

Application Guidelines

For students and graduates of Westsächsische
Hochschule Zwickau - University of Applied Sciences

06/05/2019
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1 Career service? Who or what is this and what do they even do?

Some of you may have noticed the emails from the WHZ Career Service that regularly trickle into your inbox. They usually include buzzwords such as job application training, internships or part-time jobs. And some of you have no doubt already ventured as far as a guidance session or workshop. All those who don't yet know who we are and what support you can get from us on your way into the working world can get some ideas here.

Markus Haubold and Susann Kühn work for the Career Service and are the point of contact for all WHZ students and companies in the region. Their job is to bring both sides together. In an interview they explain what they do and what is important when looking for a job.



Markus, how long have you been working for the Career Service?

I've been working in the Career Service since early 2012.



What kind of things do you do here?

The Career Service work is very diverse. Firstly, we provide advice to students on all aspects of getting started in their careers. How do I apply? How do I find interesting companies, internships and jobs?

And secondly, of course we also advise companies, for example when specialists are needed. Many are now actively looking for new employees, because the market has developed so positively. We also receive enquiries from companies seeking contacts with faculties and professors. Likewise, new business contacts are also established. We are, so to speak, a gateway to the university.

As a third pillar we see the wide range of workshops and lectures for students. They cover topics such as study skills, applications, career entry, and which companies there are in the region.

What kind of problems do the students who come to you deal with?

The problems are very diverse. The majority of students come because they are simply uncertain about their application. They get us to check their application documents. It's not so much that the documents are poor or that the applicants have too little to show. Rather, the problem tends to be that students don't present themselves well enough and don't mention many of the things they already know and bring with them in their CV or cover letter. That's a great pity, because the companies do want to see that.

Another issue is individual career planning. What's the goal? Some have concrete ideas about what they want to do and then ask what other qualifications are required. Sometimes they have to choose a subject profile in their degree programme and are not sure what to pick if they want to go in a certain direction. Every now and then, we get students who quit their studies and don't know what to do next. Yeah, those are the main questions.

Speaking of questions, which questions are most frequently asked by students?

The questions usually arise during the conversation. But what is asked fairly often is the question of starting salary. Many people apply for their first job and then the job ad says: Please indicate your desired salary. This is sometimes very difficult to answer, especially in very specific sectors.

Then what's your advice to the students in that case?

In that case I will show them ways in which they can obtain information. On which portals or databases you can get figures or which other sources you can refer to for further information. In some cases I can also give concrete figures. Some already have a concrete idea and ask if it is realistic.

International students also come to you. What's special about this kind of consultation?

International students have different prerequisites. They have completely different ideas or experiences on how to write an application or how to get an internship. We then show them what a cover letter or CV usually looks like here.

For some international students, it's also a new situation that they have to find their own internship place here. And that the university does not have a list of companies where you are guaranteed a place.

Another problem is the language barrier. If students come who do not yet speak German well, finding an internship in Saxony is not so easy.

Is it possible to find a job even if you don't speak any German or only poor German?

That's difficult. It is often possible to communicate in English but the corporate language is usually German. In production or in areas where the employees do not have a university degree, employees speak German and the work instructions and instructions are therefore also in German. German is always spoken between colleagues during breaks, which makes it very difficult to establish relationships.

How good are the chances of finding a job in Zwickau and the surrounding area in general, that is, a graduate job?

Generally, the chances are very good. There is demand on the labour market in almost all occupational and degree fields that we have at the university. With some degree programmes it's a little more difficult, for example medical technology, because there are not so many manufacturers in the region. But there are many possibilities throughout Saxony. However, you should not expect to find a job within a month. It can sometimes take up to half a year.

Do you see any new trends when it comes to job applications?

Online applications are not a new trend as such, but they're becoming more and more important. Especially in larger companies, online applications often already include mini-assessments. These are used to carry out corresponding psychological tests. And that will continue. Some already use recruiting bots. The company is becoming more and more automated. This will definitely increase considerably.

Another interesting development is that the topic of networking is becoming more prominent. Companies from the region are increasingly seeking personal contact with students at the university. These are two opposing trends.

And finally, do you have any advice you would like to give our students on their way?

Take everything you can get at the university! Everything here is free of charge. There are free services, workshops and seminars that you can take advantage of. Once you're working and want to do something like that, it gets really expensive. Get involved on the side. Companies like to see that. It's a good idea to accept a working student position or to work alongside your studies. An internship is certainly a must. A lot of practical experience then also makes it easier to get started in professional life.

Thank you, that's all.

The interview was conducted by Susann Kühn. She also works in the WHZ Career Service and supports mainly foreign students on their way to professional life, within the project "Study and Stay in Zwickau".

2 The application

In the following chapters, your WHZ Career Service will provide you with the best tips from a variety of consultations, workshop visits, conversations with HR professionals, personal experiences and online research.

2.1 The structure

A classic application consists of:

1. Cover page with photo, name, job title (optional!)
2. Cover letter
3. Current CV with photo
4. Attachments such as references, certificates, credentials, work references, etc.
5. The so-called "third sheet" can optionally be inserted in the application. It summarises once again your strengths and the reasons why you want the job so badly. However, it should only be used if required by the company. You should make your motivation tangible in your cover letter.

2.2 The Curriculum Vitae

We start with the CV, because it is the most important document in the application besides the cover letter, if not the most important document! HR professionals usually look at this first, as it provides the best overview of the applicant. Therefore the principle also applies: The CV should contain everything that is mentioned in the cover letter. You should also start with the CV when you prepare your application documents, as this will allow you to sort your information and filter out the essential points for the cover letter.¹

Observe the following criteria:

- clear (well-structured/categorised, readable, easy to understand)
- concise (no double entries)
- complete (all important and relevant information is included, no gaps)
- consistent (no style mixes, same temporal arrangement)
- current

2.2.1 Structure and content

Nowadays, the CV is often prepared in **chronological descending** order only. This means that the CV starts with the current situation and ends with the school education. This form is common for internationally operating companies.

¹ Cf. Zimmer, A.; 2013 [p. 39]

The CV may be structured as follows:²

1. Personal Information
2. Professional experience
3. Degree
4. School and vocational training
5. Thematic supplement
6. Personal skills and expertise
 - Further education and training courses, special additional qualifications and certifications
 - Driving licences
 - IT courses should only be listed if they are not older than about 1 year, except for complex special programs
 - IT skills should be listed similarly to language skills according to skill level, e.g. continuous, regular or occasional use, basic skills
7. Language skills
 - Language skills are rated as native speaker, business fluent, fluent, conversational, good knowledge or basic knowledge. Always indicate the actual level of language proficiency at present. Another possibility is to indicate the language level in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which can also be verified with certificates.
8. Private interests
 - You can state your hobbies, but this is not mandatory. They provide information about your soft skills such as organisational talent, creativity or willingness to take risks. They also enable companies to learn a little more about the applicant's personality and are therefore generally regarded positively.

This also belongs in the CV

- Time information in month and year
- Date and signature (or signature scan)

This is not (any more) part of the CV³

- Parents
- Denomination (unless you want to become a preacher or similar, or apply to a denominational institution and belong to that denomination)
- Complete school career (only the highest degree counts)

² Cf. Engst, J.; Willmann, H.-G.; 2017 [S.112]

³ Cf. Engst, J.; Willmann, H.-G.; 2017 [S.113]

2.2.2 What do HR professionals look at in a CV?⁴

1. Clear structure
2. Chronological gaps
3. No contradictions! The listed dates must correspond to the certificates and records
4. Do the listed qualifications match the requirements of the advertised position? (this means: The contents of the CV are also adjusted to the position.)

Larger gaps in the CV should always be filled honestly or at least creatively, e.g. child care, language travel, illness, etc. However, when it comes to diplomas and certificates, it's important to always stick to the truth! Breaks of one or two months or "natural" breaks between e.g. graduating high school and starting university are acceptable.⁵

2.3 The cover letter

2.3.1 What's the best way to start?

The CV is finished but you don't know yet how to start with the cover letter? Here's a bit of help to get you started:

1. Study the company's website and the job advertisement thoroughly
2. Think about how you want to structure your cover letter
3. Define the communication goal - What position do you want and what do you hope to achieve?
4. Develop messages - What do you offer the company? (qualities sought, experience, theoretical knowledge)
5. Put together arguments - Why are you the most suitable candidate?
6. Just start writing!

2.3.2 Could you be more specific? Cover letter dos and don'ts

Each application requires an individual cover letter. The following tips will help you find the right wordings.

Let's do it!

- The application must fit the company! Investigate the company like a detective and find out what they value and what they want.
- You have to present yourself. Write your application yourself and don't use ready-made sentences! Anyone will see through that straight away.
- Start the introduction with a clear motivation. What about the job advert or the company sparked your interest? And if it's the accessibility by bike, you can use that.
- If you think the company is great, you should also write why this is but please don't "fawn" like, "You are the market leader in the XY sector and I have always wanted to work in an international company...". The company is well aware of this.

⁴ Cf. Karrierebibel.de: <https://karrierebibel.de/lebenslauf/>

⁵ Cf. Zimmer, A.; 2013 [p. 46]

Be specific! The easiest way to do this is to always give specific examples with a few sentences (e.g. an interesting task in a project)

- Write actively and use active verbs ("... I conceived...", "... I optimised...", "... I constructed...").
- I can contribute ... , ... and ... to the position.
- Write about your future. How do I want to work, lead or be led.
- You should clarify what is important to you as an employee before you apply. What is an optimum working environment?
- You can write that the job should be enjoyable, what that means and what it takes.
- Have faith in yourself, then others will have faith in you! It's good to blow your own trumpet! → Don't sell yourself short. Even as a student or graduate you can often contribute many good skills, experience and knowledge.
- Use only one page for the cover letter.
- Always write only about your strengths.

What to avoid!

Recruiters take on average only 2 minutes per application. The following stumbling blocks will quickly catapult you out of the game:

- Entry phrases such as "I hereby apply for your job advertisement dated... for position XY..." or "The position has aroused my interest, which is why I am applying to you..."
- No repetition of the job advertisement, e.g. "You are looking for a specialist in the field of XY..."
- No empty phrases such as ability to work in a team, communication skills: If so, say what that means. Are you good at selling? Or can you write good emails, speeches, press articles?
- Sloppiness, for instance spelling mistakes, is the most common reason for being discarded.
- No arrogance, especially not as a career starter, e.g. "I am certain that I can contribute to the success of your company with my strengths and competences". It's better to illustrate the benefits for the company through your strengths and competences using examples.
- Avoid justifications: "I am qualified because I have done this and that."
→ Why someone is suitable must be assessed by the company!
- Do not use platitudes and empty phrases: "This is a new challenge for me."
- Do not use the subjunctive ("... I think I would..."). This appears very insecure.

Finishing off:

Your cover letter is done? Then ask the following three questions at the end:

1. Why do you want to work for this company?
2. Why do you want this job?
3. Why should you in particular be chosen for this position?

If you can answer these three questions with the statements in the cover letter, then the content is good.

2.4 Good to know! – What else you need to know

- Have your picture taken by a professional! Everything else appears unprofessional
- Use three-page folders. These are clearly arranged and elegant, if your application needs to be in paper form

2.5 Survey: What do HR professionals pay the most attention to?

To help you better organise your resources when writing your application, here is a brief overview: ⁶

1. A meaningful cover letter	31.6%
2. Clearly structured application	19.7%
3. Convincing CV	16.5%
4. Work experience gained	14%
5. Application designs	9%
6. Good references	8.7%

If you would like more details, you can find the views of HR managers from well-known companies here: <https://karrierebibel.de/arbeitgebercheck/>

3 Application types and their specific features

Whether for an internship or a graduate job, the structure of an application is basically the same. However, there are still various options.

3.1 Application for an internship/ master thesis

First of all the good news: When you apply for an internship you do not have to score points with practical experience and completed qualifications, because as an intern you can usually hardly show that. And the HR professional simply doesn't expect any.

Your motivation for the position and for the selected company is all the more important and often decisive. Your cover letter **MUST** therefore make it absolutely clear why you are applying for this position in particular, what you hope to achieve and why you are especially interested in this company.

Experience outside the university or further internships are always a plus. So be sure to mention if you...⁷

- ... have already completed other or similar internships
- ... have already accepted a working student position in this or another field
- ... are involved in a student initiative

⁶ Cf. Job-guru.de: <https://job-guru.de/bewerbung/>

⁷ Cf. Karrierebibel.de: <https://karrierebibel.de/bewerbung-praktikum/>

- ... participate in or even co-organise specialist events
- ... were able acquire special and relevant skills in a club
- ... have additional language skills

However, such experiences and skills should not simply be listed, but selected specifically: Only what is relevant for the internship position is included in the application.

3.2 Working student position

With a job as a working student you kill several birds with one stone: ⁸

1. As well as the theory you learn at university, you can also gain practical experience that is relevant and partly in line with the curriculum
2. The pay is often good (around €1,000 per month, depending on the company and location) In addition, there are no social security contributions other than pension insurance ("working student privilege")
3. Afterwards, you have a good chance of landing a job immediately after your degree and getting a first glimpse of your future employer (however, work experience also makes you very attractive for other companies)
4. Industry contacts

But all these advantages are not for free. The demands on working students are also high: ⁹

- During the lecture period you will work up to 20 hours per week at the company.
- During the semester break, work is usually full-time.
- The final dissertation should be written on a topic that also offers new insights and benefits to the company
- The application and selection processes are quite complex due to the high number of applicants. Sometimes, these jobs are even only available if you have the right connections.

Your desire for practical experience should not be your only argument in your application. After all, every applicant wants that. The structure and contents of the application for this position are the same as for the other applications.

4 Application forms and their specific features

HR professionals generally prefer electronic applications, unless a print application is expressly requested. You can also tell which application form to use by whether an e-mail and/or postal address is specified in the job advertisement.

⁸ Cf.Karrierebibel.de: <https://karrierebibel.de/bewerbung-werkstudent/>

⁹ Cf.Karrierebibel.de: <https://karrierebibel.de/bewerbung-werkstudent/>

4.1 E-mail application

The e-mail corresponds to a classic application with cover letter, CV and attachments - only with the difference that this application is sent electronically by e-mail and with a PDF attachment.

The subject line of your e-mail application should contain short, meaningful keywords so that it can be better allocated, e.g. application as sales manager / your advertisement.

Briefly announce your application with a few sentences in the e-mail body. The cover letter can also be inserted into the e-mail body, but it is more attractive in PDF format and does not have to be printed in addition to the attachment.

Etiquette, grammar and spelling must be correct. The casual tone that's standard for e-mails is a job application killer.

4.2 Online application or e-recruiting systems

This option is becoming more and more popular. It involves applying via an online form. The respective form fields must then be completed one after the other. Uploading PDF documents is often also possible.

However, electronic applications have their own rules:

1. Free fields in online applications should definitely be used to present yourself in the right light. Take your time to draft the text in advance. Mistakes often creep in if you write it on the fly.
2. If you can or should upload attachments, it's better to save them in PDF format beforehand, otherwise formatting may be lost.
3. Attention also with special characters: The euro symbol (e.g. for salary expectations) can create involuntary confusion if the recipient's program version turns it into a different symbol. Better to just write EUR or euros. This also applies to other special characters.

4.3 Print application

Print applications are becoming less and less important. If it is expressly desired, this should be complied with. You should consider the following when submitting a print application:

- Always print on one side only.
- Use the slightly thicker 100-120 gram paper. This looks more refined.
- Use font size 12.
- Three-part application folders are clearly arranged and appear professional.

4.4 Short application and application flyer

Application flyers and short applications are an additional application form. They are ideally suited for job fairs or for submitting unsolicited applications. Many companies that receive unsolicited applications appreciate getting a brief overview of the applicant first. They cannot replace a classic application!

Both forms are also not appropriate for large companies and for those seeking a senior position, or for jobs with an annual salary of more than €40,000.¹⁰

The **application flyer** is usually created in A4 format and each page is divided into three columns. You can give your creativity free rein in the design. You can also decide how to divide the columns. However, it's advisable to use slightly thicker paper. This creates a better impression.¹¹

The flyers sent out as unsolicited applications should be accompanied by a short letter adapted to each company.

The **short application** comprises one or two pages. The first page contains the cover letter. The professional career is presented on the second page. Other attachments are rather unusual. The short application can be sent by e-mail or letter.¹²

4.5 Other creative options

Being noticed is everything! In addition to the classic application, there are other options and additions to attract attention:

- Cover sheet with heading (application documents for "job title"), photo, address, signature, place and date
- Use a different format
- Include small graphic designs
- As an additional gimmick you can also create your application in PowerPoint format
- You can also make an application homepage, but it has to be really good!
- Create an application video in which you introduce yourself
- Use social networks such as Xing and LinkedIn, as companies actively search for suitable people

How much creativity is allowed when?

Keep in mind that not every creative option is suitable for every job advertisement and every company. You want a creative job, be creative. If, on the other hand, you are planning to provide consulting services to companies in the future, you should of course present yourself in a respectable manner. But as so often, the truth lies in the middle. A respectable application does not exclude creativity and vice versa.

An application as an engineer in a medium-sized company, for example, is best made in the classic way.

¹⁰ Hesse, J.; Schrader, H. C.; 2013 [p. 41]

¹¹ Hesse, J.; Schrader, H. C.; 2013 [p. 42]

¹² Hesse, J.; Schrader, H. C.; 2013 [p. 39]

5 What's new? The latest application trends

If you want to stand out from the crowd, you have to come up with something special. We show you current application trends and everything else you need to know.

5.1 The optics

What has clearly gained in importance is the visual aspect. A good cover letter is often not enough to win the companies over. Especially since some HR professionals only skim the cover letter and go straight to the CV. Nowadays a unique, visually appealing design of your documents is as important as the photo in your application folder.

The CV can be made clearer by using different fonts and colours, for example. However, you should make sure that your application folder remains consistent and does not appear overloaded. Important here: Less is more. A good mixture of creativity and elegance is therefore clearly one of the current application trends.¹³

5.2 The application video

Another way to stand out from the mass of applicants is to make a short video. In this you present your motivation and your qualifications. The video is just a cherry on top and should give the HR professionals a better impression of you. You can insert the link to the video in the cover letter. The CV and cover letter are based on the classic structure, the video is only an accessory. If it is to be a video, then it must also be top-notch and professionally produced.

5.3 The online profile

An applicant homepage or profile in professional networks such as Xing or LinkedIn is already frequently used by applicants and is becoming increasingly popular as a means of attracting the attention of companies or establishing contacts.

However, these must always be updated and maintained! Simply having an online profile is useless if you don't really use it and include it in your efforts.¹⁴

5.4 Mobile recruiting

Mobile recruiting means that applicants can easily and simply submit applications, generate CVs or create profiles via smartphone or tablet on the employers' career homepages. Many employers are not yet using this option, but the trend will increase significantly.¹⁵

¹³ Cf. Bewerbung.net: <https://bewerbung.net/bewerbungstrends-2018/>

¹⁴ Cf. Karrierebibel.de: <https://karrierebibel.de/bewerbung-2018/>

¹⁵ Cf. Karrierebibel.de: <https://karrierebibel.de/bewerbung-2018/>

5.5 Infographic CV presentation

Using special tools, applicants can present their CV as a clear diagram in just a few steps. However, a diagram alone can often not accurately reflect all the information that would otherwise be presented in clear tabular CVs. Especially for jobs where accuracy and completeness are required, the classic application form is preferable, with infographics as an optional additional element. Another shortcoming of online tools: Both programs are available in English only.¹⁶

6 The job interview

6.1 The initial interview

The preparation

You need to be very well prepared to score points in a job interview. The aim of a job interview is to find out whether the information in the application documents matches you. The following points are important in the preparation:¹⁷

1. Collect information about the interview
 - Where and when does the interview take place?
 - Who participates in the interview? Participants and duration of the interview provide clues about the depth and extent of the meeting. The more time is planned and the higher up the participants are in the hierarchy, the more detailed and comprehensive the interview will be. Moreover, the positions of the interview partners indicate the priorities in terms of qualifications.

2. Collect information about the company
 - Check homepage thoroughly
 - Search for press articles
 - Ask friends or professors about it
 - Checklist information about the company¹⁸
 - Type of company (GmbH, AG, KG, etc.)
 - Business areas
 - Business model (How does the company make its money?)
 - Significant divisions within the company
 - Head office and branches
 - Number of employees
 - Product range and services
 - Customer groups
 - Market shares of the company
 - Major competitors

¹⁶ Cf. Stepstone.de: <https://www.stepstone.de/Karriere-Bewerbungstipps/trends-in-der-bewerbung/>

¹⁷ Cf. Zimmer, A.; 2013 [p. 95]

¹⁸ Cf. Engs. J.; Willmann, H.-G.; 2017 [p. 179]

- Current sales figures or market value
 - New developments and projects
 - Objectives and strategic orientation
 - Learn more about developments in the industry, e.g. in industry magazines
3. What questions do you have for the company? Asking questions is very important and shows your interest! You can ask about their products, processes, locations and even about the career of your future boss.
 4. Take your complete application documents, the job advertisement and your list of questions with you to the interview as an important reminder. You should also bring your business cards and a notepad.
 5. Confirm the interview date in writing.
 6. Unfortunately, it is no longer customary in Germany for the company to bear the travel costs. But the Employment Agency (*Agentur für Arbeit*) can cover application and travel expenses of up to 260 euros per year.¹⁹
 7. Use your collected information in a targeted manner but refrain from being a know-it-all. Keep a low profile.

What to wear

The first impression counts! If possible, dress and style yourself as shown on your application photo so that you can be recognised. Clothing should be appropriate to the position. Not over- or underdressed! The higher the hierarchical level of the desired position, the more conservative the dress code can be.

Women:

- Suit with trousers or skirt
- No low-neckline blouse
- Opaque tights
- Subtle jewellery
- No heels that are too high; no boots that go over the knee
- The hairstyle should correspond to the application photograph
- Subtle make-up

Men:

- Lower level (e.g. internship): long-sleeved shirt, suit jacket, jeans or chinos, no tie, (clean!) leather shoes

¹⁹ Cf. Engs. J.; Willmann, H.-G.; 2017 [p. 168]

- Higher level (graduate job): Suit, long-sleeved shirt, clean! leather shoes, no jewellery (at most wedding ring)

If in doubt, it's better to dress conservatively but avoid being overdressed. Ask reliable friends or family. If you are unsure, call the HR department beforehand and ask what is usual in the company.

During the interview

- It's okay to be nervous, everyone in the room will understand.
- At the beginning you will be offered a drink and there will be small talk, e.g. you will be asked how you got there. Do engage with this. This is already the first "test".
- Try to answer questions in a relaxed manner but be attentive and concentrate during the conversation.
- Take your time to answer the questions. If a question is unclear, ask.
- Do not be reticent with your answers, but equally do not bore your counterpart with monologues.
- Observe your counterparts' body language. If they are so bored that they start doodling on their notepads, finish your remarks.
- Avoid tapping your feet or even rocking with the chair.
- Turn off your mobile phone.
- Do not smoke just before the appointment! Non-smokers among the interview participants smell this and find it irritating.

The interview with the HR consultant

The procedure is the same as for a company. The HR consultant makes a pre-selection for the companies. You can be more open here because the HR consultant checks whether you are also suitable for other positions.

7 The way to professional life - What international students need to know

You are an international student and would like to earn some extra money alongside your studies, do an internship or start your career in Germany after graduating. The following chapter will give you an overview of the legal situation in Germany and what you need to bear in mind when looking for a job.

7.1 Working while studying

International students from EU countries and the European Economic Area (EEA):

- have unrestricted access to the German labour market
- may stay as long as they wish

International students from non-EU countries:

→ Section 16 (1) Residence Act (AufenthG) "Studies" and Employment Ordinance (BeschV)

- In addition to university studies, you are permitted to work 120 full days or 240 half days (calendar days) per year. Any extra days require the approval of the Foreigners Authority (*Ausländerbehörde*) and the Employment Agency (*Agentur für Arbeit*) (Section 16 (3) AufenthG)
- A maximum of half a day's work is allowed during the lecture period
- Half day = 4h at 8h daily working time and 5h at 10h daily working time
- Night shifts of up to 8 hours are considered a full working day
- Employment is only possible with the permission of the Foreigners Authority
- Employment is permitted for:
 - Persons who qualify for asylum
 - Refugees with international protection status
 - Persons with subsidiary protection
 - Refugees with temporary residence permit

The following activities are permitted:

- **Part-time student jobs**
 - e.g. student assistant at the university, at the Studentenwerk (dormitory administration, canteen, etc.)
 - may be performed without restriction but
 - activities may not extend the time spent studying or conflict with the purpose of the degree programme
 - The residence permit must allow it. The involvement of the Federal Employment Agency is generally not required.
- **Compulsory internships during the degree programme** (including paid internships) and internships for the preparation of the final dissertation
 - No approval of the Foreigners Authority or the Employment Agency is required
 - Not counted as working time (120 full days or 240 half days do not apply)
 - There is no entitlement to a minimum wage
- **Internship** for orientation prior to commencing university studies and study-related internships (up to 3 months)
 - You must not have done the same or a similar internship previously
 - There is no entitlement to a minimum wage
- **All other internships** are included in the 120 full days or 240 half days
→ Approval of the Foreigners Authority and the Employment Agency is required

- In the case of **self-employed or freelance work**, you need the approval of the Foreigners Authority
- international students who are not from the EU are not permitted to become self-employed or work freelance!
- While applying to university or during **preparatory measures for university studies** (e.g. Studienkolleg, DSH or TestDaF)
 - in the first year, you may only work the 120 full days or 240 half days during the holidays
 - from the second year, the 120 full days and 240 half days may be worked throughout the calendar year

7.2 Working after graduation

What do I need to consider when looking for a job?

Anyone who has gained a university degree in Germany can apply for a residence permit and stay in Germany for up to 18 months after graduation to look for a job.

- Within the 18-month period, all jobs are permitted in order to ensure subsistence.
- After the 18 months, the work must correspond to the qualification acquired in Germany (Section 16 (4) sentence 1 AufenthG).
- Proof of subsistence must be submitted to the Foreigners Authority.
- Students with a scholarship from their home country for studying in Germany and an obligation to return to their home country do not receive a residence permit for the job search.

What should be observed during employment?

- The type of residence permit changes when employment is found.
- **The following residence permits can be applied for:**
 1. **Employment (Section 18 (4) AufenthG)**
 2. **Blue Card EU (Section 19a AufenthG)**
 3. **Self-employed activity (Section 21 (2a) AufenthG)**
 4. Residence permit (Section 18 AufenthG)
 5. Visa (Section 18c AufenthG)

For international students from non-EU states who completed their degree in Germany, the most relevant residence permit is "Employment in accordance with Section 18 (4) AufenthG".

7.2.1 Employment (Section 18 (4) AufenthG.)

International graduates from German universities must provide evidence of the following:

- A concrete job offer (with employment contract and detailed job description)
- The activity must be salaried work
- Proof of qualified vocational training (vocational training must have lasted at least 2 years in Germany or the qualified degree must have been obtained in Germany)
- And the provisions of Section 5 AufenthG must be fulfilled:
 1. The employment must secure the subsistence
 2. Passport or legally valid identity card is available

3. Identity and nationality have been clarified
4. There is no danger or impairment to the interests of Germany
5. Germany was entered with the correct visa (e.g. to study)
6. There is no reason for expulsion, e.g. criminal offences, drug addiction, links to terrorism, honour crimes, culture, religion
7. There is no reason for refusal (e.g. preparation of a serious offence that is a threat to the State)
8. In this case, the approval of the Federal Employment Agency is not required for the exercise of gainful employment.

After two years of employment a settlement permit (unlimited residence) can be applied for (see Section 18b AufenthG).

The following applies to the employer:

- The employer must keep a copy of the employee's current residence permit
- Applies for the duration of employment or until a change to a permanent residence permit
- The residence permit must show that the employee is entitled to be gainfully employed (Section 4 (3) AufenthG)
- In the case of a settlement permit in accordance with Section 9 (1) AufenthG, the right to gainful employment is derived from the law

7.2.2 Blue Card EU- Section 19a AufenthG.

The Blue Card EU ([Section 19a AufenthG](#)) is a temporary residence permit for highly qualified [non-EU nationals](#) of all occupational groups who want to work in Germany (Europe).

- No priority check (EU citizen is not preferred to non-EU citizen)
- German language skills are not required
- The application for the EU Blue Card must be submitted to the relevant German foreign representation **before entry**

Exception 1:

Nationals of Australia, Israel, Japan, Canada, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand and the USA can enter without a visa and apply for the Blue Card at the responsible Foreigners Authority within 3 months after entry.

Exception 2:

Anyone who has entered the country with a visa that is valid for seeking employment and has found a job can apply for a residence permit locally in Germany.

Validity

- The Blue Card is limited to a **maximum of 4 years**
- If the duration of the employment contract is less than four years, the residence permit is limited to the duration of the contract plus three months
- During this period the holder may stay outside the EU for up to 12 consecutive months

- Within the EU he may spend 90 days of 180 days abroad (visa-free)
- After 18 months he can move on to another EU Member State and apply for an EU Blue Card for that country within one month

Requirements:

- A German university degree or a foreign university degree that is recognised in Germany or comparable to a German degree
- A concrete job offer or contract of employment
- The employment must match the qualification
- Approval of the Federal Employment Agency is not required
- Minimum income (gross € 52,000 /year, € 4,333 /month in 2018)
- Minimum income in occupations where there is a shortage, such as scientists, mathematicians, engineers, IT specialists and doctors (gross € 40,560 /year, € 3,380 /month in 2018)
 - A legal entitlement to a residence permit exists only once all requirements according to Section 19a AufenthG are fulfilled

Settlement permit

An EU Blue Card holder is granted a permanent settlement permit if

- he has been in employment with the appropriate qualifications for 33 months
- he has paid pension contributions during these 33 months
- Anyone with German language skills at B1 level can apply for a settlement permit after just **21 months**
- The following conditions must be satisfied for a settlement permit in accordance with Section 9 (2) sentence 1 no. 2, 4-6, 8-9 AufenthG:
 - No. 2: Subsistence must be secured
 - No 4: there are no objections on grounds of public safety and order
 - No 5: employment in an employed capacity is permitted
 - No. 6: Possession of the necessary permits for employment (e.g. official permit for self-employment)
 - No. 8: Basic knowledge of the legal and social order and living conditions in Germany
 - No. 9: Sufficient living space

7.2.3 Self-employed activity - Section 21 (2a) AufenthG

The following proofs are necessary:

- A German university degree
- The intended activity must be related to the knowledge acquired in higher education
- The Foreigners Authority examines the relevance of the study contents and decides whether the residence permit will be granted

Settlement permit

- After three years, the settlement permit can be issued if the planned activity proceeds successfully
- If the subsistence of the family members in Germany is ensured

- The provisions in Section 9 (2) AufenthG "Settlement permit" do not apply

7.2.4 Residence permit (Section 18 AufenthG)

Non-EU nationals who have completed vocational training or a university degree abroad can be granted a temporary residence permit if...

- a concrete job offer exists
- is in principle only granted for a limited period and always for a specific purpose
- the general conditions for the granting of a residence permit are fulfilled (e.g. being able to support yourself or possessing a passport, (Section 5 AufenthG)
- the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*, BA) approves the employment ①

The Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*, BA) approves (Section 6 BeschV) if:

- there is a shortage of skilled workers in Germany in the profession you wish to pursue: The positive list of the BA lists these occupations
 - You have a concrete job offer
 - Your qualification is recognised as equivalent to the German qualification
- If the recognition authority does not confirm full equivalence but requires practical work within the framework of an adaptation course, you can obtain a residence permit in Germany for this purpose
- The residence permit is not always linked to a work permit; this must be expressly stated in the residence permit (Section 4 (2) and (3) AufenthG).

7.2.5 Visa (Section 18c AufenthG.)

Non-EU nationals generally require a **visa to enter Germany**, regardless of whether they come to the country as tourists or wish to work here.

1. Visa for job search (Section 18c (1) AufenthG)

- For academics with a foreign qualification
- Valid for six months
- You are not allowed to work during your job-search stay and must be able to support yourself

2. Visa for entry for the purpose of employment

- For non-EU nationals who work in Germany and wish to apply for a residence permit for this purpose
- must be applied for at the foreign representation in the country of origin
- The residence permit is only obtained in Germany: The visa for entry for the purpose of employment may be converted into a residence permit
- **Tourist visa**

A short-stay visa such as a tourist visa cannot be converted into a residence permit that allows you to work.

- Anyone who wants to work in Germany must therefore apply for an **entry visa for the purpose of gainful employment**.

7.3 How do I find internships, part-time jobs or graduate jobs?

If you are looking for a job, the WHZ job exchange is your first port of call. Here you can get a good overview of which industries and jobs are available in the region. The WHZ cooperates with many of the listed companies. You can also use the WHZ Career Service to find out about a specific company. We are also happy to help you with preparing your application documents.

The [WHZ job exchange](#) includes:

- Dissertations/ project topics
- Part-time jobs / holiday jobs
- Internship/ working student
- Trainee positions
- Jobs for graduates

In addition to the WHZ job exchange, you can also find out about job offers on the following websites:

- [Bundesagentur für Arbeit \(Federal Employment Agency\)](#)
- [meinstadt.de](#)
- [Ebay-kleinanzeigen.de](#)
- [meinjob.freiepresse.de](#)

Required language skills

Please bear in mind that a good knowledge of German is very, very important in order to successfully obtain an internship, part-time job or graduate position! It is expected that the work instructions, the employment contract and the instructions can be given in German. There are very few companies in the region whose corporate language is English. These include:

- [Continental AG](#), in Limbach-Oberfrohna
- [IAV GmbH](#), in Chemnitz/Stollberg

Payment during the internship

The question of paid internships is often asked. Depending on the sector in which you want to work, payment is possible. In the public sector, however, the chance of getting paid is very low. Interns will receive a minimum wage of approx. €9.19 (from 01/01/2019) for 3 months or more.

8 Bibliography

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9 Attachments

- Curriculum vitae - template
- Cover letter for an internship - template