

# Preparing Your Job Application

FIT: Soft Skills & Employability

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Did you ever wrote a cover letter and designed your CV? What do you expect from today's session?

# What Should Be Included in a Job Application?

The most important elements first: your **resume, cover letter, and certificates or proof documents** are the core of your application. These are a MUST in every application and are expected.

Additionally, you can upgrate your application with a great **layout, cover page, motivational letter**, etc.

One note in advance: For equality reasons, a **photo** in your application is no longer required. Therefore, it is not mandatory. Of course, it is not forbidden either and we would recommend you as an international students to add one.

# Where can I find open job positions?

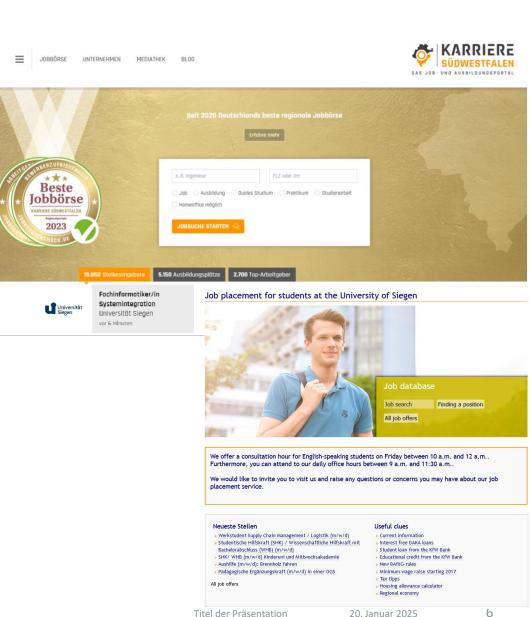
- **Especially for the region South Westfalia:** ٠ https://www.karriere-suedwestfalen.de/
- from the University: Jobvermittlung/Job placement for ۲ students at the University of Siegen: https://www.jobvermittlung.uni-siegen.de
- in general ٠

Stepstone

Indeed

Jobware

## Bundesagentur für Arbeit (Jobcenter)





# The CV

## How to impress with your CV



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# Structure and order

## Main categories

- Professional career (work experience) ۲
- Education (Studies, school) ۲
- Personal information (Name, Date of birth, address, ۲ email, phone number)
- Special skills ۲
- Interests & Hobbies •

## Additional information

- Social Commitment/Voluntary Work ۲
- Professional Development (trainings, courses, ۲ continuing education)
- Photo is optional ٠

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## MUSTERMANN

Angestrebte Position Key Account Managerin

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**INTERESSEN & HOBBYS** 

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### • maximum 2 DIN A4 pages

• friendly looking professinal photo, wear a (light-

coloured) shirt, (tie & suit for some fields of work),

### blouse

- appealing and consistent layout (font size!!)
- same structure for every paragraph, same gap size
- add month and year (e.g. 03/2016 05/2018) for

every work experience and educational experience

order: most recent job or studies should be on top

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- IMPORTANT: no gaps, every episode of your life must be listed; if there are gaps you will most likely be asked about it
- Hobbies are important to show your personality
- Colours are always great, but don't use more than two different colours
- not more than two different fonts
- same font size for every paragraph
- you can use graphics to list your skills

position

• just add the work experience that is relevant for the desired

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#### Ervin Acheson Sr. Warehouse Specialist 886 Brentwood Drive 76567 Austin, TX 512-543-7793 ervinach@email.com

#### Objective

A responsible and competent Warehouse Lead, with over 9 years of experience performing a range of roles within a warehouse. Effective induction, training, motivation, and leadership of teams. Experienced Fork-lift Operator (Reach, Electric Pallet Jack, and Order Picker). Proficient in the use of standard warehousing and distribution systems. Punctual, reliable and friendly, with excellent interpersonal and clear communication skills. Adaptable, patient and able to keep a clear head under pressure. Now seeking a new position where these skills can be used and developed to their fullest extent.

#### Experience

Warehouse Inventory Specialist 05-2019- present Manage department inventory by maintaining cycle counts in specified departments. Analyze and report data relative to the department to constantly improve quality and efficiency. Identify process improvement and make recommendations to maintain a high level of customer service. Partner with DCs and Stores to ensure all communication regarding inventory is accurate and timely. Sr. Warehouse Outbound Specialist 08-2015-05-2019 Living Spaces Furniture Supports Supervisor and performs supervisor duties when supervisor is absent or out of the area. Provides encouragement to team members, including communicating team goals and identifying areas for new training or skill checks. Assists management with hiring processes and new team member training. Conducts team meetings to update members on best practices and continuing expectations. Sr. Warehouse Returns Lead/ Inventory Control Clerk 05-2012-11-2015 West Marine Lead the team to ensure that all key performance metrics are achieved including units processed per hour. Performs cycle counts of assigned inventory lots and locations. Matches receiving paperwork (packing lists, bills of lading, invoices) to orders; andits paperwork for accuracy and completeness and receives product into inventory.

Analyze the discrepancies in inventory, perform root cause analysis and develop corrective actions.

#### Education

#### 09-2010-07-2012

Gavilan College - Associates Degree in Business Management.

	Skills
Leadership	Organization
Team Work	Communication
Ability to Work Under Pressure	Positive Attitude
Decision Making	Problem Solving
Conflict Resolution	Strong Relationship Building
	Software
General Computer Knowledge	Microsoft Word
Microsoft Excel	Microsoft Powerpoint
Microsoft Dynamics AX	CRM Software



#### SABINE MUSTERMANN

Angestrebte Position Key Account Managerin

#### PERSÖNLICHE DATEN

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#### **INTERESSEN & HOBBYS**

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# **Vague Job Descriptions**

## Worst-Practice Example:

"Worked as a manager in a company."

This description is extremely vague. It doesn't clarify what the person did, what skills were used, or any achievements.

### **Better-Practice Example:**

"Managed a team of 10 employees, overseeing daily operations, and improved team efficiency by 20% through implementing a new workflow process."

# **Inconsistent Formatting**

## Worst-Practice Example:

- One section is in bold, the next one isn't.
- Dates are listed in different formats (e.g., "2015-2019" vs "05/2016").
- Font style changes multiple times throughout the document.

### **Better-Practice Example:**

Ensure consistency in font, size, and date formatting.

For example, use a clear, professional font like Arial or Calibri, and maintain the same font size and style throughout the document. Keep dates in a consistent format, like "January 2019 – Present."

# **Irrelevant or Excessive Personal Information**

## **Worst-Practice Example:**

"I am 25 years old, single, and like to travel."

This personal information is unnecessary and irrelevant to the job application. It can also be seen as unprofessional.

## **Better-Practice Example:**

Focus on professional skills and accomplishments, rather than personal details.

# **Overused Buzzwords and Clichés**

## Worst-Practice Example:

"I am a dynamic, results-driven, go-getter with a passion for working in a fast-paced environment."

This sounds generic and doesn't provide any concrete information about your actual skills or experience.

## **Better-Practice Example:**

"I have successfully led projects that resulted in a 15% increase in sales by developing strategic marketing campaigns."

# **Spelling and Grammar Mistakes**

## **Worst-Practice Example:**

"I am a hard worker and enjoye my time helping customers."

Spelling mistakes make you appear careless and unprofessional.

### **Better-Practice Example:**

Always proofread your resume, or have someone else review it for spelling and grammar errors. Ensure sentences are clear and correct.

# **Including Unnecessary Work Experience**

## Worst-Practice Example:

"Cashier at a fast food restaurant (2012-2014)"

While early job experiences can show work ethic, listing every part-time job isn't necessary if it's not relevant to the position you're applying for.

## **Better-Practice Example:**

Focus on relevant roles and experiences that demonstrate transferable skills for the job you're applying to. For example, focus on project management, leadership, or specific industry experience.

# **Using Unprofessional Email Addresses**

## Worst-Practice Example: cooldude1234@example.com

An unprofessional email address can give a negative impression to potential employers.

## **Better-Practice Example:**

Use a professional email address such as "john.doe@example.com" or a variation with your first and last name.

# **Excessive Use of Graphics or Colors**

## Worst-Practice Example:

- Including bright colors, unusual fonts, or too many pictures.
- Overcomplicating the design with unnecessary visuals.

## **Better-Practice Example:**

Keep the design clean and professional. Use simple, easy-to-read fonts and limited color schemes (preferably black, white, or subtle tones).

# Using a One-Size-Fits-All Resume

## **Worst-Practice Example:**

Submitting the same resume for different job roles without tailoring it to the specific job description.

## **Better-Practice Example:**

Tailor your resume to match the job you're applying for by emphasizing relevant skills, experience, and qualifications that align with the job description.

# Summary: DO'S

- individual and attractive design
- clear structure
- highlight the captions and the job titles
- describe your main tasks at the job or internship SHORTLY

(same for your Studies, you can describe your thesis SHORTLY)  $\rightarrow$  use keywords

- match the design of the CV with your cover letter
- Be creative! When you have a special looking CV, it will get more attention
- CV IN GERMAN is a BIG PLUS 🙂



# Summary: DON`TS

- no Europass CV
- no full sentences  $\rightarrow$  keep it short
- no links, just attachments as PDF files, Exception: You apply in a creative field and want to show your website/programming skills, etc.
- No facts about your parents/family members
- Not more than 2 pages



# **Templates / Examples**

- <u>https://karrierebibel.de/lebenslauf/</u>
- <u>https://www.canva.com/</u> (free Design tool)
- Word

ПJ



# Let's revise your documents together! ③



# **The Cover Letter**

How to impress with a good cover letter



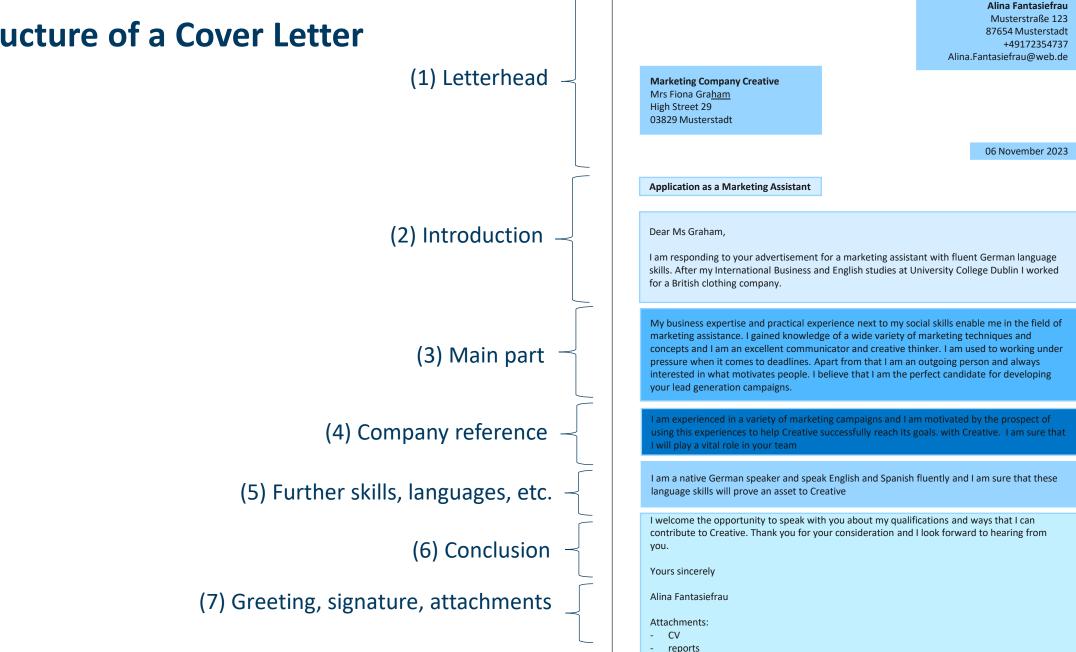
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# What are the advantages of a cover letter?

- Reinforces your goals and motivation
- **O** Demonstrates initiative and additional commitment
- Special qualifications and successes become clearer
- Elaborates on important stages in your CV
- Establishes a personal connection to the recipient
- Stands out positively from the mass of applicants

# **Structure of a Cover Letter**



# **Cover Letter Check List**

- sender's address (name, address, phone number, email)
- receiver's address (company name, first and family name of contact person, address)
- **date** (right-aligned)
- **subject** (link to position as advertised)

#### salutation

Watch out! Use "Sehr geehrte Frau \_\_\_\_\_" when contact person is female and "Sehr geehrter Herr \_\_\_\_\_" when contact person is male. Also watch out for titles of contact person (Prof./ Dr.)

- **introduction** and opening phrase
- presenting your profile strengths and competences with examples
- **Identification with company:** Why do you want to work for them?
- motivation, further skills, languages, references and notice periods
- closing phrase and greetings
- signature
- attachments

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# **DIN 5008 standards and rules**

## • Font:

- always use the same font in all application documents
- suitable fonts for applications: Times New Roman, Arial, Georgia, Helvetica, Book Antiqua, Verdana, Tahoma, Cambria
- Font size: 12 points
- Margins:
  - Top margin: 4.5 cm (without header)
  - Bottom margin: 2.5 cm
  - Left margin: 2.5 cm
  - Right margin: 2 cm (but at least 1.5 cm)
- Line spacing: between 1 and 1.5 depending on the text length

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- Avoid addressing an incorrect contact person!
- Don't just repeat what's already on your CV, add additional points of interest! Use the letter to add value.
- Don't use platitudes without reference to the job
- Avoid spelling and grammatical errors
- Do not exaggerate
- Don't use generic templates or language.
- Don't be overly informal or too verbose.
- Max. one DIN A4 page



- Professional competencies (hard skills) e.g. technical skills, Languages etc.
- Personal strengths (soft skills) e.g. communication, teamwork, initiative etc.
- Academic successes
- Professional + private goals
- Relevant experience + values
- Identification with company + passion
- Social commitment + social responsibility
- Cover Letter design should match with the other application documents



- Start with a strong opening that grabs attention.
- Show enthusiasm for the role and company.
- Provide specific examples of your skills and achievements.
- End with a clear call to action.
- Personalize each letter: Address the hiring manager by name.
- Structure: Use clear sections introduction, body, and closing.
- Highlight key achievements: Explain why you're the best fit for the role.
- Keep it concise: Aim for one page.



# **Phrasing Tips**

# Avoiding certain clichés or overused phrases

#### 1. "I am writing to express my interest in the position."

•Why avoid it: This is a very common and overused introduction. Instead, get straight to the point and show enthusiasm or mention a specific reason you're applying. •Better alternative: "I am excited to apply for the [position name] at [company name] because of [specific reason]."

#### 2. "I am the perfect candidate for this job."

•Why avoid it: This phrase can sound arrogant and lacks substance. It's better to provide concrete examples of how your skills and experience align with the job. •Better alternative: "With my experience in [specific skill or task], I believe I can contribute significantly to your team."

#### 3. "I am a hard worker."

•Why avoid it: While being a hard worker is important, it's a vague statement that doesn't provide evidence of your capabilities. •Better alternative: "I consistently meet deadlines and exceed expectations by [specific action or result]."

#### 4. "I am looking for a new challenge."

•Why avoid it: This can sound vague and self-serving, rather than highlighting why you're a good fit for the role and company.
•Better alternative: "I'm excited about the opportunity to [specific responsibility] at [company name] because it aligns with my career goals in [specific field]."

#### 5. "I am very enthusiastic and eager to learn."

•Why avoid it: While enthusiasm is important, simply stating it without examples makes it sound insubstantial. •Better alternative: "I am eager to apply my knowledge of [specific skill] and continue learning in a dynamic team environment."

# Avoiding certain clichés or overused phrases

#### 5. "I am very enthusiastic and eager to learn."

•Why avoid it: While enthusiasm is important, simply stating it without examples makes it sound insubstantial. •Better alternative: "I am eager to apply my knowledge of [specific skill] and continue learning in a dynamic team environment."

#### 6. "I think I would be a good fit for your company."

•Why avoid it: This is too vague and doesn't provide concrete evidence of why you're a good fit.
•Better alternative: "My experience in [specific skill] and my passion for [industry] make me confident in my ability to contribute to [company name]."

#### 7. "Please find my resume attached for your consideration."

•Why avoid it: It's redundant because employers know that the resume is attached. Instead, focus on explaining why you're a good fit for the role. •Better alternative: "I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how my skills and experience align with the needs of your team."

#### 8. "I have excellent communication skills."

•Why avoid it: This is a cliché and doesn't demonstrate how your communication skills have been applied. •Better alternative: "I have successfully led team meetings and collaborated cross-functionally to ensure clear communication and project success."

#### 9. "I am confident that you will find my qualifications impressive."

•Why avoid it: It's presumptuous and doesn't give the reader any specific reason to be impressed. •Better alternative: "I am confident that my background in [specific skill] will allow me to make valuable contributions to your team."

#### 10. "I am very passionate about this job."

•Why avoid it: Passion is important but is often seen as a generic phrase without substance. •Better alternative: "I am deeply motivated by the opportunity to [specific task or responsibility] and contribute to [company's goal]."

# Avoiding certain clichés or overused phrases

#### 11. "I have extensive experience in [task/field]."

•Why avoid it: This can sound vague, and without backing it up with examples, it doesn't add value to your application. •Better alternative: "In my previous role at [company name], I developed and implemented [specific task], which resulted in [specific outcome]."

#### 12. "I am a team player."

•Why avoid it: It's another vague statement that doesn't show how you work with a team or the results of your teamwork. •Better alternative: "I have successfully worked with cross-functional teams to [specific achievement], demonstrating my ability to collaborate effectively."

#### 13. "I am very interested in working for your company."

•Why avoid it: This is a generic phrase and doesn't explain why you're interested in the company. •Better alternative: "I admire [company's] commitment to [specific value or achievement], and I'm excited about the opportunity to contribute to [company's specific initiative or project]."

#### 14. "I believe I would be a great addition to your team."

•Why avoid it: This is another statement that sounds generic and lacks proof.

•Better alternative: "My background in [specific skill] and my passion for [specific task] would allow me to make a meaningful contribution to your team."

### **Tips for Writing a Strong Cover Letter:**

- Focus on **specific examples** that demonstrate your skills and qualifications.
- Avoid overused phrases and focus on your unique strengths.
- Tailor each cover letter to the **specific job** you're applying for, showing that you've researched the company and understand its needs.
- Use **confident, but humble language**. Instead of telling the employer you're a great fit, show them with evidence.

# **Examples for a strong opening**

**1.** "I am excited to apply for the [Position Title] at [Company Name]. With a passion for [relevant field/industry], I am eager to bring my skills in [specific skills or experiences] to your dynamic team."

**2.** "Having followed [Company Name]'s innovative work in [industry/field], I am thrilled at the opportunity to apply for the [Position Title]. The company's commitment to [specific company value or initiative] aligns perfectly with my professional goals."

**3.** "With [number] years of experience in [relevant field/industry], I am eager to contribute my expertise in [specific skills or accomplishments] to the [Position Title] at [Company Name]."

**4.** "In response to your recent job posting for [Position Title], I am writing to express my interest. My background in [field/industry] and my skills in [specific skills] make me a strong candidate for this role."

5. "I was thrilled to learn about the opening for [Position Title] at [Company Name] from [referral/source]. Given my background in [field/industry], I believe I can make a significant contribution to your team."

**6.** "I am writing to express my strong interest in the [Position Title] at [Company Name]. As someone deeply passionate about [specific aspect of the role/industry], I am drawn to the opportunity to contribute to your team."

7. "With a proven track record in [specific skills or experiences], I am confident that I can make a valuable contribution to [Company Name] in the [Position Title]."

# Show your possibilities to contribute the company

**1.** "I would love to contribute ideas for streamlining logistics processes, particularly by exploring ways to use data analytics to enhance inventory management and operational efficiency."

2. "I am eager to collaborate on finding innovative solutions that could help improve the efficiency of supply chain operations, such as exploring new technologies for tracking and coordination."

**3.** "I am looking forward to supporting efforts to enhance communication between departments, possibly by contributing to the development of more effective coordination practices."

**4.** "I hope to assist in developing strategies that help manage seasonal demand fluctuations by analyzing data and working on proactive planning approaches."

5. "I am excited about the opportunity to support sustainability initiatives, perhaps by suggesting ways to optimize delivery routes or explore greener logistics practices."

**6.** "I would like to contribute to improving the complaints management process, focusing on finding ways to enhance efficiency and customer satisfaction."

7. "I am keen to assist in exploring how technology can be further integrated into logistics operations, with the goal of automating routine tasks and improving overall workflow."

# Writing Exercises

#### **Exercise: Junior Engineer Position**

#### **Job Advertisement:**

"We are seeking a recent graduate with a degree in Engineering to join our team as a Junior Engineer. The ideal candidate will have a strong foundation in engineering principles and be proficient with CAD software (AutoCAD, SolidWorks). You will assist in designing, testing, and optimizing engineering systems. No previous professional experience is required, but relevant academic projects or internships are a plus."

Task: Write 3 sentences for your cover letter that highlight your engineering background, proficiency with CAD software, and your interest in gaining hands-on experience in the field.

#### **Best-Practice Answer:**

1."I graduated with a degree in Mechanical Engineering, where I gained solid theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience in designing systems using CAD software such as AutoCAD and SolidWorks."

2."As part of my final-year project, I designed and prototyped a mechanical system, which enhanced my problem-solving skills and ability to apply engineering principles in real-world scenarios."

3."I am excited about the opportunity to bring my academic knowledge and CAD skills to your team, and I am eager to gain valuable hands-on experience in engineering design and optimization."

#### **Exercise: Graduate Trainee in HR Position**

#### **Job Advertisement:**

"We are offering a Graduate Trainee position in HR for recent university graduates. The successful candidate will have a degree in Human Resources, Psychology, or a related field. You will be involved in recruitment, employee relations, and HR administration. Strong communication skills and the ability to work well with people are essential."

Task: Write 3 sentences for your cover letter that demonstrate your academic background in HR or related fields, communication skills, and interest in HR functions.

#### **Best-Practice Answer:**

1."I recently graduated with a degree in Human Resources Management, where I gained a strong understanding of recruitment, employee relations, and HR policies."

2."During my internship at DEF Corporation, I supported the recruitment process and helped organize employee engagement activities, which strengthened my communication and organizational skills."

3."I am excited to apply my academic knowledge and passion for HR to your graduate trainee program, where I can further develop my skills and contribute to your HR team's success."

#### **Exercise: Graduate Analyst Position**

#### **Job Advertisement:**

"We are looking for a Graduate Analyst to join our consulting team. The ideal candidate will have a degree in Economics, Business, or a related field. Strong analytical skills, proficiency in Excel, and a keen interest in data analysis are essential. The role involves conducting research, analyzing data, and preparing reports. Internship experience in a similar field is a plus."

Task: Write 3 sentences for your cover letter that highlight your academic background, analytical skills, and any relevant internship or research experience.

#### **Best-Practice Answer:**

1."With a degree in Economics, I have developed strong analytical skills and a solid understanding of data analysis tools, including advanced Excel functions."

2."During my internship at ABC Consulting, I assisted with market research and data analysis, contributing to the creation of detailed client reports."

3."I am eager to apply my academic training and analytical abilities to support your consulting team and provide data-driven insights for your clients."

#### **Exercise: Junior Software Developer Position**

#### **Job Advertisement:**

"We are looking for an entry-level Software Developer to join our tech team. The successful candidate will have a degree in Computer Science or a related field and proficiency in programming languages such as Java, Python, or C++. You will work closely with senior developers to build and maintain software applications. Previous internships or university projects involving programming are a plus."

Task: Write 3 sentences for your cover letter that highlight your academic background, any relevant programming experience, and your enthusiasm to work with a team of developers.

#### **Best-Practice Answer:**

1."I recently graduated with a degree in Computer Science, where I gained hands-on experience with Java, Python, and C++ through various university projects."

2."In my internship at XYZ Technologies, I collaborated with senior developers on coding tasks and learned how to work efficiently within an Agile environment."

3."I am excited to bring my academic knowledge and enthusiasm for software development to your team, where I can continue to learn and contribute to innovative projects."

# **General Tips**

#### **Important Documents**

Attach the following documents to your application:

- graduate diploma (of your most recent graduation e.g. School, Bachelors or Masters)
- List of achievements (if your still studying; not necessary for simple part-time jobs)
- employer's reference(s) from previous jobs and internships
- references from professional development
- references from voluntary work
- $\rightarrow$  in chronological order, most recent first

### **Certificates and Diplomas**

**Include Relevant Documents**: Attach **relevant certificates** such as your degree, any additional qualifications, language proficiency certifications, or industry-specific courses that support your application.

**Keep it Organized**: If you have multiple certificates, **organize them** in order of importance or relevance to the job. If possible, combine them into one PDF to avoid multiple attachments.

**Translation**: If your certificates are not in English or the required language, include **certified translations** alongside the originals, especially if they are required for the position or company.

# **Portfolio (If Applicable)**

**Showcase Your Work**: If you're in a creative field (e.g., design, writing, marketing), a **portfolio** of your best work can significantly enhance your application.

**Link to Online Portfolio**: If your portfolio is online, you can simply include a **link** in your cover letter or resume. For physical or PDF portfolios, ensure that they are easy to navigate and include only your best pieces.

**Tailored Samples**: Select **samples that are relevant** to the job you're applying for, showcasing your abilities in areas that align with the position.

#### References

**Provide on Request**: It's common to state on your resume or cover letter that references are available upon request. If you choose to include them upfront, make sure to **ask your references for permission** before listing their details.

**Select Relevant References**: Choose references who can speak to your skills and work ethic in relation to the job you're applying for. This could be professors, former employers, or internship supervisors.

# **Proof of Identity or Work Eligibility (If Required)**

**Only if Requested**: Some employers might request proof of identity or your right to work in the country. This could be a **copy of your passport** or a **work visa**. Only include this if the employer specifically requests it in the job posting.

**Redact Sensitive Information**: For documents like your passport, be mindful to **redact sensitive information**, such as your passport number, unless it's required.

## **File Format and Naming**

**PDF Format**: It's generally recommended to **submit your documents in PDF format**, as it preserves the formatting and ensures your documents appear exactly as intended on any device.

**Professional File Names**: Name your files professionally, using your name and the document type. For example, "JohnDoe\_Resume.pdf" or "JohnDoe\_CoverLetter.pdf." This makes it easier for the recruiter to identify your files.

**Single Document**: If possible, combine all documents into one PDF (resume, cover letter, and certificates) to make it easier for the employer to access everything in one click.

#### **No Unnecessary Documents**

**Stay Focused**: Only include documents that are relevant to the job. Avoid adding unnecessary items like irrelevant certificates, personal documents, or non-professional references.

**Avoid Overloading**: Too many attachments can overwhelm the recruiter. Stick to the essentials and keep the number of files to a minimum.

#### **Check for Errors**

**Review All Documents**: Before submitting, carefully **proofread all your attachments** to ensure they're free of typos, errors, or inconsistencies. A well-polished application increases your chances of standing out.

**File Size**: Ensure that the total file size of your attachments is not too large. Some email servers or application portals may limit file sizes. If needed, compress your files or use a file-sharing service.

### In Summary:

• Include only relevant documents (resume, cover letter, certificates, portfolio).

• Use a professional format (PDF), ensure correct file names, and avoid excessive attachments.

• Make sure your attachments are error-free and well-organized for easy access.

• Tailor the documents specifically to the job you're applying for to showcase your qualifications and interest.

### **Check out our next FIT-Events:**



Feeling stressed during exam season? Join our workshop on Friday 17.01.2025 *"Thriving Under Pressure"* 

Already visited our Student Living Room (SLR) in this building (F-S 002)? Stop by for a relaxing time and some good company!

Reserve your spot: Master one language level in German in just 3 weeks with **our FIT-Intensive-German-Course** starting from 03.03.2025

