

# *Internship Guide*



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## **Preface**

Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University – Who we are!

The dual education concept in which employers and state-run professional educational schools cooperate has a long tradition in Germany. The Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg Karlsruhe/Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University Karlsruhe offers career-integrated undergraduate study programs. In 1974, Baden-Württemberg launched the new project aimed at creating a fully integrated system of higher education on a tertiary educational level. It took only a few years for the project in Baden-Württemberg to develop this system of higher education with now approximately 35,000 students in Baden-Württemberg. Around 3000 students are currently enrolled at the Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg in Karlsruhe in the fields of Business Administration, Engineering and Computer Science.

The main characteristic of career-integrated study programs is alternating three-month phases, with students learning theory at the university and receiving practical training from an enterprise. The students have an employment contract, and throughout the entire period, they receive a monthly salary and have the insurance status of employees.

Your university degree in Germany may contain plenty of lab-based sessions to give you a sense of job-oriented skills, but nothing won't equal then an experience in a real job environment. This is why potential employers, scope for those candidates who have a relevant experience in their study fields to be guaranteed that these individuals are able to put their knowledge in practice.

An internship in Germany is exactly what will complete the practical aspect of your degree and will significantly boost your employability.

This is why we would like our international students to broaden their horizons and to experience the German working environment.

## **Reasons to do an internship**

If gaining practical experience and improving your language and communication skills is something that sounds attractive to you, applying for an internship abroad will be the right decision. The country's powerful economy is highly supported by professional, educated and experienced leaders, thus by doing an internship in Germany, you will have the chance to work from and with the highly qualified professionals.

International students at German universities are very often regarded as a group with high potential. Companies nowadays value practical experience, thus, doing an international internship can be a great advantage in your further education or later career, especially if you would like to work for an international company after graduation.

An internship usually gives you an insight into a still unknown professional field and thus provides you with a good overview. As a way to complete the practical aspect of your degree and significantly boost your employability, an internship in Germany is exactly what you need.

## **Types of internships**

Before you start looking for an internship, you should know the terms and characteristics of the different internship options that are available in Germany for international students. It makes a difference for you and for the internship provider whether you do a mandatory internship or a voluntary internship

### ***Mandatory internships***

Just as the name indicates, these internships are integrated into a degree and are a fixed component of the study program that is a necessary requirement for graduation. The duration of your internship depends on the study and examination regulations of your home university. During the mandatory internship, you are not entitled to a salary or vacation, however, you are still covered by health insurance. Most of the companies, however, do offer some kind of compensation.

### ***Voluntary internships***

Although you are not obliged to do a compulsory internship by your university, it would be a great idea to do a voluntary one. You are free to negotiate the content and duration. If it lasts longer than three months, you are entitled to minimum wage.

## **Duration and payment of internships**

### ***How long should an internship last?***

In the case of mandatory internships, the study regulations govern the minimum length of the internship. *Please ask your home university for more information.* In case of voluntary internships, the duration can be freely negotiated and agreed upon.

### ***Are internships paid?***

In case of mandatory internships, the company is not obliged to pay you a salary because the internship is integrated in and is a mandatory part of your studies. Many students nevertheless receive some kind of compensation.

In case of voluntary internships, the interns are subject to the Minimum Wage Act. The minimum wage in Germany is 10.45 euros gross per hour (01.07.2022). Whether it has to be paid depends on the duration of the internship; if the duration is more than three months, the company has to offer you at least the minimum wage. If your internship is shorter, the compensation is optional and is up to the company to decide.

## **How to find an internship?**

Before you start looking for concrete internships, you should first conduct a short self-analysis. Here you need to be clear about the direction you want to take and what your career goals are. Be aware of your strengths and weaknesses, your qualifications and skills and the area (industry/ company/ department) you would like to work in.

Then, you should clarify the framework conditions. Think of the duration, compensation and location.

Always be aware of what you really want and need!

Now, the search for an internship can begin. There are several ways how and where you can find a suitable internship:

- LinkedIn
- Partner companies of DHBW
- Apply online on websites/ portals

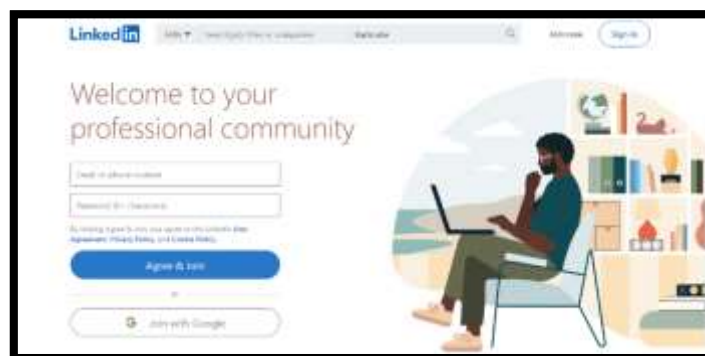
- Apply through organizations

## **LinkedIn**

LinkedIn is one of the most work-related social media platforms by recruiters all around the world. It's dominance has made a huge impact in the success of finding a job/ internship, just like to one you are seeking for. If you are not in LinkedIn, your chance of finding the right internship decreases by a huge margin, which surely you don't want. Finding an internship in Germany is already quite a process; so, if you follow the next steps towards creating your LinkedIn account you will save yourself time and effort so that you can enjoy more of what Karlsruhe and the Baden-Wurttemberg region has to offer.

### **Creating the account**

Access the official LinkedIn Webpage (<https://www.linkedin.com/home>) and create your account. You will need to input your personal details such as your name, age, professional experience, etc.

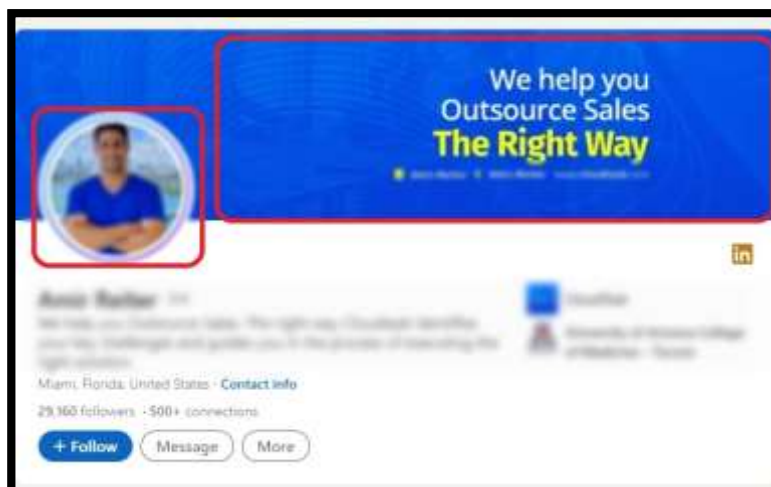


### **Adding up the information**

After completing the basic registration details your account is created. Even though you have input a bit of information, it is strongly suggested to add as much information as you can. You might ask, - Why? Well, it's an easy answer. The more information you input about your professional background, experience, education, sector, among others, the system will later on help you define your sector and the type of job profiles that you might be more suitable as a potential candidate, which will later be matched up to the job description that recruiters from a great extension of companies usually post in order to map talent.

### **💡 Pro Tip: Picture and banner**

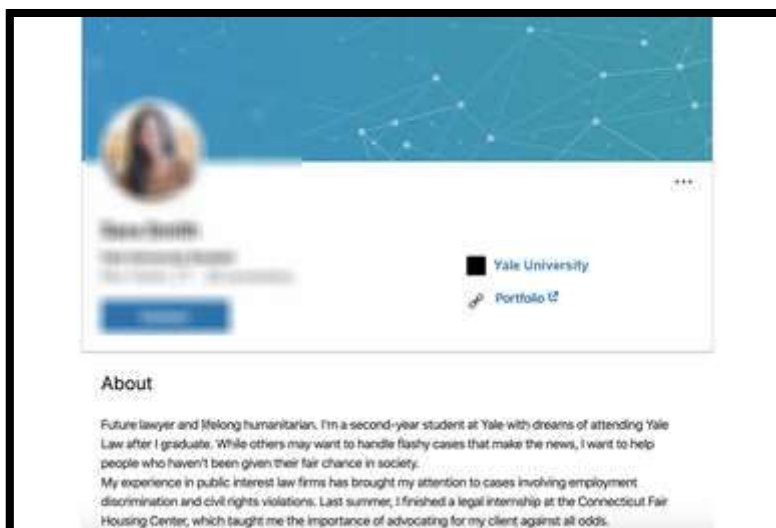
Add a professional picture to your profile, as it gives a face to the recruiters once they are mapping talent. Also, it is an added value to add a personalized banner with your details, such as the next example:



You can add a motivational message, contact details, among others. You can find a great number of banners at (<https://www.canva.com/create/linkedin-banners/>)

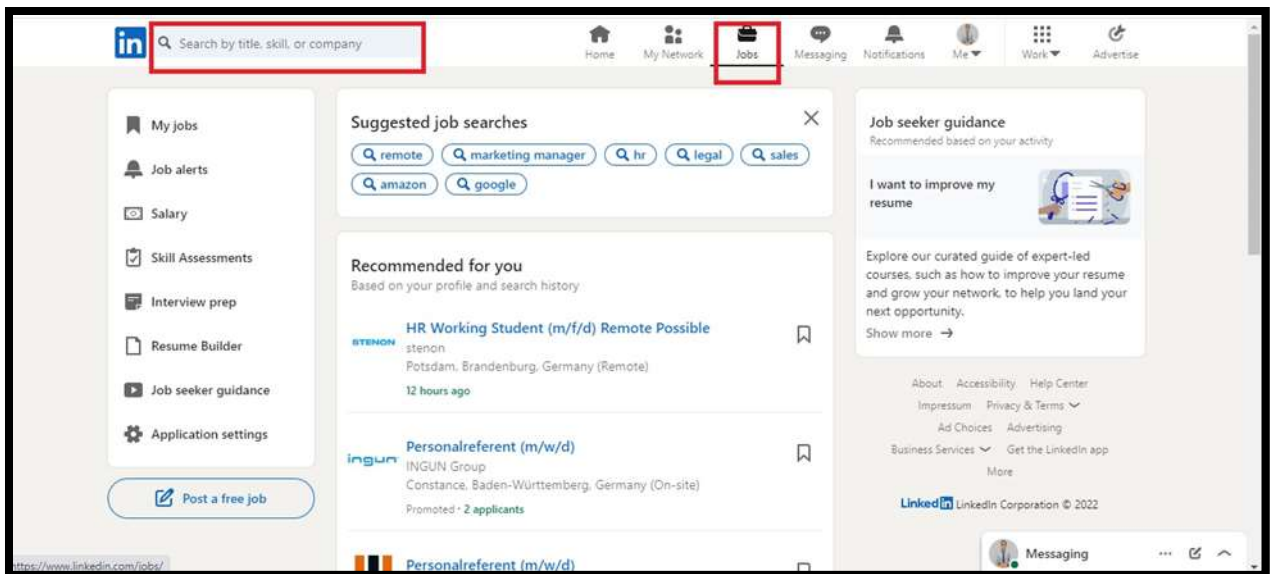
### 💡 Pro tip: Adding a description

It is greatly important to add a profile description. This will be what recruiters read once your competences match with a specific job profile. First, you can start with a brief introduction of yourself, stating a bit of what your current academic status is. Second, write about brief explanation of your future plans both academically and professionally. Finally, add up a bit about your hobbies and personal likes. The total description should not exceed 150 words. See the next example:



All right. You have created your profile, added all the information, added a great picture, and created a banner. Now it's time to start our "Job Hunt".

The first step towards this is to go to the main search bar and select which region are you interested in, as well as the name of the possible job titles that you might want to find.



### 💡 Pro tip: Key words

Add on the search bar the key words that relate to the title, sector and type of job you are seeking for. For example, if you are a business major and seek for an HR job, you could input "HR Praktikum". "HR Internship" among others. The key is to input those key words related to your field and that it clearly is an internship/praktikum.

### 💡 Pro tip: Job descriptions

Carefully read each of the job descriptions that are shown on the job ads. This is the first filter for you to know if there is a specific skill that you might require, for example, an advanced German level such as a C1, a technical qualification, among others.

### I applied: Now what?

Congratulations, you have just done your first step towards your internship! Recruiting processes might take some time before you get a response. Unfortunately, in Germany this response takes more time than the average, nevertheless, you can use this time to look and apply for many other opportunities, improve skills, and carry on.



### ***Partner companies of DHBW Karlsruhe***

The core principle of the dual education at DHBW is the three-month rhythm, by which students switch between university and their workplace training provider aiming to offer both academic skills and work-related expertise. DHBW closely cooperates with about 9,000 companies and social institutions all over Germany – its so-called corporate partners (Duale Partner in German). DHBW Karlsruhe cooperates with about 1,000 companies that can be found here:

<https://www.karlsruhe.dhbw.de/duale-partner/liste-der-dualen-partner.html>

On our website you can see a list with all partner companies arranged in alphabetical order. You will find the websites of these companies including contact details. Just send your application to the person in charge and state that you are an exchange student at DHBW Karlsruhe.

### ***Contact employers personally***

If you have an idea in mind of what company you'd like to intern for, go straight to its website and see what information it provides. Usually, on their official website, there is a specific section about available internship places. You can reach them by mail to make an appointment for an eye-to-eye interview at their offices.

### ***Apply online on websites/ portals***

There are numerous websites dedicated to internship listings that can make the process of finding an internship much easier. As well as listings of available positions, there is also an element of support to looking online. Beyond just providing job listings, many websites offer advice or tips for those searching for an internship, and helpful content like interviews with recruiters and Q-and-As with other interns.

[Mein Praktikum](#)

[UNICUM](#)

[Stepstone](#)

[Stellenwerk](#)

[Jobworld](#)

[Jobbörse](#)

[Connecticum](#)

[IHK](#)

[Berufsstart](#)

[Jobguide](#)

[Indeed](#)

## ***Apply through organizations***

Another way to get an internship in Germany is to apply through organisations such as the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and AIESEC. If you get a placement there, they will also help you to get your visa.

For more information click here:

DAAD: <https://www.daad.de/rise/en/rise-germany/find-an-internship/>

AIESEC: <https://www2.daad.de/deutschland/stipendium/datenbank/en/21148-scholarship-database/?detail=10000175>

## **The perfect application**

Writing an application for a new job can be a quite time consuming and inconvenient task. However, recruiters only spend up to 2 minutes for the first review of an application (some sources even state numbers just as low as some seconds!). This means that your application must be convincing at first glance.

First of all, recruiters will check whether all formal criteria have been met. Furthermore, the CV is searched for specific keywords relevant to the job. Finally, the overall impression of the documents determines whether he or she will invest more time in your application.

In general, a job application in Germany is made up by **three core elements**:

1. Cover Letter
2. CV
3. Attachments (e.g. reference letters, certificates, diplomas, copy of your visa etc.)

It is highly recommended to include all of them. To give you an even better idea of what this core elements are made of, let's start with the basic components of your cover or application letter.

### ***1. Cover Letter (what is important?)***

- Format is important
- Your name and address
- Place and date
- Address of the company
- Headline
- Text
- Signature

Please make sure to consider the following aspects when thinking of the content you will write in your letter. Check out the example below!

- The position applied for
- Your current situation
- Your reasons for wanting the job
- Closing paragraph
- Signature



If you already know (some) German, it would be great to write your application in German as well. The International Office will help to check your application. If you are unsure about your German language skills you should prefer writing your application in English.



### **3. Attachments**

Additionally, you can include further attachments:

- Cover sheet
- Application photo
- Copy of your visa/ residence permit/ working permit
- Language certificates
- Testimonials/ references

### ***Job Interview***

Regardless of impressing the company with your application, the recruiter's team will most probably still want to meet you before making an offer. As a student, interviewing can be challenging as you often don't have much work experience as other job seekers. You also don't have as much interviewing experience as other candidates.

Nevertheless, there is always something you can offer and ways of resonating with an employer during an internship interview; for instance, preparing yourself before the meeting by doing things like:

- Analysing the job
  - Review the job description
  - Consider what the company is seeking in a candidate
  - Make a list of skills, knowledge, professional and personal qualities that are required by the employer and are critical for success in the job
  
- Making a match
  - What assets do you have that match the job requirements? These might include skills, qualities, certifications, experiences, professional qualifications, abilities, computer skills, and knowledge bases.
  - Make a list with your strengths and weaknesses. Here are some examples:

TABLE 1			
Action-Oriented	Adventurous	Analytical	Artistic
Athletic	Authentic	Caring	Clever
Compassionate	Charming	Communicative	Confident
Courageous	Creative	Curious	Determined
Disciplined	Educated	Empathetic	Emotional Intelligent
Energetic	Entertaining	Fast	Flexible
Focused	Detail-Oriented	Helping	Inspiring
Intelligent	Leadership	Learning	Motivated
Optimistic	Open-Minded	Organised	Outgoing
Patient	Precise	Responsible	Self-Controlled
Speaking	Spontaneous	Social /People Skills	Strategic Thinking
Team-Oriented	Thoughtful	Trustworthy	Visionary
Warm	Willpower	Wisdom	

TABLE 2			
Aggressive	Arrogant	Bossy	Chaotic
Close-minded	Complaining	Contemptuous	Controlling
Cynical	Fearful	Greedy	Hesitant
Ignorant	Impatient	Impulsive	Indifferent
Insensitive	Intolerant	Irresponsible	Lazy
Lethargic	Loose-Tongued	Mistrustful	Moody
Naive	Negative	Obstructive	Passive
Prejudiced	Reckless	Rude	Selfish
Shallow	Short-sighted	Shy	Sloppy
Stubborn	Slow	Strict	Undisciplined
Vague	Wasteful		

- What soft and hard skills do you have that fit the company and the position?



- Researching the company
  - Find out as much as you can about not only the job, but also the company. Recruiters like it when candidates actually show interest for the company!
  - Check out the company website, as well as any social media they might have
  - Read articles about the company in industry magazines or websites

- Practice interviewing
  - Practice answering interview questions you will probably be asked during a job interview (friends and family members can be of great help here!)
  - [Harvard Business Review](#) and [Forbes Magazine](#) offer some interesting insight into the commonly asked questions during job interviews.
  
- Getting your interview clothing ready
  - First impressions matter!
  - Be presentable
  - Think about your makeup and accessories
  - Style your hair in an appropriate way
  
- Preparing what you need to bring to a job interview
  - *Bring*: portfolio with extra copies of your resume, a list of references, and a list of questions to ask the interviewer, and something to write with.
  - *Don't bring*: cell phone (or at least turn your phone off), a cup of coffee, gum, or anything else beyond yourself and your credentials.
  
- Practicing interview etiquette
  - Greet the receptionist, your interviewer, and everyone else you meet politely, pleasantly, and enthusiastically
  - Watch your body language – shake hands firmly and make eye contact as you articulate your points
  - Pay attention, be attentive, and look interested
  
- Getting directions
  - Know where you need to go for your job interview
  - Google Maps or another app can help you getting directions
  - Program your GPS
  - Check on parking and calculate timing
  - Do a practice run a day or two before the interview
  - Arrive a little early to the interview

- Listening and asking questions
  - Listen to the interviewer!
  - Pay attention, and take time, if you need it, to compose an appropriate answer
  - Have questions of your own ready to ask the interviewer
  - Let the recruiter know that you believe the job is an excellent fit and that you are highly interested
  
- Following up with a thank you note
  - Reiterate your interest in the job
  - Follow-up "sales" letter
  - Restate why you want the job, what your qualifications are, how you might make significant contributions
  - Might be a good opportunity to discuss anything of importance!

## **Legal Requirements**

Both EU and non-EU citizens can intern in Germany, but there are some extra requirements needed when coming from outside the EU. This requirements are mostly about getting a visa, which depends solely on where you come from. That is, depending on your nationality, you might need or not a visa to attend an internship in Germany.

When coming from any of the following areas, you do not need a visa to do an internship in Germany:

- Member States of the European Union
- European Economic Area
- European Free Trade Area

The following countries are also not required to obtain German internship/training visa either:

*(Legal regulations may change; thus, please inform yourself prior to your internship about the current requirements!)*

- Canada
- Japan
- Israel
- Australia
- New Zealand
- The United States
- Korea



If your country is not included in any of both lists, then you will definitely require a German visa to attend your internship. Nevertheless, if you are a non-EU student and coming from a non-mentioned country, but you are already in Germany with a student visa, things can be a little bit easier. For example, foreign students with a visa are allowed to work 120 full days a year, or 240 half-days.

Nevertheless, the list of countries that require or not a special visa to attend an internship in Germany is always changing. That is why you should always first check information on some of the following websites:

[Federal Foreign Office](#)

[Deutschland.de](#)

[Schengenisa](#)