

GLOBAL EMPLOYABILITY

German Applications Guide

In Germany, applying for a job requires a bit more documentation than in other countries. German companies often require a folder/portfolio ('die Mappe') that includes:

- a cover letter 'Anschreiben'
- a CV 'Lebenslauf'
- a passport photograph
- education certificates
- testimonials of previous employment (similar to a UK reference letter)
- work samples (if relevant)

Cover Letter 'Anschreiben' Advice

• Start your letter with the name and title of the person who is dealing with the applications (please note the importance of titles in Germany - phone in advance if necessary). If you don't have a particular person/ it's a speculative letter, address the letter to "Personalabteilung" and write it under the company's name in the address

• The covering letter should briefly express why you are seeking a job, what interests you about the post and why you think you are the best person to do the job

• German recruiters prefer a conservative approach ; try to write in your own style but be concise and accurate

• One page A4 will usually do for an application letter in Germany. You should avoid repeating what is written in your CV

• Use formal greetings: "Sehr geehrte(r) Frau/Herr (Last Name). If you don't know the name of the person you are writing to use: "Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren," and close the letter with "Mit freundlichen Grüßen".

• Leave a few lines and type your name underneath then sign your name on the letter

Key Differences from UK CVs and cover letters:

- German companies often require a folder called 'die Mappe' which includes certificates for your education, work testimonials and sometimes even work samples
- You should sign your cover letter and your CV
- Job titles are very important so make sure you get this right
- CVs tend to be briefer and more factual

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CV 'Lebenslauf' Advice

- Work experience is highly valued by German employers and should be a priority when writing a CV; job titles are very important so make sure you include these
- CVs should be in strict reverse chronological order, leaving no gaps unaccounted for. As the information given is usually very factual, without explanation or interpretation, most graduate CVs fit onto a single page. A CV can, however, run to a maximum of two pages
- Hobbies are only mentioned when relevant for the job. Language skills and areas of interest are given in a German CV; it is useful to mention the level of language spoken/written
- Photos are commonly included and should be passport size (scanned in or attached)
- It has been traditional to mention marital status on German CVs but this is not always compulsory
- Courses, seminars, congresses or conferences that are relevant in relation to the position should be mentioned. It is also common to mention whether you have a valid driving license or not.
- Something which is very typical for Germany is that you have to sign your CV at the bottom. Sign below the text on the right, next to the place and date in the left corner – that is the most common layout. However, you will also find CVs that hold a signature on the left with the date and place right below.