

CV-Check-List

I. CLEAR STRUCTURE

- Ideally **one page**, maximum two (with a lot of practical experience; for academic jobs possibly longer)
- Experience and training are arranged in **reverse chronological order** (standardise dates)
- Structure of the CV using **headings**: Are these comprehensible and correct in terms of content?
- Is the CV **clearly formatted**? (spacing, highlighting e.g. in bold, bullet points)

II. PROFESSIONAL SELF-PRESENTATION

- Professional application photo: good quality, professional pose, neutral background, neutral/professional outfit, friendly facial expression
- Necessary **personal data**: name, address (use German address), phone number, e-mail (use university account)

III. MEANINGFUL PRESENTATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL PROFILE

Study program

- Mark study program as ongoing („since...” or „... - to date”) or give prospective graduation date to specify availability
- Add „**personal focus**”: appr. 3 specific areas/topics within your study program (based on elective modules, elected profile, individual interests, particular strengths)
- Mention study **projects** and practical seminar work (especially Humboldt Reloaded), topic of final theses (if relevant)
- Good **grades** can be mentioned (final grade, current average or grade of the thesis)

Work/Practical Experiences (Internships, Jobs...)

- Informative **labelling**: include department/position 'e.g. internship in quality management'
- List 3 – 5 of your **responsibilities and regular tasks**
 - Active formulation: e.g. 'Prepared table presentations', 'Conducted data analysis'
 - Include your skills that might be transferable to another position (academic, methods, software, soft skills...)
 - Use bullet-points, half-sentences

Skills/Competences

- Necessary Categories: **Languages** (mother tongue, foreign languages), **IT-Skills/Software**: give **competence level**
- Other optional categories: Technical skills (e.g. laboratory methods), soft skills, certificates (Can the entries be substantiated by experience/certificates/work references? Make sure they are mentioned.)



TOP TIP: Create a complete CV with all the activities and tasks you can think of. Keep it up to date and use it as a basis for all applications. For each application, you can delete irrelevant entries and emphasise important experiences.

The individual CV

Individualise the CV for each application using the following tips

- Read the job ad carefully; the tasks/requirements listed first are the most important; distinguish between 'must have' and 'nice to have' requirements
- Put yourself in the shoes of the company: what skills are they looking for? What abilities are needed to complete the tasks at hand?
- Delete unsuitable experience/activities
- Emphasise important experience, e.g. through the order of the task/activity descriptions or the in-depth description of individual activities
- Reuse keywords from the job ad in your CV

Specifics of the CV for the German Job Market

The **most common adjustments** international students should make before applying for a job in Germany:

- Use a professional application **photo** (no passport photo or selfie); a photo is not requested but common (i. e. most German applicants will use one)
- Give your current German **address** (to highlight your availability)
- As a recent graduate or student, your **study program** is as least as important as your work experience. Say something about it!
- Translate all your **grades** into the same system for comparability
- Competence-oriented** self-presentation: Tone down your awards and achievements; focus on your competences and abilities
- Use **lists/bullet-points and half-sentences** (instead of full sentences) for describing experiences. Don't give too many/irrelevant details.
- Profile** (self-description in full sentences): concentrate on your key skills and your goals (avoid re-narrating you CV, focussing on achievements or personal philosophy)
- No **references** are needed for job entry (except for applications in the academic field)
- The section "**key achievements**" is not common in German CVs

No Gos for your CV

- CV in German language if your language proficiency is not adequate
- Spelling Mistakes
- Colloquial expressions
- abbreviations that are not commonly used
- long/complex sentences
- irrelevant/too detailed information (compare with job ad!)
- Lack of clarity due to missing formatting
- Lack of clarity due to overloaded layout, where the information fades into the background
- Unadapted remnants from a template or another application
- Devaluing formulations, e.g. passive description of activities 'Examination was carried out'
- Exaggeration of tasks and skills
- Passport photo or selfie
- Export as Graphic

Useful digital Tools (in 2024)

Be inspired by the latest trends in **CV layouts**, but do not copy them 1:1.

- **Canva** German Templates: https://www.canva.com/de_de/lebenslaeufer/vorlagen/
(Refer to English Templates for appropriate vocabulary (e. g. for headings:
<https://www.canva.com/resumes/>)

Check your **spelling** and ask for alternative formulations.

- *DeepL Write* <https://www.deepl.com/de/write-assistent>

ADVANCED --- **Content/Focus**: Enter the text of a job advertisement and/or your CV into an AI chat and ask, for example, which of your skills should be emphasised.

- *ChatGPT, Gemini...*

Structure of the CV

Optional content in grey and italics

Personal Data

Name	Peter Schmid
Address	Musterweg 1, 70599 Stuttgart
Phone	+49 171/123456
E-mail	Peter.Schmid@gmail.com
LinkedIn	<i>www.linkedin.com/pmuster</i>
Date and Place of birth	<i>01.11.1998, Stuttgart (Germany)</i>

Education

10/2020 – to date	B. Sc. Study Program Name of University, city, country - Personal focus areas/specialization - <i>current average grade</i> - <i>title and grade of thesis</i> - <i>scholarship</i> - <i>relevant practical coursework, projects</i> - <i>semester abroad</i>
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09/2014 – 06/2020	Type of degree, grade Name of school, location
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Only the last degree in secondary education is relevant.

Work/Practical Experience

03/2021 – to date	Department/Position/Job Title Name of Employer, city, country - responsibilities, regular tasks
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Internships, Jobs...
(Non-study-related part-time jobs can be omitted if they date back a long time or had a short duration.)

08/2018 – 09/2018	Department/Position/Job Title Name of Employer, city, country - responsibilities, regular tasks
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Competences

Languages	Mother tongue Foreign languages
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IT-Skills	Software
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<i>Professional skills</i>	<i>e.g. laboratory methods/equipment, technical skills, scientific methods...</i>
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<i>Soft skills</i>	<i>e.g. creativity, independent work, communication</i>
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<i>Other</i>	<i>e.g. certificates, driving licence</i>
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Skill level of languages:
Classification A1 to C2 +
description (e.g. 'native',
'business fluent, spoken and

Other possible sections

(if only one experience is available, it can also be assigned to other sections)

Student-Jobs

01/2020 – to date **Department/Position/Job Title**
Name of Employer, city, country
- responsibilities, regular tasks

These experiences can also be assigned to the 'Work/Practical experience' section.

03/2016 – 12/2016 **Department/Position/Job Title**
Name of Employer, city, country
- responsibilities, regular tasks

Awards/Scholarships

10/2020 – 09/2023 **Scholarship, Foundation**
*- selection criteria, type of support
(financial/mentoring...)*

Study-/professionally relevant awards

08/2022 **Competition, ranking**
- description of product/achievement

2021 **Award, sponsor**
- description of product/achievement

Extracurricular Activities

08/2017 – 06/2018 **Volunteering**
Organisation/Institution/Association
- activities/tasks/responsibilities/office

08/2017 – 06/2018 **work & travel/Au-Pair, country**

Hobbys/Interests

Sports, personal fields of interest (esp. cultural)

About me

A continuous text (3-5 lines) contains e.g. profile/competence description, motivation, career goals... (Only for advanced students!)

Date/location/signature are not necessary on the CV