

Walk-in consultations provided during the lecture period

Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 – 11:30
room D410 (Tue) and D411 (Thu)

Please contact us via email career.service@uni.kn to make an appointment for a longer individual consultation.

You are welcome to send us your materials in advance via email.



Contact

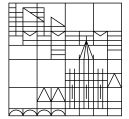
+49 7531 88-3756,

-4139, -4783

room D410 / D411

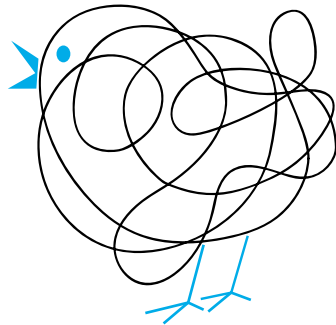
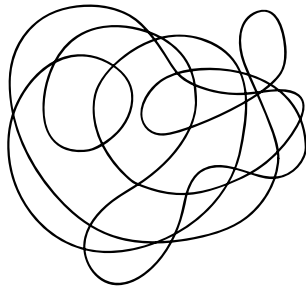
career.service@uni.kn

– *uni.kn/career-service*



Career Guide

Karrierewege?



Karrierewege!

Job Application and CV for jobs in Germany

Recommendations for international students

The team from the Career Service is delighted to support your plans to find an internship or a job in Germany. Please note the following pieces of advice/information:

Language competence

It is essential that you have some kind of German language competence. For a job the equivalent of a B1, for an internship basic knowledge are highly recommended. No matter how internationally oriented the company is, being able to talk to your colleagues is how your employer will judge how easily you will integrate and how deep your interest in adjusting to Germany is.

At the same time it is important for most jobs/internships that you have an excellent command of the English language – which includes very good pronunciation. Use your time here in Konstanz to work on the latter, if desired.

Language in the CV and cover letter

Unless specifically asked for or required in English, these should be in German. Make sure that you use all resources (correction websites, friends) to proofread them. It underlines that you are willing and able to adapt to the German language.

The German CV

There is no one right appearance but there is the mandate for clarity and conciseness. As odd as it may seem to you: it is still common to include a photo in your CV. In order to show respect for the employer and demonstrate the seriousness of your application it should be a professionally looking photo in business attire.

You are interested in discussing your application/CV/cover letter with us?
We are looking forward to seeing you in our offices.

The successful cover letter

The purpose of the cover letter is to convince the employer that you are the appropriate candidate for the job and are the perfect fit for the company. Your letter should include your most relevant skills, qualifications and practical experiences (adapted to the job you are applying for). The main aim is to help your future employer understand why you are the best person to meet the demands of the workplace. Your cover letter is also meant to reflect your personality. How well you formulate it and sell yourself determines whether you awaken the personnel officer's interest. If you were able to raise her/his curiosity, you will be invited to an interview.



How to write a cover letter

1. Look closely at the job advertisement

Extract the main points, tasks, skills and desired profile of the ideal candidate.

2. How suitable are you?

Which points in your CV match the requirements in the ad and should be mentioned?

→ The job advertisement is the employer's "wish list". Depending on the nature of the list you can detect the 'musts' and the 'can' requirements. Please note: if your features match the job by 60% to 80%, it is worthwhile to apply. Consider both the expertise obtained in your studies and internships as well as in leisure activities or volunteering.

3. Outlining your motivation for the position

WHY do you want to work for this company?

What makes it different from other companies in the same industry?

What attracts you most to this job?

→ Try not to be trivial, superficial or to exaggerate. Use personal references ... (for example, "My desire to go into politics developed during my high school years . As the head of the student council I got involved on behalf of my school mates at a very early stage and now I continue to be involved in the xxx student group to move forward political agendas in xxx).

4. The formal components

Sender

First and last name, if applicable with title, address and contact data (telephone number, mobile phone, email address).

→ If you put this information in the header, it saves space. (The cover letter should not exceed one page).

Recipient

Name of the company (including legal form, for example AG or GmbH), first and last name of the contact person, if necessary with title, department and the complete address of the company.

→ The term “z.Hd.” (c/o) is no longer used. Errors in the name of the company or contact person are an absolute no-no.

Place and date:

These should be at the top right. The date should match the one in the CV.

Subject line

Here you put the details of the position you are applying for, including when you read it. Don't forget a reference number if there is one.

→ Writing the term “subject line” is no longer used; it is common to write your subject line in bold letters, though.

Salutation

Ideally you have a concrete contact person. The salutation “Dear Sir, dear Madam” should be avoided if possible.

→ Calling a company for the sole reason of finding out the name of a contact person does not make sense. Contacting a company with other questions about details of the job is very useful. An added benefit is that you can allude to the telephone conversation in your cover letter and will very often find out who is the person in charge.

Signature

This should consist of your first and last name.

Attachments

You either do not write this at all or, by inserting the term ‘attachments’ at the end of your letter, you indicate that you are adding a CV or some references. There is no need to list them.

5. Content and structure

The first sentence of your cover letter is very important. Avoiding a standard sentence such as “I hereby apply for the ...” will attract the attention of the personnel officer. If, for example, you already had a telephone conversation with the recipient, you may want to start out with a thank-you. Another good way to start a letter is by stating the most important reason why you would be a great fit for the company (for example, “During my internship at AA in the BB department, I already gained substantial experience in cc; ever since xxx I have been interested in the link between ...”). Stress your motivation for the job and/or the company at this stage.

In essence you can use the following formula when writing a cover letter: AIDA:

Attention	to attract the attention of the of the personnel officer	the introductory sentence of the letter
Interest	to raise the curiosity of the personnel officer	core part of the letter
Desire	to awake the desire to meet you and possible even work together	
Action	to convince the personnel officer to invite you for an interview	the conclusion of the letter

In the core part of your cover letter you put your motivation and skills (adjusted to the job description) and convince people that you are the right person:

- Why are you applying for THIS vacancy?
- Why are YOU applying to this company?
- Which expertise and skills will you bring to the team?
- Which of the desired soft skills do you have?

This part of the letter is the most delicate and elaborate. We recommend that you invest a great deal of concentration and time. This is the opportunity to set yourself apart from the many other applicants and make a lasting impression on the personnel officer.

→ Do not use serial letters. A tailor-made and customized cover letter for every single job will take you much further.

It will not, however, suffice to simply list the carefully adjusted skills.

Show where you acquired these skills. (e.g. "Through my many years of work as a press officer I have shown proof of my ability to work in a team and have acquired knowledge of the PR realm).

Don't simply repeat your resume in biographical order. Place emphasis on the relevant data that support you getting the job. Think about what sets you apart from the competitors with the same degree (e.g. the topic of your thesis, the internship at this company, the study project ...).

In the final paragraph of the letter, you express that you would like to be invited to an interview. If asked for it, you should also mention when you would be available to start work and what your gross salary expectation is.

→ You always name the gross annual salary. You will need to do some research in the internet and from acquaintances in comparable companies and positions.

6. Check formatting and style

Use a commonly recognized and readable font and size (e.g. Arial in 11 pt). This should be the same as in your CV. Format the text with paragraphs.

→ Do not dispense with paragraphs. A cover letter without paragraphs, a very small font and a lot information does not make a good impression.

To-do list for the style:

1. Do not use set phrases.
2. Is this your style or is it exaggerated?
3. Have you used terminology from the everyday business to show that you are familiar with the job you are applying for?
4. Refrain from too many "I-sentences".
5. Write mainly in the active voice
6. Use short, crisp sentences.
7. Refrain from the conditional tense (would/could/had).

The CV

Besides the cover letter the CV is the second central part of your application. Therefore please always ensure that your CV is clearly arranged, well-structured, complete and up-to-date. It is also expected that it is, as far as possible, adapted to the desired job. Your CV should quickly reveal whether you are qualified for the position and have the necessary experience. **The main principles in a curriculum vitae are: clear structure, clarity and brevity.**

Shape

Scope

Your CV should be at most 2, max. 3 pages. You may also include your application photo and your personal details on a separate initial page (cover sheet).

Shape

Pay attention to the legibility and use a consistent font and size (by no means less than 10 pt).

Outline of the CV

It is advisable to divide the CV into sections. The headings should be chosen for the benefit of your counterpart but at the same time they should be conclusive and self-explanatory.

The information that specifically speaks for you as future employee must be visible at first sight (e.g. professional experience, study and schooling, internships, international experiences, foreign languages, computer skills ...).



Structure

- The achronological structure has now become the norm. You therefore begin with the most recent period and then work backwards.
- Enter the dates for the duration of all periods using month/year (e.g. 11/2014 – 04/2015).
- Explain major „breaks“ in your CV (a few months are not a problem, you should justify periods of 4 months or more).
- Describe the experience relevant to this position and avoid listing any irrelevant points (not pertaining to the concrete job you are applying for).
- Under certain circumstances it may make sense to list part time jobs, even if they are not directly related to the required skills. This is good especially if you have little or no practical experience. Take into consideration which conclusions personnel officers could draw: people who are in the catering trade are often very communicative, open, service-oriented and have proven perseverance, ...

Content

The following contents are recommended for a CV of a university graduate student:

Personal Information

- First and last name, address and a telephone number, Email address (please make sure that you have a professionally looking email address), Date and place of birth.
- the family status is optional (single/married; avoid very personal information such as divorced/remarried/separated); number of the children (if you mention children it may make sense to indicate 'day care secured') and possibly the nationality.
- An application photo is not a must but still is common in Germany.

Jobs / Practical experience / Training

- Employer and location plus month/year (e.g. 11/2014 – 04/2015).
- Nature of occupation, area or department
- Description of relevant tasks and activities
(The more relevant the experience, the more detailed the description)

School and university education

- University degree (name of the university, degree programme/subjects and main research areas; if relevant: topic of thesis and possibly grades)
- school education (type of school, degree, month/year dates, final grade); information on the primary school is no longer relevant.

Possibly include stays abroad

(especially if your international profile and intercultural experiences are supposed to stand out)

- information on study abroad or internships abroad, any time as an au pair (if relevant) or language courses abroad etc.
- However, you can also choose to integrate this topic into your school and university education or into the practical experience section.

Additional qualifications

- Language skills: with an exact level (either basic/good/very good/fluent/ mother tongue or classification according to the European reference framework, possibly both)
- Computer skills (with level indication)
- Continuing education: relevant seminars, workshops with month/year indication.

Possibly include volunteering commitment

- Also with month/year specification and name of organization/club and location. Brief description of the nature of the activity and tasks (bullet points).

Possibly personal interests

- not required, but one way to show more of you as a person. However, three to four items are sufficient, preferably concrete instead of too general.

Place, date and signature

– signature handwritten, or scanned and appropriately adjusted.

With your signature, you document that the Curriculum Vitae is current and represents the truth.

The dates in the CV must match those in certificates and work records.

Attachments

Attachments should mirror the order in the CV. The same applies to the CV as a whole: the most important and most recent first!

As a rule, the attachments are the final degree transcript (if available, otherwise the most current overview), final reports from internships, possibly proof of further activities or additional qualifications.

You do not have to submit proof for all periods in your CV (very often this is not even possible for volunteer positions) but the most important documents should be attached as hard copies or scans.

Attachments should be attached to the cover letter and CV so that they can be sent as one document; don't forget to name the documents meaningfully.

The document should usually not exceed 3 – 5 MB. Or you create two documents and merge the cover letter and CV and the other documents into two attachments. Send only as PDF and compress the documents if necessary.

Please feel free to contact us if you want your application documents checked. We would be happy to look them over and give you a professional feedback.

Your Career Service Team

Diana Caputo, Cornelia Lindenau, Margit Jetter and Judith Mikus

