled in a PDF file via e-mail or mail

We think a cover sheet is unnecessary if:

- You apply via an online application portal that asks you to upload your documents separately and the photo is mostly required in passport form.
- Your photo is not suitable for a cover sheet (not up-to-date, wrong format, it doesn't present yourself professionally, the photo does not look like you)

## APPLICATION PHOTO



An application photo is not a mandatory part of the application. However, we know from years of experience that employers value a photo of their applicants. For them, it is important to get a first visual impression, because university graduates often work closely with business partners and customers. A professional application photo conveys a good first impression – it presents you in a pleasant and competent way. It is also important that you look as authentic as possible and do not pretend. Furthermore – you should look authentic, dress appropriately – a shirt or blouse in a neutral color should do the trick – and smile.

### What else needs to be on there?

In addition to the photo, the cover sheet also includes a headline (application), the desired position and your contact details (name, address, phone number, e-mail address).

#### **ADVANTAGES:**

- You stand out – with an originally designed cover page you can make the employer curious and stay in good memory
- Ensures clarity – the recipient immediately sees who is applying for which position

#### **DISADVANTAGES:**

- The photo is very prominent – stereotypes or antipathies could arise, which may reduce your chances to get the job

# EXAMPLE COVER LETTER

**John Sample**

Samplestreet 00 · 00000 Samplepolis · Phone: 0000 - 00 00 000 · Email: John.Sample@dmail.com

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Company / Institution  
(Title) name  
Street name and number / P.O. Box  
Zip code and place

Place, DD.MM.YYYY

**Application for (position according to the job ad), reference number (if available)**

Dear Mrs./Mr. ...,  
(Dear Sir or Madam,)

1. **Introduction / Motivation:** Why do you want to work for that employer? What can be your contribution?
2. **Give reasons for your suitability:**

**Educational background** – topical focus, student research projects, present specific content of lectures and seminars

**Work experience** – priorities during internships, jobs, voluntary work

**Soft skills** – shortlist, state and document your competences (give specific examples)

3. **Framework conditions** – From ... on I will be available for ...  
Closing: I am looking forward to meeting you in person/being invited for an interview.

Sincerely,

Name/signature

\*In general:

- Name the employer within your text (instead of “your company” or similar – that feels like “copy and paste”)
- Make sure your statements correlate with the job advertisement
- Enclosures: latest transcription | last qualifying testimonial for a profession | employment reference | certificates

## 3.2. COVER LETTER OR LETTER OF MOTIVATION

In contrast to the CV, which mainly contains facts, the cover letter is more about creating an individual overview of your skills and qualifications, as well as your motivation. Don't just copy and paste examples of cover letters you find on the internet. An authentic and well-formulated application letter can make you stand out from the crowd and increase your chance of being invited to a job interview.

### Structure:

The letterhead contains your contact data (left side or header) - your name, address, e-mail address and phone number. Under your contact details write those of the recipient (left side). The recipient's address is structured as follows:

1. Full company name
2. First and last name of the contact person (if available) and the department
3. Address - street, street number, postal code, city

The date is also set in the letterhead (right side). Select the date on which you'd like to submit the application. You can use 01.10.2020 or write the month in full.

Now the reference line follows. It's important to keep it short and meaningful. Write down the position you're applying for, using the title of the job advertisement and possible reference numbers.

We recommend finding out the exact contact person for the salutation. This is more professional and shows that you've informed yourself about the company. If you can't find the contact person anywhere, use "Dear Sir or Madam" as a formal salutation.

The introduction is about catching the readers interest, otherwise the letter might not be read further. Don't use standard phrases like: "With this application I apply for ..." or "With great interest have I read your job advertisement..." If you have problems with formulating such phrases ask yourself: Why do you want to work

for this employer? What are your strengths? Why are you suitable for the job? It is particularly convincing if you establish a connection to the employer or the position.

In the main part, only mention your professional skills, qualifications and soft skills that are relevant for the position. You should describe activities which imply certain skills. For example, that you led a project with a team of five during an internship. In this way, you combine knowledge with your experiences.

In the last paragraph, mention your possible date of entry and, in the case of an internship, your availability. To finish the cover letter don't forget an appropriate sign-off and your name/ signature.



### GENERAL TIPS:



- Your cover letter should not be longer than an A4 page
- In terms of design, it should be similar to the other documents in your application
- The past tense is usually the easiest to read
- Argue briefly and concretely
- Avoid multi-clause sentences
- Use the name of the employer in your letter a few times, otherwise it can look like copy and paste
- Check your spelling and also the spelling of your address and the company's address and contact name. Any mistakes in these rather personal information can seriously harm your chances.

## LETTER OF MOTIVATION

In comparison to a cover letter, the letter of motivation is usually more personal and profound in content. As the name suggests, it's about your motivation for the job. Many find it difficult to write a letter of motivation. In order to collect some ideas, you should ask yourself: why are you applying exactly for this position with this employer? For what reasons are you the right candidate for the position?

You should build a clear connection to the company. Make sure that the motivation you name suits the employer. The company's homepage will help you with this. For example, you can refer to the company size, development opportunities and products. Maybe you've already been in contact with the company at a trade fair; put it here.

There are no fixed guidelines for the letter of motivation. Nevertheless, you should write your contact details and the date in the letterhead. In addition, addressing the recruiter directly is important, as well as a suitable headline. The first sentence should, as with a cover letter, make the reader curious about you.

The main part then includes your motivation, strengths and competencies. Be careful not to fall back on often used phrases, but to formulate your points clearly and creatively.

As mentioned above, you should link examples of your experience to your skills and not just list them. Remember to be authentic.

The letter of motivation is not there to soft-soap the employer, but to prove your suitability with arguments and to clarify your motivation, even though an application is very self-centred.

In the final part, you can thank the recruiter for taking the time to view your documents and emphasize that you are looking forward to an invitation to an interview. Don't forget the greeting and your name/signature.





#### GENERAL TIPS:



- Formatting and design should be similar to your other documents
- Pay attention to spelling and punctuation
- Try to limit yourself to an A4 page, do not write more than two A4 pages
- Don't forget to set appropriate paragraphs for better readability and division into sections of meaning
- Have someone proof-read your letter

For more information, you can also check out the sources on websites.

## DIGRESSION: SALARY EXPECTATIONS

Your salary immensely depends on the location and size of the company but also on the position, your experience and field of work. If it is written in the job advertisement to state your salary expectation, you should definitely do so in your application. Otherwise the employer might think that you didn't read the job advertisement carefully enough. If you are not specifically asked to do so, you don't have to address the topic in your application. How do I decide on a realistic salary expectation? Don't let your dream salary guide you too much. It should depend primarily on how much you think you are worth. The following questions will help you to set a salary expectation:

- What is offered for comparable jobs/ positions? Search other job advertisements to compare the given salary.
- What do others in this position earn? Talk to friends and colleagues.
- What additional qualifications do you bring with you that increase your "value"?

You should always state the gross salary, either monthly, or even better, the annual salary. If you are unsure about the net pay, you can use an online gross-net-calculator to find out. Your salary expectation should be stated at the end of your letter of application. You can either specify a range like "between 20.000 and 25.000 Euro" or a fixed amount. With a range you signal greater willingness to negotiate. You should not set your expectations too high, otherwise the application could be rejected due to an unrealistic salary. However an understatement is also not recommended because the employer could doubt your professional experience and abilities. And remember, it's just a wish and only the basis for the salary negotiation. If you get invited for a job interview, you should be able to explain why you've chosen this amount.

For more information on salaries you can check out [glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com) or [gehaltsvergleich.com](https://www.gehaltsvergleich.com).





### 3.3. CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

Clearly structured, complete, convincing, individual – a professional CV is the heart of your application. With it, the recruiter can quickly and purposefully find out whether your experience and qualifications match the advertised position or not. It is the document that is usually read first and should therefore be more detailed and extensive than the cover letter.

Usually you have two pages for your CV but if you have had a lot of jobs and/or internships that are relevant to the position, then you can use three. However, if you exceed this number, you should create a short form of your CV and link a personalized website that contains the complete document.



#### BUT WHAT ACTUALLY BELONGS IN A GOOD CV?

The curriculum vitae consists of several parts: personal data, education, professional experience, skills, additional qualifications, commitment and memberships and personal interests. Using our template, we show you a way to build and design your CV. Our neutral-classical design can of course be customized according to your wishes. Just remember that the content should always have priority.

#### Header

In the header you can not only write down your contact details (full name, address, e-mail address, phone number), but it also frames your CV nicely and saves space elsewhere. You should make sure that you use a professional e-mail address that contains your first and last name and that your phone number is correct (preferably with area code). Still it is optional to use a header.

#### Personal data

If you do not want to use a header, then you should enter the above-mentioned data here. If you have already noted your contact details

in a header, this part is no longer absolutely necessary. Furthermore, you may write down your date of birth, place of birth, citizenship and civil status.

If you apply in Germany and you do not have the German citizenship, naming your nationality becomes an obligation. This information is also practical if you have the German citizenships, but your name sounds foreign.

P.S. There are companies in Germany that are not allowed to employ people with certain nationalities. For example, if it is a subsidiary of an American company and the applicant is from a nation for which a trade embargo exists. These things are usually not communicated openly and are not mentioned as a reason for a rejection.

You can leave out the civil status, especially if you're single or unmarried. If you are in a permanent relationship or married and have children who are in daycare during working hours, then you can include it, e.g. civil status: in a permanent relationship/married, 2 children (2 and 5 years old) in daycare.



The statement behind it often has a positive effect on your application because many companies are aware of their social responsibility and therefore want to support young families, while others assume that parents work in a structured and more efficient manner. In addition, you show that you are settled in a certain region and your kids are taken care of.

### **Application photo**

If you do not have a cover sheet, it is important that your application photo is included in the CV. It is best to insert it to the right of your personal data. If you do not have space there or have left this part out, then you will surely find another suitable place. If you have not already, you can find out more about the perfect photo under the topic “cover sheet” in this leaflet.

### **Education**

In this section you describe your scholastic and university career. We want to give you structural recommendations and tell you what information you should include in this section. At the beginning you should make sure that you list the individual stages in this and also in the following categories in reverse chronological order, i.e. the most up-to-date always comes first. This means, you need to start with all university related stages of your life before you list your school related information.

### **OUR APPROACH**

In our template (page 22), we always start by naming the institution or the company, for better clarity, preferably in bold. Pay attention to the correct and complete spelling. You usually can find this information on the website of the institution. Especially in regard to the university, you should not resort to abbreviations, even if you use them while speaking or texting. You should write “Technische Universität Chemnitz” and not “TUC” or “TU Chemnitz”. If the location is not part of the name, separate it with a comma and write it behind it. The comma and place should no longer be formatted in bold.

On the following line you write what you do or what you did there. For example, "Bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering", "Master's degree in economics" or "Apprenticeship as a digital media designer". You can add the focal points right underneath. You should definitely not forget this, because this is where the individual part begins.

In Germany there are around 19,000 courses of study, so you cannot assume that the employer knows exactly what you have done if you only mention the title of your studies. At different universities, although the course has the same name, you learn different things and have different focal points. Also, even if you and a fellow student apply for the same position, your priorities will be different. So always write them down to show what you have done, enjoyed and are good at.

Module, lecture and seminar descriptions can be a good starting point to formulate focal points. You should also think about the following questions: What topics do I enjoy and what am I good at? What things can I talk about well? (Important for the job interview) In which field would I like to work in the future?

Also try to use terms that relate to the job advertisement. Here you can draw on the requirements profile, where the field of study, professional knowledge and key competencies are listed. See if you can find key points there that you fulfil and thus can copy.

You should also note the topic of your thesis and the grade as well as the title of your degree including your final grade. In the attachments, the employer will be able to find more detailed information.

For your school visits, it is enough to name the school you last visited. This is usually the school where you did your A levels/high-school diploma. If you have already graduated from another school before achieving your A levels/high-school diploma, you should also write it down. If you have only just started your bachelor's degree, you should include your advanced courses (if you did any), especially if they fit your study course. You do not need to name your elementary school. You may exclude your scholarly experience when you're already studying in a Master's program or pursuing a PhD.



## Professional Experience

By stating your work experience, whether it is internships, part-time jobs or working as a student employee, you support your theoretical expertise. As before, you should list the stages in reverse chronological order. We follow our template and name the institution/company first – it makes sure that the layout is consistent and structured. Afterwards, you can decide whether you want to name the position (intern, student employee) or the type of employment (internship, part-time job). Once you have made up your mind, make sure you stick to it. In the next lines you should point out a few of the things you did while working there.

Which things are worth mentioning? In particular, you should mention the jobs/internships that can be associated with your studies. If you have had jobs/internships that have nothing to do with your studies, you have to consider whether you want to include them or not. If you have already done many other jobs/internships that are better suited to your field of study, you can leave them out. However, it can be useful to mention them as these are also often associated with positive skills. Let's take a simple example: you worked in a supermarket where you did all sort of things. The recruiter might read the following things into it:

You are independent and do not only rely on financial support from your parents. You are hardworking and are able to balance studies, work and leisure. You interact with a lot of customers and your co-workers on a daily basis, so you are able to solve problems, express yourself clearly and deal with stress well.

## Skills

Pointing out your skills and knowledge is really important in your CV. The layout and content of one's own knowledge and skills have undergone an extensive revolution in recent years. You should give an overview by including competencies in the field of foreign languages and IT/software. Besides, you should list the driving license if you have one. Here you will find some important clues on how to design this section and what to include.

At first you should name the skill and then the skill level. Whether you want to evaluate the skill level by using a graphic scale or if you want to use terms such as very good, good etc. is your decision. But if you do use terms like very good, good, basic knowledge etc. there can be misunderstandings because maybe the employer and you have different ideas about the scale. They might ask themselves: Is there anything better than very good? What is basic knowledge? On a graphic scale, on the other hand, it is easy to compare skill levels and the entire scope of the scale can be represented. Should you still prefer to use terms or even grades (A/B/1/2 etc.) we recommend defining a complete scale and then display it in a footer.

For foreign languages, you should indicate the level of competence of the European Framework of Reference (A1 – C2). Online you will be able to find sources to help you assess your level. If you have a certificate, then use the level specified on it, e.g. university certificates or the Oxford Test of English. We recommend naming all the languages where you have a rather high level of knowledge first and the ones where you just acquired a basic understanding below.

If you have an extensive and wide-range knowledge in the field of software you should sort these into certain subcategories e.g. image editing, video editing. Of course, Microsoft Office is very important. You can write down Word, Excel and PowerPoint together if you have a similar level of knowledge. If you are much better or weaker in one of the three programs, name them one by one. You should list other programs such as Microsoft Outlook or Adobe Illustrator individually – of course also with the respective level of knowledge. Depending on your degree, you can now also add hardware or technology as categories. In addition, here is the right place to include your driving license, because in many professions you have customer contact or business trips where you might need to use a car.

## Additional qualifications

Here can you name qualifications that do not fit into your skills and knowledge section but which you have acquired a certificate for (maybe you did an advanced training) and want to include. For listing these you should orientate yourself on the sections before and name the institution where you did it, the name of the certificate and what focal points it includes. For example, if you have obtained a first-aid certificate from the German Red Cross, then the focus might be on patching up wounds, heart pressure massage and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

## Commitment and Memberships

Commitment can be shown in many fields such as sports, politics, social affairs or environment and is welcomed by employers. Participating in a sports club, for example, shows that you're a good team player and keep yourself fit & healthy. So, you should mention your memberships and active participation in clubs, student initiatives and councils. Here, too, you should briefly explain what you're doing.

## Personal interests

Stating your interests gives the reader a personal impression in addition to your scholastic, university and professional career. Of course, if you don't want your employer to know what you do during leisure, just leave it out. Various activities arouse very different associations in the reader. That means you can't know what is good or what is bad in the eyes of the recruiter. If you have interests that match the job you should definitely include it. Your activities can also tell the employer if you're a good fit for the team and they're always looking for people who do something unique and are able to think outside the box.

Here is an example: Sports (climbing, swimming), Graphic design and running a web blog, Handicraft activities in- and outdoors.

Now that your CV is set up it's all about finding and correcting possible errors or inaccuracies.

### YOU SHOULD DOUBLE CHECK:



- Did you use the same font and font size everywhere?
- Is the layout consistent? Does the layout fit the field you are applying for?
- Is everything formatted in the same way? (e.g. bold headings etc.)
- Did you use the same hyphens everywhere? (it does not matter if they are short or long, but you need to decide on one kind)
- Do you have the same line spacing before and after headings?
- Is the distance between, e.g. skill and skill level the same and in line with the others (you can correct mistakes using tab stops)
- Did you use tab stops instead of consecutive spaces?
- Did you check that you do not have too many spaces between words?
- Did you check the spelling (upper and lower case etc.)? Is, e.g. your address and the address and name of the company written correctly?

# EXAMPLE CURRICULUM VITAE

**John Sample**

Samplestreet 00 · 00000 Samplepolis · Phone: 0000 - 00 00 000 · Email: John.Sample@dmail.com

## Curriculum Vitae

### Personal Information

Name  
Date and place of birth  
[Marital status]  
[Nationality]

### Educational Background

Since 10/2017

**Chemnitz University of Technology**  
Embedded Systems (M.Sc.)  
Focus on: XY  
Other topics:  
• ...  
• ...  
Research Project: [Topic XY]  
Master Thesis: [Topic XY]

10/2013 - 07/2016

**University of Science and Technology, Chennai, India**  
Electronics Engineering (B.Eng.)  
Focus on: XY  
Other topics:  
• ...  
• ...  
Bachelor Thesis: [Topic XY]  
Bachelor Degree (final grade)

09/2008 - 07/2013

**High School, Chennai, India**  
High School Diploma (≈ Abitur) (grade)

### Work Experience

Since 05/2018

**Chemnitz University of Technology**  
Research Assistant in the Department of Information and  
Communication Systems  
• Organisation of ...  
• Assisting in ...

08/2016 - 07/2017

**XY Software Solutions, Chennai, India**  
Freelance worker  
• ...  
• ...

12/2015 - 07/2016

**University of Science and Technology, Chennai, India**









**John Sample**

Samplestreet 00 · 00000 Samplepolis · Phone: 0000 - 00 00 000 · Email: John.Sample@dmail.com

Student Assistant in the Department of Electronics and Communication

- Assisted in preparing studying material for lectures on electronics
- Assisted in writing research reports
- Documented evaluations of seminars

**Skills**

Languages	English		(C1-Level)
	German		(B1-Level)
Software	Microsoft Office		
	Solid Works		
	Autodesk Inventor		
Programming	C++		
	Phyton		
	Java		
Driver's license	Fahrzeugklasse B		

**Additional Qualifications**

02/2018	<b>Chemnitz University of Technology, Career Service</b> Workshop Project Management
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- Basic tools and aids
- Introduction to project management

**Voluntary Work, Memberships and Awards**

10/2015	National Science Conference Award
05/2016	2 <sup>nd</sup> prize for presentation on [...] at IEEE Conference in India
Since 03/2018	Cricket club XY

- Active player and team captain

**Interests**

Photography, writing short stories

Place, Date

John Sample

## 2.4. ATTACHMENTS & SENDING OFF YOUR APPLICATION

The attachments are the written documentation of your qualifications and skills. Most of the time, these become really interesting when your CV has been convincing. The attachments can then be critical for deciding whether you are invited to an interview or not.

### **Graduation certificates/degree certificates:**

The graduation certificate/degree certificate is the most important source for evaluating your professional aptitude. If you have not yet received your degree certificate, then use the current grades overview. This is followed by your last professional qualification certificate. If you're enrolled in a Master's program, it's the Bachelor's degree. If you're studying in a Bachelor's program, it's your final school certificate. Otherwise, only enclose school certificates if required. If you've already completed a vocational training, add it as well.

### **Internship and job references:**

Practical experience is particularly important to employers. In an employment reference they will not only find statements about your achievements but information about your way of working and how you treat other people.

However, it should be noted that one finds only positive things in employment references and a lot of empty phrases are being used. It is therefore possible that your potential employer will pick up the phone to call your former workplaces to get some extra information.

### **Certificates and confirmations:**

Certificates as well as confirmations of additional qualifications, language or IT skills can complement your application in a meaningful way.

### **Work samples:**

They are recommended (sometimes required) if you apply for a position in the creative, journalistic or scientific field.







### TIPS FOR SELECTION AND COMPILATION:

- Choose your documents carefully, i. e. select clearly structured, neat documents with a visible reference to the position
- Arrange the attachments according to date of issue (new to old)
- Pay attention to good scan quality

## SENDING YOUR APPLICATION

Nowadays, almost all companies and institutions want to receive your documents by e-mail and no longer by post. Most of the time you will find this information in the job advertisement. In this section we give you some pointers on how to send your application by e-mail and by post.



### BY POST:

- pay attention to the order of the documents
- discreet clamping folder with transparent deck side
- don't punch papers
- do not use transparent films
- suitable envelope
- high paper quality (at least 100g/m<sup>2</sup>)
- high print quality – continuous design, easy-to-read font
- enclose copies instead of originals



### BY MAIL:

- put all document into one PDF
- pay attention to the order of the documents – cover sheet, cover letter, curriculum vitae, attachments (certificates etc.)
- the file should not be larger than 3MB
- pay attention to the file name – it best contains your full name and the word “application” or “documents” but not the company name; e.g. Application\_Max\_Mustermann
- do not use umlauts and special characters
- use the same subject as on the cover sheet/cover letter. If you don't have these documents, then choose a suitable subject
- write in the text field of the e-mail that your documents are in the attachment, do not forget salutations and sign-off
- use a reputable e-mail address that contains your full name



### ONLINE APPLICATION TOOL:

- pay attention to the spelling while filling out the form – especially your contact details
- the photo is mostly required separately in passport form
- pay attention to the file name – it best contains your full name and the word “cover letter” or “CV”
- upload the file as a PDF – make sure that it isn't too large
- only upload the documents which are asked for – it's usually the CV and a cover letter/letter of motivation

# 4. JOB INTERVIEW

When you're invited to an interview you've already overcome the most difficult part, your application documents have been promising and you're one step closer to your dream position! Now the recruiters of the company need to be convinced during the job interview. Many applicants are afraid of job interviews. With our tips we want to take your worries away because preparing for an interview really is no rocket science. If you're well prepared, nothing can go wrong. You know, most questions asked during an interview are not about right or wrong, but about getting to know your personality. But not only the company uses the conversation to discover things, you should do the same! It's your chance to find out more about the company's work culture, the position and possible benefits.

## PREPARATION

### Self Presentation:

There are several things you should prepare for an upcoming job interview. Firstly, your goal should be to positively distinguish yourself from your competitors during the conversation. Therefore, a good preparation of the self-presentation is essential because you won't forget to mention the most important facts, state them in a coherent way and be more confident during the interview. The self-presentation could include: a brief introduction of yourself, your education and qualifications, skills and an outlook on how you want to use all of this to add value to the company. While working on your self-presentation, you should recall the requirements for the position. Think about the things you want to tell them about yourself, which contribute positively to the job. Also note that you shouldn't repeat everything from your CV. After all, the HR manager already knows this part. Rather focus on points such as the specialization of your studies, job-relevant activities you've already performed during an internship or what additional qualifications you have. Only with examples can certain skills be proven, and employers nowadays pay great attention to a broad skillset which includes

willingness to learn, customer orientation, being able to work independently but also in a team and the ability to work under stress and deal with criticism.

You can practice the whole speech in front of your mirror or with other people but remember that it shouldn't sound rehearsed. If needed, you can take some notes into the interview. Furthermore, read over the documents you have sent to know what's in them! We advise to bring a copy to the interview and a pen and a notebook to write down important things.

### Company profile:

Another important aspect is to search for detailed information about the company. This will help you to ask questions during the conversation (which you can also already think about beforehand) and you will recognize things that the recruiter tells you. Additionally, don't forget to inform yourself where you need to be for the interview, it's crucial to be punctual! While agreeing upon a certain date make sure you have enough time before and afterwards.

### Clothing:

Choosing the right clothes is not always easy. At first, you should think about what the company might expect of you. It is best to choose something you would also wear while in contact with customers. Of course, you should always appear clean and neat for an interview. A button-up shirt or a blouse in combination with trousers or a longer skirt in neutral colours are well suited. Also, a suit or a costume is a possibility you can consider. Women should make sure that their heels aren't too high and choose decent make-up and jewellery. Men should be freshly shaved or pay attention to a well-groomed beard. Don't forget to iron your clothes beforehand.

## THE OUTLINE OF A JOB INTERVIEW:



Usually the course of the job interview has this or a similar structure:

- Arrival / Smalltalk
- Short self-presentation of the company and the position
- Your prepared self presentation
- Questions – in-depth questions from the recruiter to check your knowledge and skills + your questions about the company
- Information on the employment relationship
- Conclusion of the conversation and saying good-bye

We will examine the mentioned points a bit closer in the following sections. Whether we find someone pleasant or not is usually decided within the first seconds of the encounter. “The first impression counts” is therefore not just a phrase in this case. In order to make this positive first impression you should definitely be on time. Pay attention to an upright posture, regular eye contact, not crossing your arms, a smile and generally to meet your counterpart openly and in a friendly matter. When the interviewer offers you a handshake, return it briefly and firmly, keep eye contact, smile and introduce yourself clearly with your first and last name. Say thank you for the invitation and wait with taking a seat until the recruiter offers it.

Smalltalk is used as an icebreaker to take away your insecurities and to calm your nerves. Questions like: “Have you found your way here quickly?” or whether you have gained a first impression are common. After this the recruiter will start presenting the company.

During the introduction of the company, you will get an overview of their services, products and working culture. Listen carefully and write down facts and questions. You can also nod along to show that you did your research and already know a fair share of what they are talking about.

After that, it’s your turn to introduce yourself. You now have the opportunity to present yourself and your knowledge authentically and successfully. Recruiters quickly notice whether you’re trying to improve your resume or whether you are honest. At the end of your

self-presentation your counterpart will start asking questions. The HR department is particularly interested in your work attitude, the reason for your application, your strengths and weaknesses, what expectations you have of the job and where you see yourself in the future. The important thing is that you are honest while answering all these questions especially about your weaknesses. It’s best to connect them to a good resolution. Phrases like “I am too perfectionist.” don’t go very well. Try to speak about things that present you as enthusiastic about learning and show you as someone who has a wide range of interests. Volunteering activities are always welcome.

### P.S.:

In Germany, employers are not allowed to ask too personal questions. If they do it anyway, you can either invent an answer, answer correctly (if you feel that the questions are appropriate) or mention that you do not want to answer such personal questions.

Those questions can be related to:

- your family (civil status, job of relatives, planned pregnancy, etc.)
- your private life (possible debts, etc.)
- your personal views (religion, political party, etc.)
- your health (past diseases, disabilities, etc.)

Often those questions are used during small talk in order to get to know you better as a person. You can measure for yourself if you find the questions in this situation appropriate or not. If there is a serious reason to ask those questions, you have to say the truth. For example, if you applied for a position where you will do a lot of physical labour, the employer needs to know about your health condition.

“Do you have any questions?” In any case, your answer should be YES. On the one hand you receive inside information and on the other hand you signal that you are seriously interested in the job and the company. Examples: How long is the period of vocational adjustment? Do I have a permanent contact person? What further training opportunities do I have? You are almost at the end of the interview, now you will most likely talk about the conditions. The recruiter will tell you things about the contract, salary, the hiring date and other formalities. Here you can also ask when a decision is to be expected.

It's time to say good-bye. If offered, shake the recruiter's hand and thank them again for the interview and their time - this expresses appreciation.

Postprocessing: After the interview is over, it is time to reflect about how it went and what you can improve.

The reflection of the conversation helps you to know what things to do better next time and whether you liked the position and company at all. Here are some questions which might help with your reflection:

What went well and what did not go well? Can I imagine myself working there? Did I feel comfortable or would I have preferred to leave sooner? Which aspects should I prepare in more detail for the next job interview?

Now you have to wait for a response. We know that can be exhausting but do not press for a quick answer. If you haven't heard anything by said date, you can call them and kindly ask for further information.

Now, we hope that with our tips every job interview will go according to plan! If not don't forget: Even with a negative outcome, you shouldn't consider the interview as lost time, but as a practical experience!

## 5. GERMAN WORK CULTURE

Many people have a clear picture in mind when it comes to work culture in Germany. Despite many changes in the recent years there are still a lot of points which apply to the majority of individuals and companies:

- direct and matter-of-fact use of language
- personal responsibility (even if you just started a job)
- punctuality
- bureaucratic (there really is a form for everything)
- private life and work are kept separated
- goal-oriented thinking and working
- precise agendas and timetables to maximize an efficient workflow
- strictly observed hierarchies where the distinction between roles and departments is clearly defined

- constructive discussions with little to no emotional involvement
- you address someone with “Sie” or “Herr/ Frau x” and only use “Du” if being offered
- if you have questions or need help don't hesitate to ask - it shows that you're interested in your work, that you think critically about it and are willing to improve and learn
- problems are addressed early on to solve them quickly
- criticism has the aim to help you to improve your work and should be accepted
- to greet someone you usually shake hands and keep eye contact
- well-groomed appearance (dress code depending on the company)
- the standard working week has 40 hours

\*Cultural standards describe a nation on a generalized level so be careful even if the given characteristics apply to most people, there are still individuals who differ and work environments are under constant change.

# 6. THE BENEFITS OF KNOWING THE GERMAN LANGUAGE

If you don't speak German, we're afraid to tell you that around 95% of the job market is "off limits" for you, especially here in Saxony. You tell companies that you're highly motivated?

Prove it by showing that you've made the effort to learn German in addition to English because it's one of the most vital keys to start a successful career in Germany and quickly integrate yourself.



## HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS?

- ▼ You can't learn German overnight, so you need to divide it into categories. Create a study plan and practice on a regular basis
- ▼ It's a very good idea to learn new words (nouns) with the article and in their grammatical context from the very beginning to avoid confusion and inaccuracy
- ▼ Find a language tandem or form a group to practice with each other, learn German with fun and enjoyment
- ▼ Involve yourself in social activities at the campus
- ▼ Try switching the language of your phone (and/or computer) to German
- ▼ Watch your favorite shows or movies in German language, use subtitles
- ▼ Listen to German radio and learn from songs
- ▼ While waiting for public transports or while travelling, read and practice German via apps, notes, books or other mediums
- ▼ At supermarkets, playgrounds, student clubs, at any place, try to communicate in German – never be afraid or ashamed of mistakes – you will see that Germans appreciate the effort and will help you to improve your skills



## TOOLS

- ▼ **App: Duolingo**
- ▼ **DW - Deutsch Welle**  
(<https://www.dw.com/de/deutsch-lernen/s-2055>)
  - **Nicos Weg**
  - **Jojo sucht das Glück**
- ▼ **Youtube**
  - **Extra auf Deutsch**
  - **Learn German with Jenny**
  - **Learn German with Herr Antrim**
  - **Deutsch lernen A1-B2**
- ▼ **Online Link Collection**
  - **Online course at Goethe-Institut (free):**  
[www.goethe.de/de/spr/ueb/daa.html](http://www.goethe.de/de/spr/ueb/daa.html)
  - **Learn German at BBC learning (free):**  
[www.bbc.co.uk/languages/german/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/german/)
  - **Klett-Die Deutschprofis (free):**  
[www.klett-sprachen.de/die-deutschprofis/r-388/461#reiter=mediathek&dl\\_niveau\\_str=B1&dl\\_kategorie=undefined](http://www.klett-sprachen.de/die-deutschprofis/r-388/461#reiter=mediathek&dl_niveau_str=B1&dl_kategorie=undefined)
  - **Learning German (free online lessons):**  
<https://www.learning-german-online.org/>
  - **Forum Wirtschaftsdeutsch (different worksheets for free):** [www.wirtschaftsdeutsch.de/lehrrmaterialien/index.php](http://www.wirtschaftsdeutsch.de/lehrrmaterialien/index.php)
  - **Lingolia (free online platform):**  
<https://deutsch.lingolia.com/de/>
  - **Schubert (free online lessons):**  
[www.schubert-verlag.de/aufgaben/uebungen\\_a1/a1\\_uebungen\\_index.html](http://www.schubert-verlag.de/aufgaben/uebungen_a1/a1_uebungen_index.html)



## 7. APPLICATION CHECK LIST

- I checked my spelling twice.
- I'm giving a reputable email adress.
- I checked my formatting and made sure I used one font style and font size.
- My CV and cover letter mention the relevant skills for the job position.
- I mentioned the correct job position in the reference line and added the correct reference number.
- I attached my current grade report, last diplomas and certificates.
- I have all my documents saved in one PDF file which is not larger than 3 MB.
- I gave my file a professional name.

## 8. WORK PERMIT

You would like to stay in Germany and find a job after you successfully graduated university? Here we offer you a small overview of possibilities for settling in Germany.

### Non-EU Citizens

In order to search for a job corresponding to your qualifications, you can apply for a residence permit for 18 months after you've finished your studies at the responsible foreigners' registration office. During this period, you can work without any restrictions. For this, you need the following documents:

- Valid Passport
- Diploma
- Proof of health insurance
- Proof of the ability to earn a living e.g. account extracts

As soon as you've found a job that corresponds to your qualifications, you can choose whether you want to take up a residence permit for a qualified employment or apply for an "EU Blue Card"\*. The two residence permits are based on different conditions.

Find further information here: [make-it-in-germany.com](https://www.make-it-in-germany.com) or [sachsen.de](https://www.sachsen.de).

\*The "EU Blue Card" is a residence permit for academics from outside the EU who take up employment in an EU Member State. It requires a university degree and an employment contract with a minimum gross salary. Due to the constant change of some information, we could not display all the facts for example regarding the "EU Blue Card".

P.S. For citizens from the following countries special regulations apply: Australia, Israel, Japan, Canada, Republic of Korea, USA, New Zealand.

If you want to stay longer you have to prove that your livelihood is secure. The access to the German labour market is simplified for EU members. Find further information here: [make-it-in-germany.com](https://www.make-it-in-germany.com).

### **EU Citizens**

People who are citizens of an EU Member State (or Switzerland, Norway, Lichtenstein & Iceland) can enter Germany without a visa due to the freedom of movement and stay here for 3 months.



## **9. CAREER FAIR CHECK LIST**





## 1. BE INFORMED

You can get a good overview of the employers and their offers by checking our fair catalogue and list of exhibitors before your visit. This gives you the opportunity to be well informed about exhibitors of your interest in advance. Look up the main facts about your chosen exhibitors, such as the branch of trades, business services, locations and biggest successes of the company. Company representatives appreciate aspirants who are well prepared.



## 2. CONVINCING THEM

Know your strengths and weaknesses as well as your professional aims and expectations towards the company. Think thoroughly about what you can offer to the companies and consider which competencies and experience you have. Why should they choose you? If you can answer the questions: What have I learned so far? What do I like? What am I good at? You will be able to approach potential employers in a confident manner and convince them of your competencies.



## 3. CHECK YOUR APPLICATION DOCUMENTS IN ADVANCE

Sometimes it's helpful to have an updated CV ready to hand. Even though that most companies only accept online applications, you may get the chance to exchange your CV for a business card. Consequently, you can contact the employers personally and relate to the conversation you had.



## 4. DRESS APPROPRIATELY

The golden rule of job interviews applies for fairs as well: The first impression counts! This means that appropriate clothing and a neat appearance along with a self-confident manner will be noticed by the employers immediately. You may wonder what "appropriate" clothing is: it is relative to the company, the sector and your branch of study. You don't need to wear a suit but pick a business shirt instead of a T-shirt or a skirt rather than worn out blue jeans.



## 5. ORIENTATE YOURSELF ON SITE

Get an overview of the companies, their locations on site and get informed about the fairs program. Most career fairs offer workshops and lectures as well as assistance with your application documents or application photo shootings.



## 6. BE ACTIVE

Start introducing yourself to a company which is not a priority on your list – practice your self-confidence and you'll be well prepared for the following conversations. Approach the companies proactively, introduce yourself and appear interested by engaging in eye contact. Smiling leaves a good impression. If your German language skills allow it, try to have the conversation in German and show your effort to improve your language skills. Be polite, appear self-confident, but be yourself at any time.



## 7. BE OPEN FOR NEW THINGS

It may not be obvious from the first sight if the company offers a job opportunity, which suits your interests and competencies – have the courage to approach the company representatives anyway. There is nothing to lose. Introduce yourself briefly, present your interests and close the introduction with an open question: „How can I get involved within your company?“

Our career events offer you a great chance to get in touch with potential employers for your future career. Take advantage of this opportunity!



## 8. ASK INTERESTING QUESTIONS

If you're well prepared, you can leave a good impression by asking clever questions about the company and give good answers to questions they pose. If you're unsure about something, reflect it in the conversation. Show that you're aware of the situation and that you know how to handle it.



## 9. REMAIN IN GOOD MEMORY

When leaving the exhibition booth, say thank you for the conversation, take along brochures of the company and don't forget to swap details (this is the time when you could hand over your CV in exchange for a business card). If you're unsure, let the company representative decide if they want to shake your hand at the end (there are regional differences).



## 10. AFTER THE FAIR - WHAT TO DO NOW?

Reflect your performance: What was good, what can be improved in the future? Organize the collected information, notes and business cards – you may use the fair catalogue. If you handed in application documents, wait at least two weeks before you contact the employer by phone or email in order to check for the current status of your application. If you apply after the fair, it's recommended to relate to the conversation you had during the fair. If it didn't work well for you, don't worry – every conversation is helping you getting to know yourself better and being better prepared for the following conversations and interviews you will have. Don't let it get your hopes down, relax and try again.



## CAREER SERVICE CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact your career service. Also, check our website for sources, useful links and events for international students.



### TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT CHEMNITZ

Website: <https://tu-chemnitz.de/career-service>

E-Mail: [beratung@tu-chemnitz.de](mailto:beratung@tu-chemnitz.de)

Tel.: 0371 – 531 19930

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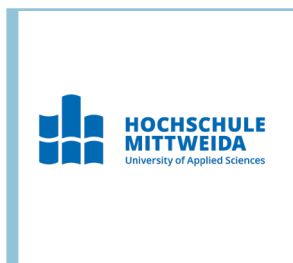
### TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT BERGAKADEMIE FREIBERG

Website: <https://tu-freiberg.de/en/career-center>

E-Mail: [kontakt@cc.tu-freiberg.de](mailto:kontakt@cc.tu-freiberg.de)

Tel.: 03731 – 393 303

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### HOCHSCHULE MITTWEIDA

Website: <https://www.hs-mittweida.de/en/webs/career.html>

E-Mail: [career@hs-mittweida.de](mailto:career@hs-mittweida.de)

Tel.: 03727 – 581 943

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### WESTSÄCHSISCHE HOCHSCHULE ZWICKAU

Website: <https://www.fh-zwickau.de/studium/studierende/berufseinstieg-gruendung/career-service/international-students/>

E-Mail: [careerservice@fh-zwickau.de](mailto:careerservice@fh-zwickau.de)

Tel.: 0375 – 536 1699

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Diese Maßnahme wird mitfinanziert mit Steuermitteln auf Grundlage des von den Abgeordneten des Sächsischen Landtags beschlossenen Haushalts.