



Application- Guide

of the Marketing & Career Service

From the job ad to the interview – getting
prepared for your application!



Application Guide of the Marketing & Career Service

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1 Foreword

Dear students,

Writing a good application is not easy. There are a number of application guides and tips on the internet, but experts often have different opinions. It is often difficult to keep track of them all.

In addition, a successful application consists of more than a cover letter and a CV. To create really good application documents, you need to think about a few things in advance: „What can I do?“, „What do I want?“, „How and where can I find the right job for me?“. Only then will you be able to make your application meaningful and present yourself and your skills in the best possible way.

This application guide was created based on advice literature and experience from everyday counselling on applications and career entry and is intended to give you orientation in the application process. We can and will only provide you with examples and food for thought. Use our tips and examples as suggestions and try to implement them for yourself. The application guide gives you the opportunity to reflect and leaves room for your own additions and insights. Checklists give you the opportunity to check your documents time and again.

Our advice to you

- Give your application a personal touch
- Pay attention to what is important for the employer

The Marketing & Career Service (MCS) supports the students of the Faculty of Business and Economics with a wide range of offers to prepare them for their career entry.

What we offer

- Rhetoric and soft skill courses
- Online job exchange
- Workshops/ Events with companies
- Application portfolio check
- Job-Wall
- Personnel fair „Karriere-Kontakte“

If you have any questions about applying for a job, or if you have any other questions about starting a career, we will be happy to help. We wish you every success with your application and your future career!

Your MCS-Team

It is a long and often rocky road from studying to starting a career. In order to succeed, it is crucial that you think about your future job and career planning early on during your studies and take the necessary steps to achieve this.

An important building block for this is a successful application. However, there is much more to a promising application than just creating application forms and sending them to different companies.

To make it easier for you to apply in the best possible way, we have compiled the most important application tips and tricks in our application guide.

The 4 phases in the application process



The application process consists of different phases in which certain goals have to be clarified.

We recommend that you already think about your professional wishes, skills and abilities during your studies and gather information about occupational fields, activities and employers. This can make it much easier for you to take the step into your professional future.

In our application guide, you will find useful advice for support as well as further food for thought to help you succeed.



1.2 Checklist

To help you with the planning and preparations and so that you don't forget anything important, we have put together a checklist for you with all the main points. Here you can check whether you have thought of everything. In the following, we will go into detail about these points.



Before the application

- Clarify career aspirations
- Read and interpret the job advertisement correctly
- Self-analysis
- Self-marketing



The components of the application

- Cover page
- Cover letter
- Curriculum vitae
- Application photos



Interview and Assessment Centre

- Research on the company
- Self-presentation
- Preparing for typical questions
- Suitable application outfit



2 Before applying

At the beginning of the application phase, there are a few open questions that you should clarify so that you can get started with a well-considered and promising application. These preliminary considerations make the application process much easier.

2.1 Clarify career aspirations

Before you start the application marathon, the most important thing is to clarify your own career aspirations. „What do I want to do?“, „What do I enjoy doing?“, „In which industry do I want to work after graduation?“, „Do I want to work in a small or medium-sized company or in a large corporation?“

Answering these questions for yourself helps you to become clear about your own goals and wishes.

Information about the labour market, different sectors or companies will help you to find the right job profile for you. The following sources of information, for example, offer you opportunities for this:

- Career Service
- Career pages of the companies
- Personnel fairs and recruiting events
- Guest lectures from companies
- Excursions (offered by different institutions of the university)
- Trade journals
- Networks such as professional associations
- Student clubs and organisations
- Internet portals about career and profession
- Social media (LinkedIn, XING, etc.)

In addition, we strongly recommend completing informative internships or working student jobs in the favoured areas during your studies.

Because: theory and practice complement each other! It is precisely through this that you can determine whether your own ideas and professional competences for the subject area match the practical day-to-day work.

This allows you to get an idea of your desired profession and to reorient yourself if necessary. Practical experience during your studies makes it easier for you to start your career.

2.2 Self-analysis

A very important part of the application process is self-analysis, i.e. the ability to know one's own strengths, weaknesses and goals. For, only the person who is aware of these personal factors and knows about himself or herself can provide information about him or herself and thus prepare a well-founded and goal-oriented application.

This self-reflection is also very important for the further steps in the application process!

In the self-analysis, you should analyse not only your professional know-how but also interdisciplinary qualifications, soft skills and practical experience. The first step in self-analysis is to answer the following questions as precisely as possible:

- What can I (not) do?
- What do I (not) want?
- What distinguishes me from others?
- How do friends/acquaintances see me?
- How do professors/colleagues see me?
- What development and learning potential do I have?
- How do I imagine my employer?

In order to answer these questions, it is often helpful to ask friends, acquaintances or family members and have them assess you. They sometimes know amazing things about you that you take for granted or that you haven't even noticed yourself.

In order for you to become more aware of your skills and strengths, it is helpful to create a mind map for this analysis, for example. With the help of this method you can, for example, take a closer look at the following characteristics and evaluate them for yourself personally:

Possible points for a mind map:

- Team-oriented work
- Independent work
- Flexibility
- Organisational skills
- Strong communication skills
- Persuasion
- Structured way of working
- Management responsibility
- Engagement
- Resilience
- Analytical thinking
- Presentation skills

Think about where you have already been able to successfully demonstrate these skills. Of course, this may have been the case during your studies or during your first practical experience.

Often, however, the private sphere is also a good place to learn more about your strengths, for example in hobbies or social contacts. Sometimes it can also help you to question what you understand by these terms and what is important to you, for example, in teamwork.

Feel free to look for more or for other competences that make up your person and try to analyse where and when you have applied them.

The mind map on the following page can be used to help you design your own. But you should not only be aware of your strengths. It is also important to know the qualities and skills that you would like to improve, so that you can work on them and improve.

It is also possible that this will be asked about in the job interview. Knowing one's own strengths, weaknesses, but also competences is therefore of central importance.

Personal skills

GUIDELINES

Where did I acquire these skills?
How can this skill be described?
How do I approach problems?
What is important to me? ...
...

Communication ● ● ●

.....
.....

Organisational skills ●

.....
.....

Analytical thinking ● ●

.....
.....

Resilience ● ● ● ●

.....
.....

Engagement ● ● ● ●

.....
.....

Management responsibility

.....
.....

Flexibility ● ● ● ●

.....
.....

Independent, structured way of working ● ● ●

.....

Before applying

2.3 Job advertisements

2.3.1 Finding job advertisements

Job offers are an important tool for employers to communicate vacant positions to potential employees. Possible job offers can be found, for example, on the career homepages of the companies themselves or on various job boards on the internet, such as StepStone, Monster, Indeed etc.

The Career Center (Job Exchange) of the University of Regensburg also offers you a versatile and extensive online job market.

Print media have long since lost the importance they once had in the application process. However, if you are looking for a company in your area, regional print media can provide you with a good basis for research. Trade journals and job markets of national newspapers are also possible sources for your job search in the print sector.

2.3.2 Structure

Job advertisements contain a great deal of information. To make it easier for you to interpret, it is helpful to first internalise the structure of a job advertisement:

- Description of the company („Who we are...“)
- Job description („We are looking for...“)
- List of requirements („We expect...“)
- Range of services offered by the company („We offer...“)
- Notes on the application process („We request...“)

A thorough analysis of the job advertisement fundamentally facilitates the preparation of your application documents.

2.3.3 Read and interpret job advertisements correctly

To make it easier for you to read and evaluate a job advertisement, we recommend the following procedure:

- Read the job advertisement slowly and carefully several times
- Describe the tasks and requirements in your own words
- Put yourself in the employer's shoes - what do they want from the applicant, what is important to them?
- The job description should match your professional and personal qualifications approximately 75%
- Take all the required qualifications and areas of responsibility from the job advertisement and classify them according to mandatory and optional criteria
- Mandatory criteria should be fulfilled

Mandatory criteria

- The prerequisite is a very good knowledge of ...
- Knowledge in ... is required
- We are looking for ... with completed training in ...
- You have .../ You are ...

Optional criteria

- (Sufficient experience) ... is desirable
- (Good knowledge) in ... is advantageous
- Ideally/optimally ...

2.4 Self-marketing - emphasising your individual profile

Once the self-analysis step has been completed and you have identified your personal strengths and competences, you can relate them to the requirements profile of a job advertisement.

This is where the right use of self-marketing is called for. However, the purpose of self-marketing is not to present oneself in an exaggerated or better way or even to artificially disguise oneself. Self-marketing means consciously highlighting one's own strengths, showing what one is made of and presenting oneself as one is.

In order to achieve a link between your individual strengths and the requirements of the company, you should first intensively check the job profile of the job advertisement. If there is a match of about 75% with the requirement criteria, it is worth applying.

It is not advisable to invent new competences to better match the job profile. Do not exaggerate your competences and try to achieve a realistic presentation of yourself.

Present yourself with the strengths and personality traits that match the position you want to fill, because applying means advertising yourself and showing what you are good at. Moreover, you are by no means an uninteresting applicant if you do not meet a required qualification.

If, for example, you do not have a desired requirement, in some situations it is a good move to speak openly about it and to compensate cleverly for the lack of qualification by giving authentic reasons, because this can ultimately also have a positive effect on your appearance.

You do not bring the „experience abroad“ requirement with you

„I was determined to acquire the necessary professional skills during my studies. During my relevant internships, I therefore specifically emphasised interesting and well-founded projects. Unfortunately, for these reasons, I was not able to acquire the required experience abroad.

But that’s precisely why I’m looking for this experience in my career entry. However, through private travel and learned foreign languages, I see myself well prepared for this. In addition, I was already able to gain intercultural skills during my studies through group work with international students.“

Always remember that every job advertisement and every company is different. We therefore recommend that for each individual job advertisement of a company, you present your person individually to fit the position and focus on various of your merits, depending on what the company defines in its job advertisement as the requirement criteria for the advertised position.

With an individual applicant profile for a specific position, you will present yourself better in your application!

The following example shows two different companies that have different requirements for their applicants for a vacant position.

Example

Company X, a major international corporation, is looking for team players with experience in project management, organisational skills, international experience and excellent communication and language skills.

Company Y, a research institute, is looking for team-oriented, motivated specialists with special computer skills, an independent and structured way of working as well as transfer and innovation skills.

Your profile: You have studied abroad for one semester and then completed a six-month internship during which you were given a lot of responsibility in a company project.

In addition, you have successfully completed an IT course at your university in a statistics programme during your studies and have thus already worked with the required programme. You were able to acquire innovation skills during your final thesis.

You find the positions to be filled in both companies very interesting. However, each company requires a different applicant profile. Although the applicants are expected to meet different criteria, you can convince both companies with an individual applicant profile that fits each job advertisement.

At company X, for example, you will put more focus on your stay abroad and the experience in project management due to your internship.

Your individual applicant profile for Company Y will focus instead on your IT knowledge in the statistics programme for fulfilling the required IT skills and your thesis.



3 Components of the application

A typical application consists of a cover sheet (optional), a cover letter, a CV and the references and certificates attached to the application. To make it easier and more successful for you to prepare the individual parts of your application, we have put together some tips for each of these components below.

3.1 The cover sheet

You can add the cover sheet to your application as an optional extra. With an individually appealing cover page design, you can give your application a personal touch and thus arouse curiosity and interest among recruiters. The cover page is particularly recommended for classic paper applications.

When you open the application folder, the cover sheet is the first document on top. The cover sheet should provide a quick overview of your application, so it is recommended that you consider the following points in your cover sheet.

Formal aspects are not strictly prescribed in the design of the cover page. You are free to experiment with font sizes, text arrangements and layout. Nevertheless, your cover page should fit in with the rest of your application documents and a common thread should be recognisable. The following example is intended to illustrate a possible cover sheet design and inspire you to create an individual layout for your cover sheet.



Cover sheet checklist

Headline: For the heading, you should choose a meaningful title including the job title, the job ID and the company name.

Application photo: You can choose a larger format on the cover page. Make sure that the photo is as professional as possible.

Contact details: Enter your full address including telephone number and e-mail address.

Attachments: A brief overview of which documents you have attached to your application – Though this is not mandatory. When you list the attachments, however, make sure you indicate the correct order in which the listed documents follow.

Example cover sheet



Marie Muster

Musterstraße 11
54321 Beispielhausen

0941/1234567
marie.muster@gmx.net

Nationality: German
Marital status: single

Application

as Junior Sales Manager

Attachments:

Cover letter
Curriculum vitae
Performance record
Internship certificate

Components of the application

3.2 Score the right points in your cover letter

The cover letter is an important part of your application and reflects your motivation. It is not just a simple list of contents from your CV. Rather, here, you can show your personality and motivation. In your cover letter, you should try to present your achievements, experience and successes that are relevant for the respective position as compactly and clearly as possible. Try to show in your cover letter why you are the best person for the vacant position and why you fit into the company. Make sure that your cover letter is based on the job advertisement.

General tips for the cover letter

- As a guideline, use one DIN A4 page for the cover letter. Try to be short, concise, and as informative as possible!
- Use a uniform font for all your application documents! Fonts such as Verdana, Times, Arial or Georgia are best suited for this.
- Use formatting sparingly. Indents, spacing, headers and footers should be used consistently on all written pages.
- The body text should be written in a pleasantly readable font size of 10 to 12 points. Do not use more than three different font sizes in total.
- If possible, do not use abbreviations or filler words.
- You should also choose varied and self-confident, active formulations.
- Write an individual cover letter and do not copy pre-written sentences from guidebooks.
- During the final proofreading, look out for spelling or grammatical errors.

In the following, we use a sample cover letter to show common errors and then give tips for a possible improved version of a cover letter.

Example of a bad cover letter

Marie Muster
 Musterstraße 11
 54321 Beispielhausen
 E-Mail: mini-mausi@gmx.net

Rones GmbH
 Personalabteilung
 Industriestraße 10
 34567 Musterstadt

Subject: Application

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I was very pleased to read your job advertisement and hereby apply for the vacant position at Rones GmbH. My mother discovered your job advertisement and advised me to apply to your company. That is the reason why I became aware of your company.

During my business studies at the university in Musterhof, I already learned a lot about the topic of sales and during my internship I was able to gain initial experience in this area. Furthermore, the ability to work in a team and ambition are among my greatest strengths, which is why I perfectly meet the requirements of the job profile. I am also very flexible for field work, as I have a class B driving licence.

„One is responsible not only for what one does, but also for what one refrains from doing“ (Lao Tzu). I have taken this famous quote as my resolution, which is why I am very responsible and reliable.

My salary expectation for this position is 80,000 euros per year. I would really appreciate it if you would invite me for an interview.

Yours sincerely

Marie Muster

Marie Muster

Beispielhausen, 15.05.20xx

Attachments:

- Curriculum vitae
- Baccalaureate certificate
- Internship certificate
- Confirmation of participation in the workshop
- Certificate additional course

- 1 When designing your cover letter, make sure that the formatting is both consistent and personal. Your address should be complete, i.e. your telephone or mobile phone number is also an important part of the address, in order to be able to discuss any queries, e.g. from the HR department, about your application by telephone. In addition, the designations „E-mail:“ and „Telephone number:“ before listing the two components are not a must, but you can certainly use this. When choosing your email address, we recommend that you make sure you get a reputable address. For example, use „firstname.lastname“ as a possible address for your e-mail account. It is also advisable to remove the hyperlink when specifying the e-mail address.
- 2 If you know a contact person for your application, you should include this person in the recipient’s address. Make sure that you have spelled this person’s name correctly! In addition, if you are sending out several applications, you should make sure that you have used the correct contact person. By the way, the address does not have to be listed for online applications.
- 3 The word „Subject:“ is not to be placed explicitly in front of your subject. In addition, the subject should not be longer than two lines. We recommend that the subject line contains a concrete reference to the advertised job (which job, job ID, when and where it appeared) so that your application can be assigned to the correct job advertisement. The simple subject „Application“ is therefore not sufficient.
You can format the subject in bold, but not in italics, because it is generally advisable to use formatting sparingly in your application. For speculative applications, you should also specify the position you are applying for, e.g. speculative application as employee in product management at Beispielhausen AG.
- 4 If possible, you should find a specific contact person for the salutation. This person is often mentioned in the job advertisement. If you want to be sure, it does not hurt to clarify the name of the contact person by making a phone call beforehand.
„Dear Sir or Madam“ is impersonal and should only be used if there is no known contact person for your application.

Components of the application

In the case of large companies, however, it may be that there is no specific contact person. Be sure to check whether the contact person named matches the recipient in the address field!

5 It is not advisable to use standard introductory sentences such as „I hereby apply...“ or „I was very pleased to read your job advertisement...“, as these are clichéd and impersonal. It is better to refer in the introductory sentence to a previous telephone conversation with a contact person at the company or to briefly describe your reasons for applying and how you became aware of the company.

For example, you can also briefly describe your enthusiasm for the company and its products and formulate this as a reason for applying. It is also good if you introduce yourself at the beginning of the cover letter with your profile (degree programme, focus) and your goal (career entry/internship in area XY).

The reference „My mother discovered your job ad...“ makes you seem dependent. Moreover, this seems as if you don't know what you want. It is better to leave this kind of wording out of your cover letter. On the other hand, if you have family members or friends who already work in the company and you mention this in your application, it may be an advantage for you. They may have triggered enthusiasm and motivation for the company in you, which is why you might have decided to apply. However, make sure you formulate this network effect appropriately.

6 We advise you to be as precise as possible in your statements! Formulations like „learned a lot“ are meaningless. Go into more detail here and give more concrete information about where you learned what. But always keep the reference to the job description and the tasks in mind.

7 When naming your strengths and competences, we recommend that you always support them with an example. How did you learn which skill? In which situation were you able to demonstrate one of your strengths well? In addition, when interpreting some of the requirements of the job profile, pay attention.

Flexibility does not always mean that you should be mobile, but that you should be flexible in terms of work tasks or working hours, for example.

Therefore, always ask yourself what is really meant by the job requirements and how you can best fulfil them. Your previously created strengths profile is a treasure trove for these topics.

- 8 We recommend that you do not necessarily use quotes from famous writers in a cover letter. If you do want to include quotes in your application, they should contain a concrete reference or an implication for your application motivation. If you decide to use a quote in your application, make sure that you quote it correctly and have interpreted its meaning correctly.
- 9 If you are asked for an expected salary, it is better to state a range in your cover letter rather than a specific amount. In addition, you should inform yourself in advance about the salary customary in the industry for the vacant position so that you do not state a salary expectation that is too low or too high in your cover letter. For example, career magazines on the internet offer an annual salary report that you can use as a guide.
- 10 Feel free to use confident phrases. Verbs like work, implement, act, take over, etc. are proactive. Avoid the use of subjunctives. Make sure you use an appropriate farewell formula, e.g. „Yours sincerely“.
- 11 Finally, do not forget to sign your letter with your own hand or a scanned signature.
- 12 Put the place and date in the right place. These belong at the top right with a small space below the recipient's address.
- 13 Only the word „attachments“ is sufficient to indicate the attachments. You do not have to list individually which attachments you have enclosed (CV, references, etc.). In the case of electronic applications, this may not be necessary at all.

Components of the application



Example of a good cover letter

Marie Muster

Musterstraße 11 - 54321 Beispielhausen - marie.muster@gmx.net - 0941/1234567

Rones GmbH
Personalabteilung
Frau Paula Personalerin
Industriestraße 10
34567 Musterstadt

Beispielhausen, 30.10.20xx

Application as Junior Sales Manager | Job-ID 112345

Dear Ms Personnel Officer,

I became aware of Rones GmbH through the personnel fair „Career Contacts“ at the University of Musterhof and was able to obtain interesting information about your company and the career opportunities from you during the interview there. Therefore, I have been observing your job advertisement for some time and have specifically decided to apply for your job advertisement from 25.10.xx for a Junior Sales Manager.

I am currently in the sixth semester of my business studies, which I will successfully complete in August 20xx with a Bachelor of Science. The main focus of my studies is on Controlling and Sales. In my bachelor's thesis I am researching the topic „Sales concepts in B2B companies“ and therefore I have already been able to gain sound theoretical knowledge in this subject area, which I would now like to apply and expand in practice.

During my three-month internship at Abis GmbH, I was able to gain practical experience in the field of sales. My responsibilities included the coordination of sales activities as well as the organisation of budget and personnel. I was able to take responsibility for the projects during my internship and achieve good results thanks to my structured and independent way of working. My communicative nature and open-mindedness made it easy for me to deal with customers.

Working in your company allows me to turn my interest in sales into my profession. What I like about this field is the variety of tasks and the customer contact. In addition, I would like to contribute to your team with great commitment in order to apply and further develop my previous expertise and qualifications, such as my analytical way of thinking.

My salary expectations for this position are 46,000 euros - 50,000 euros gross per year. I will be available from 01.09.20xx.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions about my application. I would be pleased to receive an invitation to a personal interview.

With kind regards

Marie Muster

Marie Muster

Components of the application



Cover letter checklist

- Is your cover letter designed in a reader-friendly way?
- Have you entered the recipient's address completely and correctly?
- Are the place and date on the right under the recipient's address?
- Have you indicated the name of the contact?
- Is the font uniform (continuous text in font size 10-12 pt)?
- Is the subject line in bold and with specific reference to the job advertisement?
- Have you chosen an interesting introduction (reference to telephone conversation, reasons for applying, enthusiasm for the company/products)?
- Presentation of the highlights of the CV (profile, strengths, soft skills)?
- Have you picked up on the requirements of the job?
- Were you able to make a connection with the company (why you are applying for this company)?
- If applicable, have you indicated your earliest possible starting date?
- Have you used an appropriate farewell formula?
- Has the signature been scanned/written cleanly?
- Are attachments/supplemental materials indicated (without listing them individually)?
- Has the cover letter been proofread?

Components of the application

3.3 The curriculum vitae

The CV is an important part of your application. It should be compact, well structured and adapted to the vacant position. It should also show at a glance that you are a good fit for the company and the best person for the advertised position.

A CV is not only a list of educational pathways and work experience, but should also give insight into the skills you have obtained in each section and reflect your profile.

General tips for the CV

- Your CV should be approximately two pages long.
- Choose a suitable heading for each heading.
- Use formatting such as headings in bold to make your CV clear and descriptive.
- Ensure a clear presentation and consistent formatting.

Line spacing, font spacing, font type and font size should be consistent.
- There should also be a recognition value with the cover page or the cover letter.

On the left is always the time with month and year, on the right the
- corresponding description.

With the American CV, the points in the CV are arranged in an anti-chrono
- logical order. The advantage is that recruiters can see at first glance what you have done most recently.

Customise your CV: You can arrange your categories in a desired order,
- depending on which areas of your CV you want to emphasise.

- You can also include additional headings that are applicable to your CV. Possible additional categories are: Awards/scholarships, experience abroad, scientific publications, successful projects.

The contents of a CV should be truthful and, under certain circumstances,

- verifiable!

Gaps in the curriculum vitae

During these periods, the applicant cannot prove any professional activity. A smaller gap is defined as 3 months, a larger one as of 6 months.

Not every gap is evaluated negatively, such as parental leave or world travel. A professional reorientation can also be mentioned. You do not have to mention certain periods of time, such as illness, pregnancy or imprisonment.

To cover these gaps, indicate time periods with year numbers or group several time periods under one heading.

Components of the application

Example of a bad CV

1	
Personal 2	
Contact	Marie Muster Musterstraße 11 54321 Beispielhausen Telefon: 0941/654321 E-Mail: mini-mausi@gmx.net
Date, place of birth	01.02.1998, Musterstadt
Marital status	Single
Parents	Mother: Ingrid Muster (Verkäuferin) Father: Leopold Muster (Mechatroniker)
Siblings	None
Schule 3	
01.09.2005 – 31.07.2009	State Primary School, Musterstadt
09/2009 – 07/2012	Grammar School, Musterstadt
09/2012 – 07/2014	Secondary school, Musterstadt
09/2014 – 07/2017	State technical secondary school, Musterstadt Graduation: General higher education entrance qualification (1.9)
Study 4	
10/2018 – today	Business studies, University of Musterhof current grade point average: 2.4
Work experience/study financing activities	
10/2019 – 10/2020 5	Working student at Muster-AG, Musterburg
Internships	
07/2014	Sample pharmacy, Musterstadt
05.07.2019 – 15.10.2019	One-week student internship in the pharmacy Company Abis GmbH, Beispielhausen
University engagement 6	
seit 10/2019	Member of the economics student council, Musterhof university
Additional qualifications 7	
Languages	German English (business fluent) Spanish (basic knowledge)
EDP	Microsoft Office (excellent knowledge)
Further education	VHS sewing course Project Management Workshop Fishing Licence
Hobbies / Interests 8	
	Shopping Cinema Bungee jumping Play computer games 9

① A heading for your CV should not be missing. For example, you can choose „CV“ or „Curriculum Vitae“ as the heading here.

② **Personal:** The same applies here as with the cover letter: The terms „e-mail:“ and „telephone number:“ before listing the two components are not a must, but you can certainly use this.

When choosing your email address, we recommend that you make sure you get a reputable address. For example, use „firstname.lastname“ as a possible address for your email account. It is also advisable to remove the hyperlink when specifying the e-mail address.

You can explicitly indicate your marital status, though it is not a must.

It is only necessary to indicate your nationality if your name or place of birth is not revealing. Otherwise, you are free to add or omit this information.

You can also omit information about your parents and siblings from your CV, as this does not convey important information.

If you do not add a cover page to your application, it is best to add an appropriate application photo of yourself to the right of the personal data. However, if you have designed a cover sheet to go with your application, we recommend only using an application photo there. Another photo on the CV is then no longer necessary.

③ **School education:** Today, the American CV is usually recommended. The American CV requires an antichronological order, i.e. the events are ordered in descending order of recency. Instead of the term „school“, it is better to use the term „school education“ in the CV. You do not have to include primary school in your curriculum vitae; the schools you attended only become important from the further education onwards. Be sure to include majors or advanced courses and possibly your final grade. If you list your grades, we recommend that you do so consistently for all other qualifications.

4 Studies: When stating your studies in your CV, you should go into more detail, because this represents which professional competences you have acquired during this education. State your university, your degree programme and the degree you expect to obtain or have already obtained. Go into detail about your chosen specialisation, relevant subjects taken and the topic of your final thesis. Optionally, you can also state your final grade or your current grade point average. When stating the grades, or if you choose not to do so, make sure that they are consistent with your other degrees.

5 Work experience/study financing activities/ internships: Gaining professional experience during your studies is important for you to become clear about your future career aspirations and also to acquire practical knowledge in addition to theoretical specialist knowledge.

In your CV, don't hesitate to mention activities that finance your studies and have nothing to do with your future career. This will show the recruiter that you are hard-working and independent even when you are not studying. In addition, you may have acquired teamwork skills or other job-relevant skills. Here, too, the rule is: go into detail! Exact time details, company, location and job description are a must. It is advisable to briefly describe two to three of the activities you performed there, especially if they are relevant to the job.

In the case of student internships over a short period of time, we recommend that you possibly only list them in your CV if you have specialised very early on. Otherwise, it is worth considering whether you would be better off omitting them.

6 Involvement/ university involvement: We also advise you to be more specific about your extracurricular involvement, e.g. club work, voluntary work, social or university involvement, and which activities you are responsible for there. These can be evidence of your strengths profile, for example, your organisational talent if you are involved in the organisation and implementation of student events in your voluntary work at your university.

If you name two to three meaningful areas of responsibility, that is quite sufficient. However, we recommend that you do not describe more activities, but only commit to the most important ones, otherwise it can quickly seem inflationary.

Components of the application

7 Additional qualifications: The additional qualifications are divided, for example, into languages, IT skills and other further training. You can also design this category flexibly and subdivide it into new or other sub-areas. In the languages category, you can list all the languages you have mastered from „basic“ to „advanced“, „fluent“, „business fluent“ to „mother tongue“. However, make sure that the information you give is realistic. Your language skills are increasingly being put to the test in job interviews. You can prove your language skills with possible acquired certificates and recognised performance benchmarks.

When mentioning your computer skills in your CV, you should avoid using collective terms. For example, just mentioning the Microsoft Office programme is often not enough. Here, too, give more details about which individual programmes you have mastered and how well. You can assess your skills using terms such as „beginner“, „advanced“ or „expert“. Here, too, you can prove your qualifications through certificates you have obtained and courses you have completed. Under the Continuing Education section, we recommend that you only list selected workshops and seminars that are useful for your future job description. For each of the professional trainings, indicate the type, the content and, if applicable, a degree.


Hobbies/ Interests: The hobbies and interests section is not mandatory. However, it gives you the opportunity to add personal characteristics to your CV. We recommend that you do not list more than four leisure activities.

If you enjoy risky sports, you should not necessarily mention them in your CV, as this tends to have a negative impact on the decision-making process of recruiters. Hobbies such as going out with friends, shopping or going to the cinema are not very original and should either be replaced by interests that reveal more of your personality or described in more detail if possible. You can score points in the hobbies category with team sports, such as volleyball, because they reinforce your ability to work in a team. It makes sense to list hobbies or interests, especially for young professionals. These activities provide information about your skills, interests and personality. They also give you the opportunity to elaborate on them in the interview.

9 The end of your CV should include the place, date and your handwritten or scanned signature.

Components of the application

Example of a good CV

<p>Marie Muster Musterstraße 11 - 54321 Beispielhausen - marie.muster@gmx.net - 0941/1234567</p>	
<p>MARIE MUSTER</p> <p>Musterstraße 11 54321 Beispielhausen marie.muster@gmx.net 0941/1234567 Born on 01.02.1998 in Musterstadt Marital status: single</p>	
<p>Study</p> <hr/>	
<p>10/2018 – today</p>	<p>Musterhof university Study of business administration Focus: Value creation - Controlling - Distribution Bachelor thesis: „Sales concepts in B2B companies“ Degree: Bachelor of Science (expected 08/2021) Current grade point average: 2.1</p>
<p>03/2019 – 08/2019</p>	<p>University of Economics in Prague Semester abroad in English - Controlling - Marketing & Sales</p>
<p>School education</p> <hr/>	
<p>09/2014 – 07/2017</p>	<p>Staatliche Fachoberschule, Beispielhausen Specialisation: Economics and Law Graduation: General university entrance qualification (2.0)</p>
<p>Work experience/study financing activities</p> <hr/>	
<p>10/2019 – 10/2020</p>	<p>Muster-AG, Musterburg Working student in sales (20h/ Woche) - Support of the sales team - Support for important key accounts - Support in everyday business</p>
<p>Internships</p> <hr/>	
<p>07/2019 – 10/2019</p>	<p>Company Abis GmbH - Coordination of sales activities - Organisation of budget and personnel</p>

Marie Muster
Musterstraße 11 - 54321 Beispielhausen - marie.muster@gmx.net - 0941/1234567

University engagement

Since 10/2019 **Musterhof university**
Member of the Economics Student Council
 - Student counselling for all economics degree programmes
 - Organisation of student events (city tours, first semester introductions)

Experience abroad

08/2017 – 09/2018 **Work & Travel** through Australia, New Zealand

Additional qualifications

Languages German (mother tongue)
 English (business fluent)
 Spanish (basic knowledge)

Computer skills Microsoft Word (very good)
 Microsoft Power Point (very good)
 Microsoft Excel (good)
 Microsoft Access (good)
 SAP (basic knowledge)

Further education Project Management Workshop, Musterhof University

Hobbies/ Interests

Sports (volleyball, fitness classes)
 Travel (Australia, New Zealand)
 Singing (church choir Beispielstadt)

Marie Muster

Beispielhausen, 15.03.20xx

Components of the application





Curriculum vitae checklist

- Are your details complete and correct?
- Is the wording consistent and clear?
- Are your entries arranged anti-chronologically?
- Have you provided your contact details?
- Have you formed meaningful blocks (e.g. internships, studies, languages, ...)?
- Were the period, type and location of the stations specified?
- Have you described all the activities?
- Are internships and further training relevant for the entry-level position?
- Is a focus evident and appropriate to the entry position?
- Do you have any non-university commitments?
- Have you indicated language and computer skills?
- Have you added an application picture, if applicable?
- Was the place and date indicated at the end of the CV?
- Has the signature been scanned/written cleanly?
- Is there a common thread?

3.4 The application photo

The application photo is the visual business card where you can rely on the appeal factor. You will achieve more with a good photo than with your job references!

Although the photo may no longer be required in Germany due to the „General Equal Treatment Act“, the right application photo can act as a positive booster for the application. Therefore, if you use a photo, be sure to use a professional application photo instead of an ordinary passport photo.

This is what you should consider

Only recent photos taken by a professional photographer should be considered for the application. Discuss what you need the photos for and what impression you want to convey.

The photo can be either black and white or colour, it's up to you. You can also vary the size of the photos. We recommend a size of about 6 x 4.5 cm.

For example, if the application photo is to be placed on your cover page, it can be slightly larger than a photo on your CV.

The business look is obligatory in the application photo, because with the correct clothing you signal that you can and want to represent the company to the outside world.

In the picture you should have charisma, i.e. it is advantageous for you to express professionalism and personality in the picture. A natural facial expression and an open, friendly and determined look are also important to appear authentic.

With digital application photos, you should make sure that the file used is of high quality. This quality should also be achieved in the printout, because applications sent online are often printed out in the company.

Components of the application

You should avoid this

Holiday photos or party shots have no place in an application.

Poor quality photographs have a negative effect on the overall impression. Under no circumstances should you adopt artificial or affected poses in the application photos. Furthermore, full-body shots are also not appropriate for the application. Photo effects are also taboo.

If you are submitting a paper-based application, you should not use liquid adhesive for attaching the application photo, as this causes unsightly ripples on the paper. Photo corners are more suitable.



Checklist application pictures

- Are your photos high quality and up-to-date?
- Do you wear clothing appropriate to the industry?
- Is your external appearance appropriate?
- Do you radiate professionalism (natural facial expression; open, friendly and determined look)?
- Do facial expressions and gestures seem credible?
- Is your digital/printed photo of good quality?
- Tip: have two different photo versions taken: casual and conservative.

3.5 Attachments and necessary documents

The attachments include copies of educational qualifications, as well as work references and further training certificates. The importance of these documents should not be underestimated. Not every single document or certificate you have received so far needs to be part of the supporting materials to your application documents. Rather, it is important that you attach selected references and certificates that have a high relevance and information content for the employer.

Decide for yourself which documents are required for the vacant position and represent you as a suitable person for it. Here, the motto more is less counts, because it is too time-consuming for the personnel decision-maker to first wade through a mountain of attachments and pick out the interesting certificates for the advertised position.

It is advisable that you sort your documents in descending order of relevance, i.e. the most recent transcript or certificate appears first in the order. Make sure that the scans or printouts of the attachments are clean and legible.

If it is an electronic application, pay attention to the size of the attachment. Some companies either limit the size of the attachment to a maximum of 2 MB as a rule or to, for example, three to four PDF documents that you can attach.



Checklist supporting materials

- Are all diplomas available?
- Have you added all the important work references?
- Have you selected certificates that are related to the content of the application?
- If applicable, is your matriculation certificate attached?
- Have you paid attention to the order of the attached documents?
- If applicable, have the documents been compressed so that they do not exceed the specified size of the attachment?

4 Digital application

When applying online, there are various options for students and graduates. In addition to applying by email or the widespread form of application portals that are popular with companies, applications via social and professional networks are also becoming increasingly common.

At least the same due diligence principle applies to the online application as to the classic application. You should also work precisely here, research thoroughly and avoid technical pitfalls.

4.1 By e-mail

The content of the application by e-mail with an attachment can be designed in exactly the same way as the application on paper. It consists of a single, clear PDF file with the application documents attached to the e-mail. In this PDF file, you should combine your CV, cover letter and references or certificates. In the e-mail itself, do not include the entire cover letter, but either summarise the most important points from your cover letter or simply refer to the attachment.

Make sure that the subject line is meaningful and includes the job ID of the advertised position as well as the contact person so that your application can be assigned to the job advertisement.

At the end of your email, add your signature, which contains your contact details such as address and telephone number. This makes it easier for the recruiter to find you. You can also link your LinkedIn or XING profile here.

Pay particular attention to the following points when applying by e-mail:

- Send your application documents from a reputable e-mail address.
- If possible, send the e-mail directly to the responsible contact person.
- E-mails to the info@...-mail are quickly lost.

- Insert the exact job title/job advertisement in the subject line.
- Address the recipient personally.
- Formulate a meaningful and error-free text.
- Add a signature at the end of your email so that the recruiter can quickly
- find your contact details (address, phone number).

- Create a file with all important documents (cover letter, CV, certificates). Give it a unique name and make sure that the file does not exceed the maximum size.
- Regularly check your email inbox from which you sent the application! Also check your spam inbox to see if a reply email has accidentally landed there.

Example good email

Dear Mr XXX/ Dear Mrs YYY,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

please find enclosed my detailed application documents as XXX for your job advertisement number XXX.
I look forward to the opportunity to convince you in a personal interview.

Yours sincerely,
Marie Muster



Checklist e-mail

- Was a reputable email address used?
- Is the email addressed directly to the responsible person and is this person addressed personally?
- Have you included your documents as a PDF file in the attachment?
- Is your email text free of spelling mistakes?
- Have you formulated a meaningful subject line?
- Have you included your signature at the end of the email?

Digital application

4.2 Via online form/ application portal

Applying via an online form or application portal on career sites is the most common application procedure at many companies and has become a standard procedure.

For companies, this type of application offers some advantages, such as a quicker and easier selection of applicants through a standardised application form, which makes the candidates comparable and enables a software-supported filtering of the most suitable applicants. However, this advantage for companies sometimes turns out to be a disadvantage for the applicants, because conveying personal qualities is not quite as easy here and processing is very time-consuming.

But there are also tips and tricks for the online form to stand out from the crowd. Often, online forms offer rigid input fields as well as fields or questions that do not have to be filled in to complete the application. However, they are good for creating unique selling points by revealing personal information or finding out why you as an applicant are the right candidate for the company.

Example „Comments/ further remarks“
 „What makes our company interesting for you?“
 „About me“

We strongly recommend that you fill in all fields or questions, as this will help you to stand out and present yourself individually.

Keywords / Keywording

Enter the most important skills from the job advertisement in the fields.

Example: Team player with knowledge of statistics wanted

Free text: As a university graduate, I fulfil two important requirements for you: I appreciate working in a team and can support you with strong statistical skills (SPSS, mi-nitab, STATA).

In addition, the online application form process requires you to upload your CV, a cover letter and certificates or references in PDF format. Take the time to adapt each application precisely for the respective applicant management system. If you have the choice, we recommend uploading these documents in addition, because your own documents offer you the opportunity to distinguish yourself from other applicants through individual formatting and personal interests. So even with the standardised online application form, there is a chance to skilfully showcase your own strengths and personal motivation in order to individually stand out from the

crowd. Don't forget to run a spell check before submitting the form. Furthermore, pay attention to the technical parameters (number of documents, size of files or prescribed formats).



Tips

- **Make use of the possibility to save changes, if this is appears throughout the application.**
- **Find out in advance how many applications you are allowed to upload to a company.**
- **After filling in the form, take screenshots or print a copy. Most browsers allow you to save the page as a PDF file. You can then use your answers to prepare for the interview.**



Checklist online application form

- Are all the details complete?
- Have you included key terms from the job profile?
- Have you followed the format templates?
- Are the scanned PDF documents logically summarised and of high scan quality?
- Has the size and number of uploaded data not been exceeded?
- Are the spelling and grammar correct?
- Could all options for uploading additional PDF documents be used and optional fields be filled in?
- Is there a scanned signature on the CV and covering letter and is it legible?

4.3 Professional networks

Approximately 65% of jobs can now only be accessed via the „hidden“ job market. Platforms on the internet provide access to the hidden job market. That is why many students and graduates now use the opportunity to create their own online profile with a digital CV on career platforms on the internet such as XING or LinkedIn.

This means that applicants can also be found on the internet and can be contacted and recruited directly by companies via career networks. Recruiters are increasingly looking for specific qualifications or applicants on career platforms who meet the qualifications desired by the company and then contact them.

There are many professional opportunities associated with a strategically wise use of career online platforms. In order for your online profile on social or professional networks to be a possible helpful roadmap for your professional future, it is advisable that you consider the following tips:

Proper presentation

When presenting yourself on your online profile, it is important that you present yourself properly. Use professional self-presentation in the form of a network profile on providers such as XING or LinkedIn. When creating your online profile it is of course important that you know yourself first, i.e. your competences, experiences and goals. Proceed in the same way as described in the previous chapter „Self-analysis“. In your online profile, show what you are made of and put this in the foreground. In doing so, think about what special features and skills you have.

Also check what entries you can find about yourself on the internet. Often long-forgotten photos of party nights or embarrassing social media entries about you turn up, which you should delete as soon as possible. This kind of internet presence about you does not make a good impression with the employer and has a deterrent effect.

Furthermore, your profile should be complete, but also truthful, i.e. present yourself as you are. You should not list skills or achievements that you cannot show, because these lies will be your undoing in the job interview at the latest.

Networking

Be open to communication in career networks and seek contact, for example with former colleagues or company representatives. Be careful, however, as these are only business contacts and not contacts on a friendly basis.

Your communication should always remain factual and on a business level.

The benefit you get from business contacts through the platforms is another added value you can generate through your online profile. You can create and maintain important networks with your online profile. In addition, it is easier to maintain the flow of information and communication through career networks. You can also view useful company information for yourself on career platforms, which usually also have a job market.

Example: Using the network correctly

You want to join a certain company and would like to find out what important stages in life those people have gone through who have already managed to join this company. You can look at their online profiles and analyse which education and skills might be important to the company. In addition, you can find out more about the interview partners or interviewers before an interview if they have an online profile and can look for parallels and similarities in their CVs with which you can possibly score some points in the interview. If you use your online profile in the career networks skilfully, it can offer you added value for your professional future.

Unsolicited application

The right job advertisement is not always found. In this case, you can still apply - with a speculative application. This has the advantage that you do not present yourself in a mass of applicants, but can make it clear that you are particularly interested in the company. Especially in times of a hidden job market, where vacancies are often not advertised externally, but contacts and networks are used, speculative applications can be successful.

With an application based on your own initiative, you can prove that you want to make a difference. It is important to show what you have to offer and why you are specifically interested in this company. You need to be particularly careful and clever with your arguments so that your application awakens an unrecognised need in the recruiter.

5 Special application channels

Short application

Sometimes job advertisements ask for a short application. The aim is to briefly present the most important facts about yourself to the recipient. Often, one page is used for the CV and cover letter. You can dispense with further attachments. However, you should definitely include a photo. Due to the brevity of the application, every detail is important. Prepare this application thoroughly and write short, concise sentences.

Profilcard, flyer, ...

The profile card is always handed over personally and is therefore well suited for trade fair visits. Here is an example with front and back:

As a newly qualified economist, I am eager to use my skills to strengthen your company.



My name:
Marie Muster

My goal:
Junior Sales Manager

Plan and organise sales activities in a qualified and committed manner!

You can read more about me on the back page...

Hard Facts

- 23 Jahre jung, ledig, ortsungebunden
- 08/2021 Graduation B. Sc.
- Economics, U Musterhof
- Microsoft Office programs
- Very good English, good Spanish

Soft Skills

- Creative, persistent
- Self-motivated, flexible

Are you interested? You can request my complete application here:

Musterstr. 11 - 54321 Beispielhausen
0941/1234567 - marie.muster@gmx.net

6 Preparing for the interview

If you as an applicant receive an invitation to an interview, you have already tackled a big hurdle, because only about 10% of all applicants are invited to an interview. At this point, it is important to prepare for the interview conscientiously.

6.1 Research

It is recommended that you have a sufficiently broad and sound information base about the company you are invited to interview with. To acquire this knowledge, you should study the company websites or be prepared for current topics such as IPOs and the company's product range. This will also help you score points in the interview with questions about the company, because this information is the basis for smart questions.

6.2 Application outfit

„The clothes make the man“ and „First impressions count“ - everyone knows these sayings. That's why it's especially important to pay attention to what you wear for a job interview. There is no patent remedy for the right job interview outfit. However, there are a few basic rules.

The Basics

First of all, the chosen application outfit should be a good fit - neither too small nor too big. The clothes should be chosen in such a way that nothing slips or scratches, so that there are no distractions or unsafe adjustments to the clothes. Of course, it is essential that the clothes are clean, washed and ironed. For a well-groomed appearance, you should also make sure that your hair is neatly coiffed and your fingernails clean.

Outfit choice customary in the industry

When choosing the right application outfit, you should make sure that the clothes you wear match the industry and the position you are aiming for. Industry, banks, insurance companies or financial service providers, for example, place a lot of emphasis on a classic appearance. In other, more creative sectors, the IT industry or even young start-ups, this can seem too stiff.

For orientation for an appropriate application outfit, the clothes that you have on serve as an example of what you would wear to important events, such as a meeting with important business partners, if you were hired for this position.

With the appropriate dress code at the interview, you also show directly that you know the rules of the game of the respective industry and position and that you will also comply with them in your everyday work. To get an impression of the dress code in the company, you can have a look at the company's website.

Executive positions:

Classic outfit such as a suit, business dress, elegant attire.

Industries with a lot of customer contact:

Usually a classic outfit, sometimes also business casual, depending on the company.

Classic office job:

Business casual: suit or fabric trousers/skirt with matching shirt (+ tie if necessary) or elegant top.

Technical professions, engineers:

Depending on the company: classic suit/outfit to casual dress with cloth trousers & shirt/ elegant top.

Medical & manual professions:

In everyday life often work clothes, in job interviews business casual.

Creative industries, start-ups & social professions:

In everyday life often wear clothes you feel most comfortable in, for job interviews something more elegant e.g. cloth trousers with a shirt or good T-shirt, (smart) casual.

When in doubt, the rule is: it is better to appear „overdressed“ than „underdressed“.

The right choice of colour

A striking mix of colours can distract from the actual content of the conversation. Therefore, pay attention to a harmoniously coordinated colour scheme. You can't go wrong with the following colours: grey, dark blue, brown. Combine these colours with a shirt or blouse in white or other light pastel colours.

In colour psychology, different meanings and effects are attributed to colours, which one subconsciously associates with them.

- Blue:** confidence, seriousness, composure; dark blue tones: authority
- Brown:** solid, neutral, calm, grounded
- Grey:** simple, elegant, sophisticated, much experience
- Red:** passionate, energetic, extroverted, subliminal sexual message, high signal effect; inappropriate for a job interview
- Black:** authoritarian, powerful; too hard for an interview, prefer anthracite
- White:** simple, radiant, pure, true; for shirts and blouses

Besides the colour, you should also pay attention to the pattern. Do not combine several patterns and avoid comic motifs.

Shoes in the job interview

The colour of the shoes should be chosen to match the clothes. Worn, dirty shoes with holes and worn heels devalue the entire outfit. Shoes with heels should not exceed a height of 5-6 cm. Sneakers are usually too casual. However, if you are applying for a job that is characterised by sportiness and creativity, you can combine sneakers with your outfit. In this case, however, make sure that they are kept simple and clean.

Accessories

Accessories should be used sparingly, according to the motto: „less is more“. Sparingly used jewellery can enhance an outfit, whereas a combination of many pieces of jewellery - earrings, necklace, bracelets, belt - can quickly make an outfit look overloaded. It is best to concentrate on one, max. two pieces of jewellery that give your application outfit an additional personal touch. Flashy statement necklaces and extravagant accessories distract from your skills and belong in your free time. A watch and a belt can be combined with a suit, but they should be colour-coordinated with your shoes.

If you wear a pocket square with your tie, note that the pocket square and the tie do not have the same pattern. The pocket square merely reflects the colour of the tie or shirt. The pocket square should be made of silk or linen. If you wear make-up, it should be discreet, i.e. no bright lipstick or heavily made-up eyes.

Preparation for the interview



External Appearance Checklist

- Did you choose your outfit to match the industry?
- Are your clothes clean and ironed?
- Have you paid attention to a harmonious choice of colours?
- Have you showered? Are your hair, fingernails, beard well-groomed?
- Is your make-up and jewellery chosen discreetly?
- Are your shoes clean and do they match your outfit? Can you walk well in them?

Dress codes

To ensure that you are dressed appropriately for all occasions after the job interview, here is a brief overview of the most important dress codes and what they mean:

Casual:	Casual wear
Smart Casual:	Upscale leisure wear, casual business outfit
Business Casual:	Office attire
Business Attire:	Business clothing

Below are a few more examples of what you can wear with each dress code:

Casual:	Shirt/blouses, polo shirt with jeans, chinos, skirt, dress, neat sneakers
Smart Casual:	Cloth trousers, jeans in dark colour with shirt, polo shirt and jacket
Business Casual:	Elegant fabric trousers, skirt with shirt/blouse, classic suit with plain-coloured shirt, possibly tie
Business Attire:	Dark suit, light-coloured, plain shirt, tie, trouser suit, elegant attire

Preparation for the interview

6.3 Self-Presentation

„Why don't you tell us something about yourself?“ is a classic question in a job interview. It is very important. That is why it is important to thoroughly prepare a self-presentation about yourself before the interview. In this phase of the interview, you should be able to talk about yourself in an interesting and descriptive way for up to five minutes and make a connection to the company and the advertised position.

For a good self-presentation, it is not enough to simply describe your CV chronologically. It is more about highlighting the relevant personal and professional talents and linking them to the vacant position of the potential employer.

In order to do good preparatory work for your self-presentation, you should study the company's job advertisement carefully. Be aware of what is required for the position to be filled. It is also advisable to research additional information about the essential specifics of the industry and the company.

On the basis of this information, you can take suitable and qualifying stages from your CV and formulate them into arguments that speak for you as the ideal candidate for the vacant position. It is important to find a logical link or „red thread“ and to present motivation, enthusiasm and good reasons convincingly.

Afterwards, we recommend that you summarise the argumentation of your self-presentation in short bullet points, practise it well and also present it to friends or family members in order to build confidence in your self-presentation.

Tips for an impressive presentation of yourself

The following formula offers guidance for the structure of the self-presentation:

- **I am**

- **I can**

- **I want**

I am: The first part includes a short introduction of oneself with name and age followed by a description of the current professional and personal situation.

I am:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

I can: In the main part, the relevant stages of the CV are presented with competences and achievements.

I can:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

I want: In conclusion, explain the motivation why you have applied to this company, what you hope to achieve with this job or what added value you can offer.

I want:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



Preparation for the interview

6.4 Typical questions – well-considered answers

In order to ease your fear and nervousness before the interview, we have compiled some typical questions asked by personnel decision-makers, for which we recommend that you work out your personal answers and explanations in advance of the interview.

As a rule, the following topics are usually asked during the interview:

- Personality, strengths/weaknesses
- Motivation
- Mode of operation
- Objectives
- Experience

The aim of these questions is usually to get a complete picture of the applicant(s). Of course, there are no „right“ or „wrong“ answers here. What is important is that you think about and deal with these issues based on your self-analysis. Applicants are often unsure about these topics and the company representatives sometimes use these questions to put the applicants in stressful situations.

You can avoid both if you answer these questions for yourself in advance according to the motto „Know yourself! Because you are most convincing when you know your goals, your values and convictions, strengths and weaknesses and show that you can think critically about yourself.

Questions about personality:

- What are your personal strengths and weaknesses?
- What is your greatest success/failure?
- What bothers you most about other people and how do you deal with it?
- What do you do in your spare time? What are your dreams in life?
- Where would you like to go in your career?
- What drives you up the wall?

These questions are particularly difficult to answer. It is not recommended that you sweep your weaknesses or failures under the carpet and pretend that you have none. There is only one smart, individual answer to these questions: an honest answer with a good resolution to go with it.

Preparation for the interview

My personality:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Questions about the motivation to apply:

- What do you know about our company? About our industry?
- What is your goal with this position?
- Why did you apply to our company?
- Why do you think you are the right person for this position?
- What motivates you?
- What would you like to work on in area XY?

Questions about the way of working:

- How would you describe your working style?
- How do you deal with change?
- How do you demonstrate your trustworthiness in the team as quickly as possible?
- How do you feel when you get a „no“ answer?

My way of working:

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Questions about experiences:

- What experience have you had at XY?
- How did you deal with problems?
- What did a typical day in your internship look like?

Previous experience:

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Questions on goal setting:

- What would you like to have achieved in 5 years?
- What should not happen?

My goals:

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Special questions:

- What are your salary expectations?

Queries:

It is not advisable to answer „No“ to the question „Do you have any questions? You should have questions ready in the interview and ask them when you have the opportunity. Often this is a test by the recruiter of your true interest in the vacancy or how well you have prepared for the interview and the company.

Asking questions signals interest in the company and makes you appear goal-oriented and competent. However, if you ask questions that can be answered by looking on the company's website or questions that the recruiter has already answered during the interview, this reflects badly on them.

Here are some tips for asking smart questions in the interview:

- Can you describe to me a typical day or week in this position?
- How are talents and strengths promoted in your company?
- How long did my predecessor work in this position?
- What is the induction process for this position?
- How big is the team?
- What are the most important interfaces in this area?



7 Interview

If your application documents have made a lasting impression on the company and convinced the recruiters, you will be invited to an interview.

A personal interview allows the recruiters to get a better picture of you. Your personality is in demand here, as the review of professional suitability has already taken place when looking through your written application. The interview must clarify whether you

- fit the company
- are able to integrate into the team
- are an acceptable candidate to the would-be manager
- show willingness to perform
- are able to assess your strengths and weaknesses
- fit in with the company with your working style
- have a realistic picture of the requirements

7.1 The interview process

Every interview typically follows a similar pattern:

- Welcome
- Entry phase
- Self-presentation, question phase
- Company presentation
- General conditions (e.g. salary)
- Final phase (questions)
- Goodbye

Greeting: It is important that you make a good impression right at the beginning, because the first impression is often the decisive one. Convince them with a short and firm handshake. However, you should wait until the recruiter offers you their hand. Maintain eye contact and introduce yourself with your first and last name. We recommend that you thank them for inviting you to the interview and wait until they offer you a seat.

Entry phase: First of all, the recruiter will probably ask you how you are or if you found your way to the company without any problems. We recommend you to be calm, composed and self-aware and try not to show your nervousness. Use this warm-up to concentrate!

Self-presentation and question phase: Questions will be asked about your person, your career, your motivation, etc. In your self-presentation, you should try to convince the interviewer with important qualifications for the position that was advertised that you are seeking. You can master this part of the interview well with careful preparation!

Company presentation: In this phase you will receive information about the company, the work there and the requirements for the advertised position. You should listen carefully to the presentation, even if you already know a lot. Do not talk in between and do not interrupt the recruiter during their explanations.

Final phase: „Do you have any further questions for us?“ Here you should definitely answer „yes“ and ask questions, because this makes you look interested and motivated.

At the end of the interview, you should once again shake hands with everyone and maintain eye contact. You can thank them for the good conversation and the pleasant atmosphere.





Job interview checklist

- Are traffic jams or other delays planned into the journey?
- Have you practised your self-presentation?
- Do you know what questions you want to ask?
- Do you have a pen and paper ready to take note of important points? Is your mobile phone switched off?



Tips

- Before the interview, do not smoke and avoid garlic. Do not chew gum during the interview!
- Try to create a relaxed atmosphere at the beginning with small talk.
- Pay attention to the right body language during the conversation: Maintain eye contact; firm handshake; open, friendly gaze; upright seated posture.
- Breathe calmly and deeply, this helps you to be calm and concentrate.

7.2 Telephone and Video

7.2.1 The telephone interview

A telephone interview often takes place before the traditional job interview. This allows the recruiter to get a more in-depth picture of the applicant and to check soft skills. During the telephone interview you are usually in a familiar place. This gives you more support and a positive feeling, which reduces stress during the interview.

The telephone interview also requires thorough preparation so that you can create a pleasant interview atmosphere and be convincing.

Tips for a successful telephone conversation

- Find out in advance approximately how long the telephone interview will take so that you can plan enough time for the interview.
- Make sure that you have the conversation in a quiet place. There should be no background noise.
- Make sure that the battery of your phone or mobile phone is fully charged and that there is a good connection for making calls.
- Put your application documents and the job advertisement of the vacant position in front of you. You should position each sheet individually in front of you so that you can see all the information without having to leaf through the documents.
- Dressing in your application outfit for the telephone interview can be an additional psychological support for the interview.
- You should not smoke, chew gum or eat during the telephone conversation. You can prepare a drink to take a sip of if your mouth is dry.
- Smile a lot during the conversation! This is audible even on the phone and makes you likeable.
- Never interrupt the person you are talking to and let him/her finish. If you do not understand something acoustically, ask.



Tips

- **Address your communication partner by name during the conversation.**
- **Try to smile a lot during the conversation, it comes across sympathetically.**
- **Thank them at the end of the phone call.**

Interview



Telephone interview checklist

- Have you created optimal framework conditions (quietness, network quality, ...)?
- Do you have paper, pen, CV and you self-presentation ready?
- Have you defined your interview objectives in advance?
- Do you know the name of the contact person?
- Have you formulated suitable introductory sentences in advance?
- Can you present your qualification profile in concise terms?
- Are you prepared for possible questions?



7.2.2 When do I call?

Before the application

Your application will be more successful if you take the opportunity to reach out by phone and show initiative. You can then include additional information in your documents. Even after a short telephone conversation, you will be able to assess whether you are suitable for the position.

The first impression is crucial. Therefore, you should be prepared when you call. Even before the call, you should think about your goals for the interview and get to grips with the requirements of the job. We recommend that you prepare as if this were already your job interview.

After the application

If you do not hear from the company three to five weeks after sending the application or after an interview, you can ask and be remembered. You cannot influence the decision, but at least make your interest clear.

You should keep in mind that the application process is still ongoing and that the person you are talking to on the phone might make the decision. Thus, always remain friendly and confident.

Limit yourself to formal questions, e.g. what the further course of the application procedure is. Do not try to evoke sympathy or demand a decision. This reflects badly on you. Questions can be, for example, until when a decision is planned or what further selection procedures are planned.

7.2.3 The Video interview

If your interview is to be conducted via Skype or a similar service, body language and facial expressions are crucial factors in addition to your voice.

In addition to the points to be considered during the telephone interview, we recommend further important preparation tips for a successful video interview.

10 Recommendations for the video interview

- Don't save money on the wrong end and invest in a high-quality headset or microphone and a stable, fast internet connection.
- A blurred or virtual background is not recommended. It distracts from you and your connection with the interviewees. It is also okay to show personal items such as family pictures or awards. This shows your openness and

honesty and an insight into your personality. However, it should be tidy and not too crowded.

- Provide a quiet environment to avoid distracting background noise.
- Keep regular glances with the camera and don't just look at the screen. The person you are talking to might get the impression that you are not looking at him/her. In addition, your camera should be at eye level so that you do not look down on the person you are talking to.
- Make sure that the picture of you is framed in a way that makes sense. The camera image should reach up to your chest and not just include your face.
- Before the video interview, check the lighting conditions and What kind of light is most flattering.
- Wear your application outfit to the video interview that you would wear to a normal job interview and make sure your posture is upright and calm.
- Put your hands on the table or your thighs, for example. This way you can avoid gestures of insecurity.
- It can give you a lot of confidence if you have practised with people you know beforehand. A cheat sheet on the side of the screen is also helpful.

7.2.4 The Video application

The application video offers you as an applicant the opportunity to score points with your personality and thus stand out from the crowd. More and more companies offer the option to apply by video.

The application video does not replace the complete application, it only serves to illustrate the motivation and the presentation of yourself. A CV is still required.

Make an effort with the video application, because it is like a first job interview. The recruiter can get a good impression of you and see if you fit into the team. The length of an application video can vary. Sometimes the company already specifies a maximum length. Usually a duration of 1.5 - 2 minutes is the guideline.

To create application videos, here are some suggestions that will make you look favourable:

Inspiration

Several examples of video applications can be found on the internet. Take a look at them and note down what you like, what fits the industry and what you might want to adopt. However, be careful not to copy anyone.

Script

After you have been inspired and have already collected your own ideas, write a script. Some questions you can use as a guide are:

- What appeals to you about the job?
- What motivates you to aspire to this job in particular?
- Why are you the perfect person for the job?

Talk about yourself and your skills without repeating your CV. A video looks more interesting if there are some cuts in it. So don't do a one-take where you just talk to yourself, but think about how you can add variety to your video.

Exercise

Practise what you want to say, possibly even in front of the mirror. Then do a few test recordings and ask friends or relatives how you come across. Posture, facial expressions, gestures and speech tempo/melody are important here. The text should not be read out, but always spoken freely.

Surroundings

Find the right location for the shoot. The background should be calm and the lighting conditions suitable.

Clothes

As with the job interview, the clothing is also important for the video application. Here, too, the outfit should be chosen to match the target industry. Use what you would wear in an interview as a guide.

A coherent overall impression also includes your hairstyle, jewellery, well-groomed fingernails, etc. To prevent your face from shining in the video, you can powder it beforehand or dab it with a paper towel.

Interview

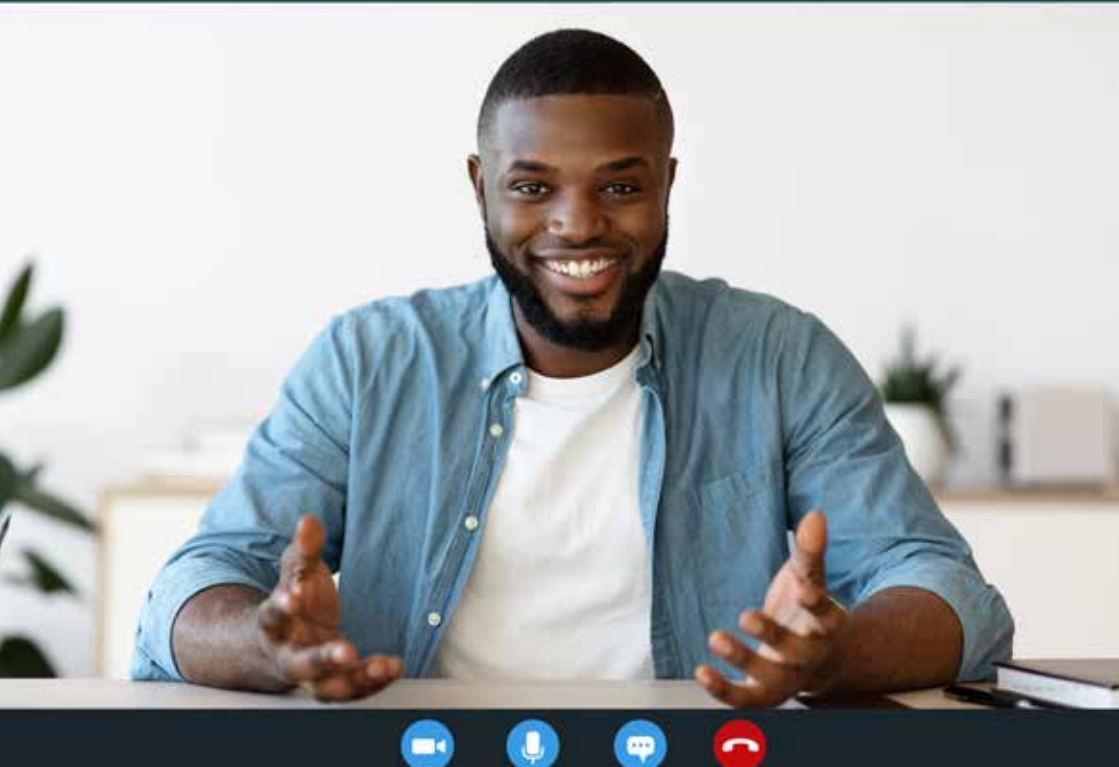
Post-processing

Nowadays there are enough free programmes for editing the video. Here you can trim the beginning and end, insert transitions and possibly fade-ins.

However, be careful not to use too many special effects or filters, as these distract from the actual content.

Contact details

Don't forget to include your contact details when editing your videos. After everything you have to keep in mind, don't forget to stay authentic, because that's what matters.



8 Assessment centre

In some sectors, the assessment centre (AC) replaces the classic job interview or is used as a supplement to it. This is especially true in the fields of management consultancy, sales, human resources and financial services. In contrast to the job interview, you will not be invited by the company to an individual interview with decision-makers from the recruiting and specialist departments, but to a one to three-day group selection process with up to 12 different applicants, possibly also for different positions. You will go through various exercises in the group under the eyes of professional observers.

The aim of the AC is to get a complete impression of the personality and qualifications of the candidates and to check their personal and professional suitability for the vacant position. The candidates can be compared directly with each other.

The applicants are analysed and evaluated by psychologists and company representatives who do not know the individual applications and can therefore form a neutral picture of each person. Your challenges at the AC consist of having to deal with certain discussions, lectures, problems or tasks of an active everyday office life alone or in a team.

Standard exercises in the AC are discussion rounds on socio-political topics. You should therefore always keep up to date and, for example, read appropriate daily newspapers to inform yourself about current events. Furthermore, you may have to prepare and then present speeches on certain topics in a given processing time. Popular elements are also case studies, inbox exercises, role plays, competence tests and a self-presentation.

In role plays, for example, you have to conduct a sales talk or, as a department head, demonstrate how you deal with certain problems and behaviours of your employees in the department. In all tasks, your approach to the topics and problems is particularly important. At the end of an AC there is usually an interview.

Good preparation for the AC is important to successfully master the selection process. However, always act according to your personality. Remain authentic and do not pretend. To do this, familiarise yourself with the typical exercises used in assessment centres.

You should not take a too narrow-minded view of recommendations and advice from books on the subject of AC. However, they will also provide you with valuable tips and can offer you useful support in your preparation.



Assessment centre checklist

- Have you confirmed receipt of the invitation and made a binding commitment?
- Are travel and accommodation planned and, if applicable, booked?
- Do you know the schedule of the AC?
- Is something still unclear to you? → Ask the contact person in charge.
- Have you collected information about the company (industry, products, locations, key figures) → Pay particular attention to current news and developments.
- Have you practised typical AC tasks (self-presentation, inbox exercise, group discussion)?
- Do you know any testimonials from other applicants?
- Do you use free practical training and seminars on AC (e.g. at your university)?



Companies put a lot of effort into personnel selection. In order for you to be convincing in the end, you have to be well prepared throughout the entire process and show your best side. Stand out from the crowd, but present yourself in a way that is credible and adapted to the company.

This is what matters:

Common theme

Present your professional development path and lead towards an overarching professional goal. But there should also be a common thread within your application documents that allows you to stand out. In terms of content, you can pick up on keywords that catch your eye in the job advertisement or on the company's homepage. Visually, the cover letter should resemble the CV. You can also score points here with creative ideas.

Authenticity

Show your best side, but make sure you describe your real personality.

Goal orientation

Recognise the needs of the employer and explicitly address them. This is the only way to spark the reader's interest. Important information is provided here in the job advertisement.

Research

Check out the company's website or press reports before writing an application. You are sure to find a clue for a creative hook.

Good intuition

An application should not be pretentious or time-consuming. Look at the company's self-presentation and adapt your style accordingly.





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Publisher:

Marketing & Career Service

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Content: Marketing & Career Service

Design: Sonja Neumeier, Dipl.-Designerin (FH)

Photos: Marketing & Career Service
Benedikt Helmhagen
Adobe Stock

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