How to read a job ad

Employers like to write job ads looking for candidates who are practically perfect in every respect. In most cases, though, such people don’t exist.

As a general rule, therefore, it’s worth dispatching an application if you meet about 70 percent of the requirements listed in the ad. A closer look at the wording will tell you what prior knowledge you absolutely must have and what will be bonus points?

Detailed vs. complete application portfolios

Recruiters in Germany distinguish between three types of applications:

- **detailed application**
  A detailed application (aussagekräftige Bewerbung) will ask you to include your certificates and employment references that are relevant to the advertised role on top of your cover letter and CV.

- **complete application**
  A complete application (vollständige Bewerbung) requires all certificates, employment references, and evidence relating to the activities included in your CV.

- **brief application**
  A brief application (Kurzbewerbung) or informal application (formlose Bewerbung) is only asking for your CV and a covering letter. It’s a useful option for unsolicited applications.
The requirements made of applicants are usually listed in order of relevance. In other words, the most important things come first. You can tell what skills are must-haves by wordings such as

*You will be*
- Sie sind

*You will have*
- Sie haben

*is a requirement*
- ist Voraussetzung

*is compulsory*
- ist zwingend erforderlich

*is essential*
- ist unabdingbar

*is indispensable*
- ist unumgänglich

The fewer of these requirements you meet, the less likely you will be invited to an interview.

Requirements that aren’t obligatory are signaled by wording like

*Ideally...*
- idealerweise

*is desirable*
- wünschenswert

*is welcome*
- gerne auch

*if possible*
- nach Möglichkeit

*is an advantage*
- ist von Vorteil

*initial knowledge of*
- ausbaufähige Kenntnisse in

*enough experience in*
- hinreichende Erfahrungen mit

*would be useful*
- wäre hilfreich

Being able to demonstrate those skills can earn you bonus points.