Apply
successfully

Good applications made simple
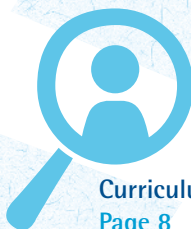
IHK Ausbildungs-GmbH

This brochure provides you with lots of important tips and advice for a successful application.

But perhaps you are still unsure about your professional future? Dual vocational education and training or maybe even a dual study programme?

Or maybe you also already have some idea of what you would like to do, just do not know which company offers training for this profession? Then just take a look at our homepage – the IHK (Chamber of Industry and Commerce) offers lots of services relating to choosing a profession.

You can visit our homepage at ⟳ schule-wirtschaft-ihk.de/berufsstart/. There we have put together many exciting offers for you.

If you want to start working on your application now, you can find two checklists here. The first lists all the important points to ensure that your application is complete. The second lists the points which need to be checked and adjusted for additional applications.

Before you send off any application, use this list and cross off each point once it has been properly checked. This way you can avoid embarrassing mistakes.
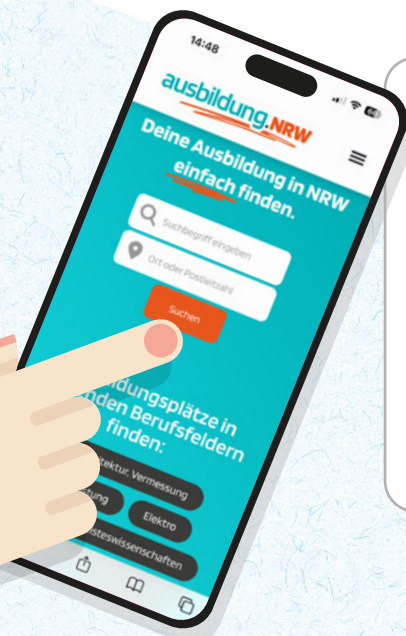
TIPP:
You can now also find a training place on the internet at ⟳ ausbildung.nrw and on the app soon too.

Erhältlich im **App Store**

JETZT BEI **Google play**

Checklists
for writing an application

1

Cover letter

- ☐ Full company name
- ☐ Contact person
- ☐ Correct name of training occupation
- ☐ Your contact details such as address, phone number, email
- ☐ Location, date, signature

Curriculum vitae

- ☐ Your contact details such as address, phone number, email
- ☐ Reverse chronological order (most up-to-date information first)
- ☐ No information gaps
- ☐ Precise dates (month/year)
- ☐ (Expected) school-leaving qualification
- ☐ Professional application photo
- ☐ Foreign language knowledge including language level
- ☐ IT skills (name programmes, specific skills)
- ☐ Location, date, signature

Attachments

- ☐ Straight and well-scanned documents
- ☐ At least the most recent school certificate
- ☐ If applicable, all pages of your school-leaving certificate
- ☐ References from work and internships, certificates

Important for all application documents

- ☐ Check spelling
- ☐ Ask another person to proofread
- ☐ Clear formatting
- ☐ PDF file
- ☐ Max. file size of 10 MB
- ☐ Clear file name(s)

2

Check and modify for each new application

- ■ Full company name
- ■ Contact person
- ■ Correct name of training occupation
- ■ Date on curriculum vitae and cover letter

The most important thing first

NEVER be sloppy with your applications! Whether the application is on paper, via an online portal or by email, ensure that your work is clean and thorough and that at least one other person proofreads your application!

You should have the following documents completed and available (see also the checklist on page 3):

1.	Cover letter
2.	Cover page (this is not essential)
3.	Curriculum vitae
4.	School certificates
5.	Internship certificates
6.	Certificates, references, etc.
7.	Work samples (if required)

Online applications

Applications via online portals, social media and other digital platforms offer many options to present your qualifications in the best way.

Here are the most important things to consider:

TIP:
Take screenshots of what you have filled out so you can refer to them again later. If the form does not allow you to go back a page or make corrections, you can initially fill it out partially and take screenshots before you officially submit the application.

Applying via an online portal

This involves filling out a form which has been prepared by the company. You receive specific instructions about what documents need to be uploaded and in what form.

In most cases you can upload your cover letter as a PDF file.

If there is a free text field, first write your cover letter in a word processing program like Word and then copy-paste it into the form. Pay attention to whether there is a character limit and adjust your letter accordingly.

Additional free text fields, such as for personal statements or particular questions, offer you the chance to stand out even more. Do not leave these fields blank – they could be decisive.

Note: The application via an online portal is a clearly structured and specific process. These portals, such as StepStone, Azubiyo or karriere.de, are provided by employment websites or by companies themselves.

START ▶

Applications via social media

Application via social media is a phenomenon that has increasingly gained significance over the last few years. Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram offer fresh alternatives to classic application pathways in the creative and modern industries. With their visual set-up and wide reach they are particularly suitable if you would like to stand out as creative and innovative.

However, it is best to be a little bit reserved rather than give too much information about yourself. Make sure that you stay authentic. Overexaggerating your experiences will not get you anywhere. The way you present yourself has to hold true in interviews and at a possible trial work day!

It is also possible to create a profile on specialised social networks. Here you can "be discovered" by companies that train people in your desired profession. This is possible on LinkedIn or Xing, for example.

Most of the platforms on which you can set up a profile and be found by companies offer a certain amount of data protection. This is also the case with the apprenticeship exchange. Only registered training companies have access, and of that group only companies which offer training in your chosen profession(s) within a set radius can access your data. That is important! Always check the privacy policy before submitting your data anywhere!

The same is true here: Exercise caution! So: Use a professional photo, make sure you look respectable, present information in a clear and structured manner, and upload a complete CV.

Other possibilities such as an application video or your own application website can help you stand out from the crowd. This can be great but also become really embarrassing – and the internet never forgets. This is why you should only use such media if you are comfortable and familiar with it.

TIP:
It may sound obvious, but it is worth repeating because mistakes often appear in precisely this area: Make sure that there are no spelling or grammar errors in your documents. If possible, all documents should **be proofread by several people**. If applying in German, make sure to use a capital letter for "Sie" and "Ihr" when formally addressing the recipient. An online check of your texts might also be worthwhile. Websites that offer this service include **duden.de** – but you should also take another close look at your text yourself.

You can also have your text checked by AI tools such as ChatGPT for example – but never have your text completely written by artificial intelligence. AI can be a great help, but always give your application a personal touch. Identifying keywords in the job vacancy and using these keywords in your cover letter can be helpful – because companies are now also using AI to assess applications.

TIP:
Before you apply somewhere: Check what you can find on the internet when you search for your name. Are your social media profiles public? What is your profile picture and status on, for example, WhatsApp? What information is visible to a person who does not know you, but who has your mobile number? Now is the time to delete, hide or change to whatever degree possible **anything that might be embarrassing**. Be aware that anything that can be found about you online might be brought up in conversation, and think about how you should react.

Cover letter

The cover letter in your application portfolio is the first work sample that the company gets to see from you. You should therefore prepare it with the utmost care. The reader wants to form an impression of you to see whether you are a good fit for the training position. Avoid irrelevant details in the letter. Instead, focus on your main strengths.

Write a strong cover letter and think about what information it contains which will need to be checked or modified for each application. You can also find these points in the checklist. Use colour to highlight this information, and remove the colour only when you have edited the point for the cover letter you are currently working on. This will help you to avoid embarrassing mistakes. If you want to make a particularly good impression, revise the letter for every application individually and show that you have done your research on the company.

Using the example of Tom Tower, who would like to train as a photographer, we show you what points will immediately grab the attention of human resources managers:

1. Subject line: This should include the training position you are applying for and where you saw the advertisement. If you have spoken to the contact person in advance by phone, then refer to the call in your subject line ("Our phone call on 24 April 2025").

2. Before applying you should, if possible, identify a specific contact partner. This can often be done via the company's homepage. If not, you can contact the company's head office and ask for the name of the person who deals with applications. In this case, make sure they spell the name for you!

3. You need a bit of courage to call the company in advance, but it offers a major advantage. As in our example with Tom, it provides you with an excellent introductory sentence for your cover letter, and the contact partner is familiar with you!

4. By mentioning the Canada trip, Tom shows what he has been doing between finishing school and writing his application. If there is also a considerable gap between the time you finished school and the time you are making your application, mention briefly what you have done in this period – a line or two is sufficient.

5. If you mention your internship, describe as specifically as possible what you learned or did and how. If that would involve too much information, then perhaps just give an example and add that you would be happy to provide more detail in person.

6. As a rule, you should only use words and phrases like "motivation", "team player", "ability to work under pressure" and "commitment" in connection with your own skills, hobbies and work tasks. Be as specific as possible in explaining how, for example, you demonstrated your qualities as a team player when doing sport: "As a player I also sometimes had to put my own ambition aside and take up a defensive position for the good of the team." Or: "When learning to play the harp I also learned how to motivate myself and develop the discipline required for regular practice."

7. The last paragraph explains why Tom is applying to Ideenfabrik GmbH. Mr Watzke will be impressed. Who wants to offer a position to someone who does not care where they do their training?

8. A frequent piece of advice, but one that is absolutely correct: Make sure your final sentence is not lacking in confidence. "I would be happy if you invited me for an interview" does not sound great. Tom has found a good alternative!

9. The word "attachment(s)" can be used to refer to additional documents. Nowadays, This is not always necessary.

Important! ⚠

Cover letter and curriculum vitae also need to be signed in the case of an electronic application. Insert your scanned signature into the respective document. Please do not print the document, sign it and re-scan it, as it reduces quality!

Tom Tower | Müllerweg 99 | 41464 Neuss | 0176 1234567 | tom_tower@web.de

Ideenfabrik GmbH
Martin Watzke
Dürener Str. 123
50931 Köln

Neuss, 27. April 2025

1. **Ihre Stellenanzeige auf ausbildung.NRW**
Ausbildung zum Mediengestalter – Bild und Ton
Unser Telefongespräch am 24. April 2025

2.

Sehr geehrter Herr Watzke,

3. vielen Dank für das informative Gespräch am Donnerstag, das meinen Wunsch, eine Ausbildung bei Ihnen zu machen, bekräftigt hat. Im vergangenen Jahr habe ich die höhere Handelsschule mit der Fachhochschulreife abgeschlossen und im Anschluss zehn Monate lang Kanada bereist. Nun bewerbe ich mich für den Ausbildungsbeginn am 1. August 2025.

4.

Seit über zehn Jahren beschäftige ich mich in meiner Freizeit mit Fotografie und Bildbearbeitung. Schon früh hatte ich die Gelegenheit, einer befreundeten Mediengestalterin bei Auftragsarbeiten zu assistieren und habe dabei die technische Ausstattung für Bild- und Tonaufnahmen kennengelernt. In einem Workshop des Neusser Jugendzentrums habe ich gelernt, wie man Audiomaterial mittels Hard- und Software bearbeitet. Meine redaktionelle Mitarbeit in der Schülerzeitung bildet eine gute Grundlage für die Arbeit im Team.

5. Während eines Praktikums bei hb-media konnte ich darüber hinaus meine Kontaktsicherheit im Umgang mit Kunden unter Beweis stellen. Mein selbst organisierter Auslandsaufenthalt
6. hat meine Belastbarkeit und Flexibilität gefordert und gefördert.

Wie ich Ihrer Website entnommen habe, liegt einer Ihrer Schwerpunkte im Bereich der Firmenporträts. Hieran reizen mich vor allem der Kundenkontakt und die Möglichkeit, Unter-
7. nehmen individuell in Szene zu setzen. Mein Pkw-Führerschein macht mich mobil. Gerne würde ich mich mit großem Engagement in Ihr Team einbringen, um mein Hobby zum Beruf zu machen.

8. Ich freue mich auf die Gelegenheit zu einem persönlichen Gespräch.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Tom Tower

9. (Anlagen)

Curriculum vitae

Your curriculum vitae should be clearly and logically structured in a table-like format and contain no information gaps. It complements your cover letter and brings all your important personal and academic data together on one page. It helps the human resources manager to decide whether you would be a good fit for the training position.

We have compiled and explained the most important points for you to consider when writing your curriculum vitae.

1. Format the document clearly. Headings should be distinct from the rest

Make sure to use tab settings to give your CV a neat appearance. Do not try to do this by manually inserting spaces – it will go wrong! Web pages such as **pcs-campus.de/office/word_tabulatoren/** provide a good description of how to work with tabs.

2. An application photo is no longer obligatory, but companies do like to see one. Insert your digital photo directly into the CV. At the bottom of this page you can find a tip on application photos.

3. Details about your place of birth, your family and nationality are voluntary. If you are not yet 18 years old, we recommend giving the names of your parents, as they will also have to sign your training contract. There is no need to give any information about their occupations.

4. The best approach is to present information in reverse chronological order i.e. start with the most recent information and work backwards. This means the person reading the CV can see the most important details straight away – they are more likely to be interested in your final secondary school grades than in which primary school you attended.

5. When listing your practical experience, be specific with times. State as accurately as possible what you did in which months. It makes a good impression if you state your main role during your internship or part-time job.

6. No matter what school you attended, state your school-leaving qualification. If you are not yet finished, you can write, "Expected school-leaving qualification: Abitur (upper secondary school leaving qualification) 2026". If your grades have already been determined, you can include them.

7. Almost all applicants have computer skills these days. That is too vague. It is better to list the exact programmes you have experience of. You should also say whether you have, for example, "basic" or "good" knowledge of these programmes.

Likewise, you should be as specific as possible when it comes to foreign language knowledge. For example:

English:	native speaker
Turkish:	intermediate
German:	business fluent
Ukrainian:	basic knowledge

8. If you have a driving licence, state it on your CV, including the licence category.

9. Think carefully about what hobbies to include. "Netflix" or "gaming" are not really hobbies that add something to your CV. Simply stating "music" makes it sound like you enjoy listening to music as a way of relaxing. As a hobby that is also not particularly striking. However, if you are actively involved in music – you play an instrument, sing in a choir or in a band – that's another story. Experience of being in a band or on stage, for example, show that you can integrate yourself into a group and that you are not afraid of performing in front of strangers. Depending on the training position, these qualities can also benefit a company and are worth mentioning in the cover letter.

However, it should not sound as if your hobbies are more important to you than the training position you are applying for. If you and your band play in a different German city every weekend, the company in question may worry whether you will have the time to dedicate to the training position on offer.

10. Location, date, and signature should be included at the bottom of every CV. Make sure that the date is the same as the date on the cover letter!

TIP:
If you include a photo in your application, **avoid using a passport photo**, as these biometric photos tend not to look very good. Wherever you get your photos from, make sure they look professional, the background is neutral and that you are appropriately dressed.
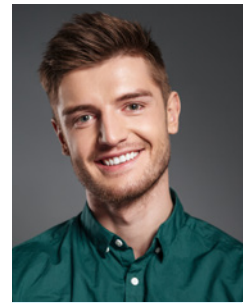
1. Lebenslauf

Persönliche Daten

Vor- und Zuname: Benjamin Cook
Adresse: Bäckergasse 99
                          41464 Neuss
Geburtsdatum: 6. Mai 2007
3. Geburtsort: Mönchengladbach
Staatsangehörigkeit: deutsch

Praktische Erfahrungen

4. 5. 03/2025   Schreinerei Holzweg, Neuss;
                        zweiwöchiges Pflichtpraktikum im Zuschnitt

10/2024   Commerzbank AG, Neuss; dreiwöchiges freiwilliges Praktikum
                        in der Abteilung „Wertpapiere"

06/2024   Computershop „Bits & Bytes", Neuss; Aushilfskraft im Service

Schulausbildung

6. seit 09/2018   Comenius-Gymnasium, Neuss
                        Voraussichtlicher Abschluss: Abitur im Sommer 2026

09/2014 bis 08/2018   Käthe-Kollwitz-Grundschule, Neuss

Besondere Kenntnisse

PC-Kenntnisse: 7. Microsoft 365: sehr gute Anwenderkenntnisse;
                       Adobe Photoshop: erste Erfahrungen
Sprachen: Englisch: sehr gute Kenntnisse;
                       Französisch: Grundkenntnisse
8. Führerschein: Klasse B

9. Interessen

Lesen, Musik (ich spiele Gitarre in einer Band und habe Bühnenerfahrung),
Volleyball (im Verein), Fitness

10. *Benjamin Cook*

Neuss, 27. April 2025

Email applications

Essentially, an email application is just an application portfolio in electronic form. You should prepare all the necessary documents and ideally combine them in a **single** PDF file. The maximum file size is usually stated. Also pay attention to specific instructions from each company! Most of the time you will also receive precise information on what your application should look like, even with applications via QR code and WhatsApp.

You can create, combine and change the size of PDFs with online tools such as 🔵 **tools.pdf24.org/de/**.

Check the finished PDF file to make sure it is of sufficient quality. A lopsided certificate should be rescanned. Also check your scanner's resolution settings.

If you do not have a scanner, you can scan in a copy shop or library or at your school. Scanning apps are also available for your phone. Smartphone photos, however, do not look good and you should only use these as a last resort.
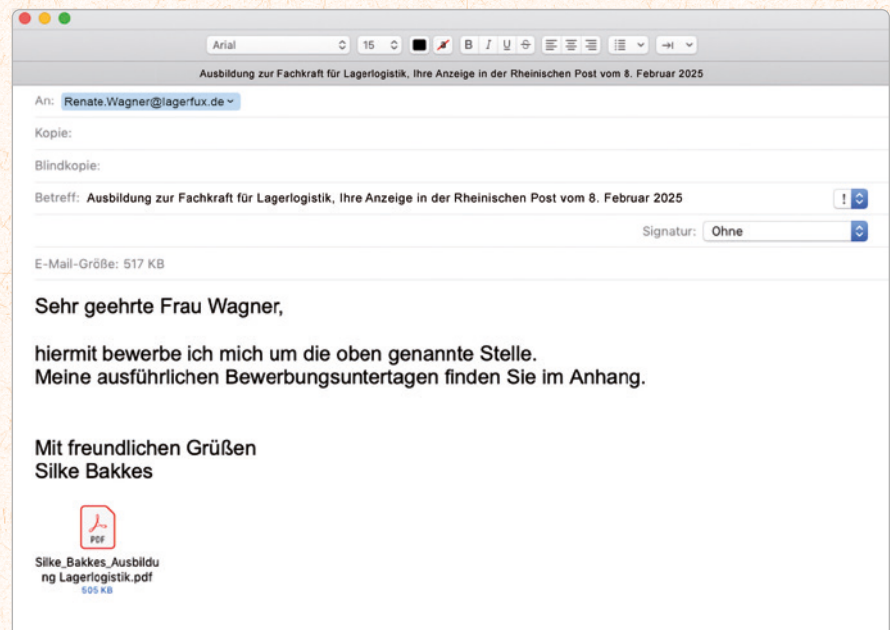
It is important to give the files an appropriate name. The file name should mention the type of document and your name (for example: CV_Birte_Bienlein). The recipient can then be sorted easier at the company. You then send the final PDF file together with a short email to the respective company.

The application cover letter should not be copied into the email, but instead also attached in the PDF file. The subject line of the email contains the exact title of the position, for example "Training as a Warehouse Logistics Specialist" and where you saw the advertisement. In the accompanying email you should also formally address the recipient. Under no circumstances should you send a "blank" email with attachments!

A good accompanying email might look as follows:

> **TIP:**
> Use a respectable email address (not schaumparty13@hotmail.com) and make sure to use this one email address throughout. Send your application from the same email address that you provide as your contact address.

Ausbildung zur Fachkraft für Lagerlogistik, Ihre Anzeige in der Rheinischen Post vom 8. Februar 2025

An: Renate.Wagner@lagerfux.de

Kopie:

Blindkopie:

Betreff: Ausbildung zur Fachkraft für Lagerlogistik, Ihre Anzeige in der Rheinischen Post vom 8. Februar 2025

Signatur: Ohne

E-Mail-Größe: 517 KB

Sehr geehrte Frau Wagner,

hiermit bewerbe ich mich um die oben genannte Stelle.
Meine ausführlichen Bewerbungsuntertagen finden Sie im Anhang.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen
Silke Bakkes

📄 Silke_Bakkes_Ausbildu
ng Lagerlogistik.pdf
505 KB

You have sent your application – now what?

After sending your application, you should be aware of how the training organisation might contact you. If you have given your parents' landline number, let them know who might be calling in the near future. Tell them what information they should give to a caller and what information they should request if you are not there. Pen and paper should be close at hand!

If you have given your mobile number, check the greeting message when someone gets through to your mailbox and make sure to answer the phone appropriately if it rings. Try to always have a pen and paper ready to make notes!

If you expect to be contacted by mail, check your inbox every day and your spam filter to make sure you don't miss any messages.

If the interview is due to take place by video (Microsoft Teams, Skype, Zoom, …), make sure you are well prepared. Be aware of what is visible in the background and remove any inappropriate objects from view. Check lighting and sound and make sure that you will not be disturbed. Treat the conversation as seriously as you would a face-to-face interview in a company and dress appropriately. Switch off other mobile devices, put the landline phone in another room and make sure that no one enters the room and that the doorbell will not disturb you. It is a good idea to close the window so as not to be disturbed by noise from outside. We also recommend you do a test call in advance with a family member or friend.

And then?

Now you should prepare for your interview. To help you do this, we have made some videos available here:

schule-wirtschaft-ihk.de/berufsstart/videos-zur-bewerbung/

We at the IHK Ausbildungs-GmbH wish you every success with your application and rewarding and successful training!

TIP:
All documents you plan to send should be saved as PDFs. Please do not use any other file formats!

IHK IHK Ausbildungs-GmbH

Legal notice

We have provided a lot more useful information at 🔗 schule-wirtschaft-ihk.de/berufsstart/ to help you enter professional life. Just scan the QR code!

Contact details of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mittlerer Niederrhein

Nordwall 39	Bismarckstraße 109	Friedrichstraße 40
47798 Krefeld	41061 Mönchengladbach	41460 Neuss
📞 49 (0)2151 635-0	📞 49 (0)2161 241-0	📞 49 (0)2131 9268-0
@ ihk@mittlerer-niederrhein.ihk.de	@ ihk@mittlerer-niederrhein.ihk.de	@ ihk@mittlerer-niederrhein.ihk.de