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? ▶

TUM TIP

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.

Must-haves:

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.

Nice-to-haves:

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

sufficient experience in
hinreichende Erfahrungen mit

would be useful
wäre hilfreich

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