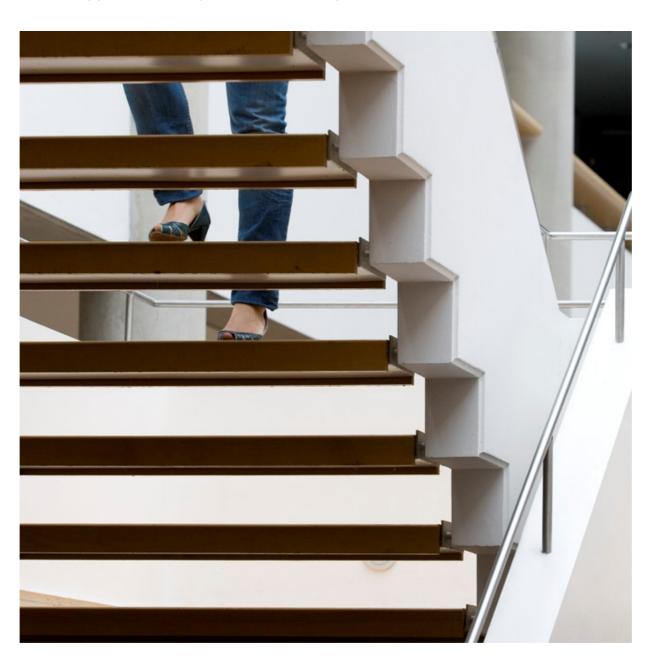# Guidelines for a successful job or internship application
Written applications for jobs and internships

# You never get a second chance for the first impression

Employers make the decision as to whether or not to invite an applicant for an interview based on the quality of that applicant's application documents. The applicant, therefore, needs to present him or herself in the best possible light through these documents. The documents need to be truthful and accurate in every detail – up-to-date, complete and grammatically and orthographically correct, whilst at the same time being uniquely tailored to that particular job or internship. For this reason, it is important to invest sufficient time and care in the preparation of these documents and to present them in a professional, but eye-catching manner.

A written application could include:

- A cover page (optional, but looks professional, so recommended!)
- A letter of application (also known as a cover letter or covering letter; essential)
- A Curriculum Vitae (CV, also known as a resume, resumé or résumé; essential)
- Written references (only if requested)
- Copies of certificates (only if requested)

# The letter of application

## Tips for letter of application

- The letter of application should be concise – try not to write more than one page (absolute max. 2 pages).
- Address your letter to the responsible person within the company. If necessary telephone the company to ask for the name of the relevant contact person.
- Start your letter with "Dear Mr (Name)", "Dear Mrs (Name)" or Dear Ms (Name). If your contact person is female and you are unsure whether to use "Mrs" or "Ms", use "Ms".
- If you want to use a subject line, put it after the salutation and keep it short. "Application for the position of (job title)" or "Re: (job title)" are fine.
- In the first paragraph, say which job you are applying for, quote the job reference number if there is one, and say where you saw the position advertised.
- In the second paragraph, say what you are doing now and why you are interested in this company, in their own needs and this spcial job.
- In the third paragraph, you can expand on what special skills, experience and/or qualities you have that make you right for the job. Be positive, but at the same time avoid being too pushy – avoid saying things like "I am the perfect person for this job because…."
- If possible, pick up on key words or phrases from the job advert and include them in your skills, experience and qualities. However, do not make claims that are untrue!
- Use practical examples of things you have done as evidence to show your  skills / experience / qualities.
- Close with "Yours sincerely" or equivalent.
- Don't forget to sign your letter and print your name beneath your signature. If you have an unusual or non gender-specific first name, or you wish to specify how you want to be addressed, write Mr, Mrs or Ms in brackets after your printed name, e.g. Kerry Brown (Mr).
- Write your letter in a font and type size that is easy to read.

# Other application documents

## Tips for the cover page

- The cover page should be custom made for the particular job or internship for which you are applying – Include the name of the job or internship at the company or institution clearly as the main title of the page.
- Your name should be clearly readable.
- Your address, telephone number and email address should be included. The telephone number and email address should be the ones at which you can actually be reached. Use an email address that is based on your name (e.g. j.smith@email.de) - avoid silly or amusing email addresses (e.g. simplesimon@email.de).
- If you feel the need to include a photo of yourself, it should be on the cover page – not on the CV.

## Tips for the application photo

- There is no requirement to include a photograph of yourself in your application. However, in some countries (e.g. Germany) it is still usual to do so. Inform yourself as to the culture-specific standards regarding application photos and act accordingly.
- If you wish to include an application photo, get one taken professionally and make sure that it is up-to-date. See that you are dressed appropriately for the position for which you are applying.

## Tips for the CV

- The CV should give a clear overview of your educational and professional achievements.
- Within the scope offered by this, it should be tailored to the particular job or internship for which you are applying – emphasising educational and professional achievements that are particularly relevant.
- Make sure that your most relevant experience and achievements are placed early in the CV. This is usually done by starting with the most recent information and working chronologically backwards – what you have done most recently is probably the most relevant. However, if this is not the case, arrange the information in your CV to highlight the most important.
- Your CV should include the following items:

## Personal Data

- Your full name. If you have an unusual or non gender-specific name, make it clear whether you are a man or a woman.
- Your contact details – full postal address, daytime and evening telephone numbers, email and possibly your mobile telephone number.
- Your date of birth is optional, as is your marital status and offspring, not in English CVs. Your nationality is only relevant if it affects your ability to work legally in that country (work permit)
- Do not include information about your parents.

## Your education and professional qualifications

- Usually in reverse chronological order (see above).
- Details of your kindergarten, nursery and primary schools are of no interest to potential employers.

## Your career history

- List all jobs and/or internships that you have previously been involved in.
- The job title
- The company name and address
- The start and end dates of working there, e. g., 08/2005-02/2006
- Your responsibilities and achievements whilst working in that position. Use action verbs to form short phrases to describe your responsibilities and achievements. This is probably the area that gives you the most scope to emphasise experience and achievements that are relevant to the particular position for which you are now applying. Where possible, order them to match the job description.
- Explain any significant gaps in your career history (travelling, raising a family, etc

## Your interests and activities

- These show the potential employer that you have an active life beyond work, and may help to demonstrate your personality or soft skills, so include team activities and charity activities. However, be honest. (NB: Meeting friends is not an activity!) This area can also often demonstrate job relevant skills.

**References**

- It is possible to include the names and contact details (including email) of 2 referees who know you professionally or educationally (former employer, head of department, professor, etc). References are available upon request.
- Always ask these referees if they are willing to provide a reference for you before you include them.
- Make sure that the contact details that you give are up-to-date.
- Referees should not be members of your family.

■ Your CV may also include the following optional sections:

**Community, military or voluntary service**

- Give brief details

**Additional skills**

- Languages – give CEFR levels, if possible. If not use descriptors such as Fluent / good / basic spoken / written English etc.
- IT skills – list any relevant software skills you may have
- First aid
- Driving license only if relevant for the job/internship.

■ It is usual to put your signature on your CV.
■ Do not include written references or certificates unless these are specifically requested.
■ Never attach original certificates; these should be taken with you in person to the interview, if you are offered one.

# Other types of application

## Tips for unsolicited applications

- The chances of success with an unsolicited application are significantly improved through personal contact. If it is possible, telephone the personnel department of the company or institution, or follow up contact made at job fairs, conferences, company presentations, etc. Use information gathered through such contact to optimise your application documents.
- Address your application to the relevant person within the company or institution. If necessary, telephone the company to ask for the name of the relevant contact person.
- Use job advertisements for similar positions within the company, or from similar companies, to develop a requirements profile for the type of position for which you are applying. Orientate your application to that profile. Don't just send identical letters and CVs to a list of different companies for different jobs. Tailor your application to the specific company anad job as much as possible.

## Tips for online applications

- When an employer offers the possibility to apply for a job or internship through an online application, it is most likely that such applications will be preferred. Online applications offer the employer the chance to process the applications through a predetermined system and possibly to use computer technology to assist in this.
- Approach an online application exactly as you would a written one. Research and prepare your application. Avoid grammatical or orthographical errors. Remember, once you have hit the send button, it is too late. Check and double-check your entries.
- Prepare text entries in free-text fields offline beforehand.
- As mentioned above, use an email address that is based on your name (e.g. j.smith@email.de) for your contact address - avoid silly or amusing email addresses.
- If the letter of application is included as a part of the online application form, it is not necessary to send it again as an attachment.
- Use clear, self-explanatory filenames for any attachments you include.
- Send any attachments as .pdf format documents. They should not be bigger than 1MB.

# Tips for email applications

- Only send your application by email when the employer explicitly states that this is desired.
- Use an email address that is based on your name (e.g. j.smith@email.de) - avoid silly or amusing email addresses (e.g. simplesimon@email.de).
- Make sure that you send your application to the email address of the person responsible for the position for which you are applying. If in doubt, look on the company website for the address of the personnel manager or telephone the company and ask for the correct email address. A mail that lands in the wrong in-tray will probably be simply deleted.
- Your letter of application does not need to be sent as a separate attachment. The email itself should be written just as a paper-based letter of application, and thus will suffice.
- As per a written application (see above), use a formal salutation (Dear Mr …, Dear Mrs…, Dear Ms….) when starting your email application.
- Finish your email application with "Yours sincerely" and your name.
- Attach your CV as a .pdf document. It should not be bigger than 1MB
- Make absolutely sure that your email is virus-free. Any document detected to be containing malware will be destroyed before it is opened.

# Literature and Links

## List of literatur for written applications (Place of location: Infothek C 8. EG)

- Jasmin Hagmann / Christoph Hagmann: Die besten Bewerbungsmuster für Bachelor- und Masterabsolventen. Freiburg i. Breisgau: Rudolf Haufe Verlag 2007
- Hesse / Schrader: Die perfekte Bewerbungsmappe für Hochschulabsolventen. Mit kommentierten Bewerbungsfotos. Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn 2002
- Hesse / Schrader: Praxismappe. So schreiben Sie einen überzeugenden Lebenslauf. Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn 2005
- Hesse / Schrader: Die perfekte Bewerbungsmappe für nicht perfekte Lebensläufe. Die besten Beispiele erfolgreicher Kandidaten. Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn 2002
- Svenja Hofert: Jobsuche und Bewerbung im Web 2.0. Wie Sie das Internet als Karrieresprungbrett nutzen. Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn 2008
- Judith Leigh: CVs and Job Applications. Oxford University Press Inc. 2004
- Püttjer & Schnierda: Die Bewerbungsmappe mit Profil für Führungskräfte. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag GmbH 2003

## Links for written applications

- Stepstone.de: Newsletter und Tipps zum Thema Bewerbung - www.stepstone.de/
- Berufsstrategie.de: Tipps rund um Bewerbung/Berufseinstieg - www.berufsstrategie.de/bewerbung-soft-skills-karriere.php?zg=ZG02?zg=ZG02
- Bewerbungsberatung online: Kostenlose Informationen, kostenpflichtige Beratung- www.bewerben.de
- Bewerbungen.de: Bewerbungsratgeber, Bewerberforum - www.bewerbungen.de
- Bewerbung.net: Unterstützung bei der Online-Bewerbung - http://bewerbung.net
- Hilfsmittel und Vorlagen zum Thema Bewerbung als download - www.talentmarketing.de/stellensuche_bewerbung/beispiele/index.htm
- matchboxmedia: Bewerbungstipps - www.jobguide.de/index.php?id=12
- Bewerbungstipps - www.personal-wissen.de/bewerbungstipps-vom-personalprofi/
- bab.la: Sammlung mit Mustersätzen für die Bewerbung im Ausland - http://de.bab.la/phrasen/bewerbung/