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Job Application in Germany — CV, Cover Letter and Tips

How to apply correctly in Germany: CV, cover letter and what matters in interviews.
Status: March 2026.

Deutsche Begriffe: Bewerbung | Lebenslauf | Anschreiben | Vorstellungsgespräch |
Bewerbungsmappe

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> Status: March 2026. All information without warranty.

The German Application — Structure

A complete application in Germany consists of:

- 1. Anschreiben** (1 page)
- 2. Lebenslauf** (1-2 pages)
- 3. Certificates and diplomas** (copies)

CV (Lebenslauf)

Required content:

- **Personal data:** Name, address, phone, email, date of birth
- **Professional experience:** Reverse chronological order (most recent first)
- **Education:** University, vocational training, school
- **Skills:** Languages (with level: A1-C2), IT skills, driver's license

- **Photo:** Common in Germany (but not mandatory)

Tips:

- **Maximum 2 pages** — concise and to the point
- **Avoid gaps** — every period must be explained
- **Relevance:** List only what matters for the position
- **German format:** Date as MM/YYYY (e.g., 03/2026)

Cover Letter (Anschreiben)

Structure:

- 1. Subject:** "Application for [Position], Reference number [...]"
- 2. Introduction:** Why this position? What motivates you?
- 3. Main section:** Your key qualifications and experience
- 4. Closing:** Salary expectations (if requested), earliest start date

Common mistakes:

- Copy-paste without customization for the company
- Too long (maximum 1 page!)
- Spelling errors (proofread carefully!)
- "Hereby I apply..." — too old-fashioned

Where to find jobs?

Portal	Type	Specialty
StepStone	All sectors	Largest job portal
Indeed	All sectors	International, also English-language jobs
LinkedIn	Professionals/Academics	Networking + job search
Xing	Professionals	German LinkedIn
Agentur für Arbeit	All	Free, including counseling
Make it in Germany	Professionals from abroad	Official government portal

Recognition of foreign qualifications

Your foreign degree often needs to be **recognized**:

- **Regulated professions** (doctor, teacher, nurse): Recognition **mandatory**
- **Unregulated professions**: Recognition recommended, but not mandatory
- Portal: **anabin.kmk.org** (database for foreign qualifications)
- Counseling: **Recognition advisory services** of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce or Chamber of Crafts

Tips for foreigners

- Always provide German language skills with a **certificate** (Goethe, telc, TestDaF)
- **Unsolicited applications** — very common and successful in Germany
- Use **internships** as an entry point — especially if you don't have a network yet