Guide to Finding Work in Germany
Career Service

Eva Maisel
30 May 2018
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Outline

What is the German job market?
  Facts and figures
  Employers' expectations

How should I prepare?
  Which skills you should acquire
  and how you could acquire them

Where can I find jobs?
  Where to look for openings
  and how to apply

What happens when I found a job?
  A few words about
  German business culture
Outline

- What is the German job market?
- Facts and figures
- Employers’ expectations
German Labour Market – employment rates

In general

- **Low unemployment rate** (5.7% in March 2018; especially amongst academics: 2.6% in 2016)

- Demand for high skilled workers – so called „Fachkräftemangel“ – especially in the field of IT and Engineering and in medium sized companies

For recent graduates

- **Average time to find employment** after finishing degree: 4 months (ca. 60% after 3 months, 80% after 6 months, highly dependent on subject)*

- After 1.5 years, 69% are regularly employed (6% looking for work)*

* International Centre for Higher Education Research Kassel 2014. Data for NRW
What do employers in Germany look for?

**Study performance**
- Final Grade
- Masters degree
- Standard period of studies
- University reputation

**Additional skills**
- English
- Internships
- Practical experience
- International experience
- Other languages
- Social engagement

What do you rate higher, an excellent final grade in standard time or practical experience via internships?

JobTrend 2017, Staufenbiel
What about German language knowledge?

German skills and employment rate

- Persons with a fluent knowledge of German:
  - earn on average 22% more than persons with no or basic language knowledge (as well as 12% more than persons with good knowledge)
  - and
  - are 20% less likely overqualified for their position.

https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/ImFokus/Arbeitsmarkt/ZuwandererSprachkenntnisse.html
If I work at an international company in Germany, I won't need German skills.

Wrong:

- Contact to **German customers or business partners** will require German (you don't want to make communication hard for them).

- Even in an international team, you usually **have to talk to a German occasionally** (for example to an electrician).

German employers rate German language knowledge as highly important.
Outline

How should I prepare?

Which skills you should acquire

and how you could acquire them
Which skills should you have when applying for a job in Germany:

- Expertise – hard facts
- Practical skills – more than just internships
- (German) language knowledge
Expertise

What?

Knowledge you have gained through your studies or related projects.

How?

• Studying
• Doing project work
• Writing papers/thesis
• Joining conferences, scientific workshops, Summer schools
• …

How to present:

Don’t assume the recruiter will read your transcript/certificate carefully. Make sure to include/highlight important features in your cover letter and CV, as for example:

Major field of studies, courses, project work, thesis, specific IT knowledge …
Practical skills

What?

All kinds of experiences where you were able to implement your expertise or gained practical knowledge.

How?

• Internships
• Student jobs
• Previous work experience
• Voluntary work/associations
• Key qualifications (SQ center)
• Project seminars
• …

How to present:

Make sure to **include practical experience of some sort** – if you didn’t do an internship, what else might count as practical experience?

Practical skills include hard and soft skills – try to **match them to the job advertisement**. Explain which skills you gained by each experience.

Relevance – if you have a large number of practical experiences, chose 3-5 important ones OR group similar experiences together.
(German) language knowledge

What?

German language knowledge
English language knowledge
(Native language)
(Other languages)

Where to learn German?

• Uni courses
• Language schools
• Work
• Sports
• Tandem
• Voluntary work/associations
• …

How to present:

Include a certificate if you have one (some job adverts specifically ask for one).

If a job advert is written in German, they usually expect a German application (if in doubt, call and ask).

Be bold – write in German if possible. Use your own words and sentence structures, but ask a native speaker to correct your grammar and spelling.
Which specific skills should I acquire during my studies?

Orientation and information:

• read job advertisements

• research career biographies

• Portals informing about job perspectives (for example berufe.net and watchado.com in German)

• make contact, ask questions

• make an appointment with the Career Service
Services you can use at Uni Konstanz

Career Service
- Workshops, career counselling, application check …
- Kompetenzportfolio Campus & Career
- uni-konstanz.de/cs

Career Passport
- Career related activities, portfolio for your skills
- informatik.uni-konstanz.de/beratung-und-service/career-passport/

SQ - Schlüsselqualifikationen
- Transferable skills, project management, workshops …
- uni-konstanz.de/sq

SLI - Sprachlehrinstitut
- (German) language courses, tandem …
- uni-konstanz.de/sli

Departmental Coordinators
- Help to find internships
- Information about possible working fields
Outline

Where can I find jobs? Where to look for openings and how to apply
Where to find job offers

- Job advertisements online or print (ca. 40%)
- Speculative application
- Offer after an internship/student job
- With help of friends, family, professors etc.
- Contact on a job fair (kontaktpunkt DATUM) www.messen.de
- Career Networks (XING, Linkedin,...)
Job adverts vs other job hunt tactics

Job advertisement:

Pro:
• you know that the employer has an open position
• you know for which kind of employee the employer is looking

Contra:
• it is likely that many persons are applying
• an average of 7 applicants get invited for a job interview
• one person gets the job

Therefore: Consider other tactics too!
• 50% of employers ask their employees if they know a suitable candidate.
• 30% of employers consider speculative applications
• Inform your contacts that you are looking for a job
• Make contact (for example on fairs, conferences etc.)
• Write a speculative application perfectly tailored to the employer

Source: Süddeutsche Zeitung 22./23.Oktober 2016
Which documents do I need to apply?

Put effort into compiling your documents – it’s a work sample!

An internship and a job application usually include the same documents.

**Always read the job advert carefully** for required documents:

Nothing mentioned or „vollständige Bewerbung“, „übliche Unterlagen“:
Cover letter, CV and Certificates/References

„Kurzbewerbung“: Only Cover letter and CV
German style application documents

Possible differences to other counties:
- maximum one page
- subject line mandatory
- own and company address mandatory
- Date mandatory
- Recommended to address a person directly
- 4-5 sections
- salary expectations only if asked for
- Signature, also if applying online
- …
Possible differences to other countries:
- personal details including photo
- focus on hard facts, no description of personality
- bullet point structure
- two pages are possible
- date and signature at the end
- clarity and brevity
- ...
More information about application document formalities:

- **Webinar „Job application in Germany“**
  - 20th of June, 5pm (please register via SSZ)

- **Career Guide (available in German and English)**
  - Download section of the Career Service website

- **Get your application documents checked**
  - Mondays between 2pm and 3.30pm in D411
  - Or send your documents to career.service@uni-kn.de
The job interview

Preparation is key!

- Gather information about the company
- prepare for standard questions
- plan your outfit and how to get to the office
- think of questions you would like to ask
- think about how to present your skills and yourself (but be authentic)
More information about job interviews:

- **Short seminar „How to prepare for a job interview“**
  - 21 June 2018, 5 to 5.30pm in P712
  - No registration necessary

- **Mock interviews „How to succeed in a job interview“**
  - 3 July 5 to 6.30pm in PZ 801
  - Please register until 21 June via Career passport website
Outline

What happens when I found a job?

A few words about

German business culture
German business culture

Reliability:

Wherever you work in Germany, you are expected to be 100% reliable. This includes:

- You are expected to **fulfill your assignments**, this is your responsibility. Should there be a problem, **communicate openly and as early as possible**.

- Deutsche Pünktlichkeit: **Always be on time**, this includes deadlines as well as being on time for meetings etc.
German business culture

Structures and rules

German businesses usually have a structure (for example who makes certain decisions, how to address business partners, who is able to spend company money, how to apply for holidays) and a set of rules which all employers are expected to follow.

Such rules often exist in written form and/or are part of the work contract. Failing to comply with the rules can lead to a warning or even termination. Therefore, make sure you know the rules or ask beforehand if unclear.

Beware: There are also often hidden (hierarchical) structures.
German business culture

Task focussed

Most German companies and professional teams work very task focussed. This means:

- **Communication is very direct and straight forward.** This also applies to criticism, which is usually not intended to be personal. You are expected to have a **professional attitude towards criticism.**

- If your German colleagues or business partners do not share a lot of private information with you right from the beginning, this does not mean that they don’t like you. Most Germans separate between private and business, although you should be ready to make some small talk as well.
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