CHECKLIST FOR PROACTIVELY REVISING JOB APPLICATIONS

The following information and tips are supposed to help you with autonomously revising your job application documents – primarily with a focus on the formatting. After having had a go for yourself, we still recommend requesting a feedback session with one of our career counselors:

General tips:

- **Purpose of your application:**
  Applying for a job, internship, etc. usually requires a cover letter („Anschreiben") – highlighting the potential use of a candidates skills and knowledge for the employer; in contrast, applications for a scholarship, a mentoring program, etc. usually require a motivation letter („Motivationsschreiben"), detailing the candidate's personal plans and expectations

- **Completeness:**
  1. Cover letter, 2. CV, 3. Supplements such as university diploma or current grade sheet, certificates of trainings, language proficiency tests, or scholarships, letters of reference or official „Arbeitszeugnisse"

- **Consistent formatting:**
  One font type and size for cover letter and CV – preferably non-serif such as „Arial" and no smaller than size 11

- **Document format:**
  If possible, create one pdf document from all three parts, and label it clearly, e.g. "Bewerbung_MariaMustermann_DataScientist_221207", document size max. 3 MB

- **Corporate culture:**
  Mirror the language style of the job advertisement, e.g. if the advertisement is in English, apply in English or use the first name of a person when addressing them casually in the „Du"-style

- **Faultlessness:**
  Typos and grammatical errors give a bad first impression. Have someone proofread!

CHECKLIST FOR CURRICULUM VITAE

General tips:

- usually 2-column table, approx. 2 pages in length
- Insert page numbers, e.g. "Page 1 of 2", full name and optionally full contact information on each page
- use reverse chronological order within CV sections, i.e. with the most recent experience at the top
- always include month and year information to indicate the exact duration, e.g., "10/2012 - 02/2013"; no gaps if possible
- Consistent structure: highlight job titles, educational qualifications
- Pick up relevant keywords from the job advertisement
- no must-have going by German labor law, but a professionally done and friendly photo may open doors and signal a good match to the advertised job role and/or the corporate culture in place
- Use of icons is *not* recommended, e.g.
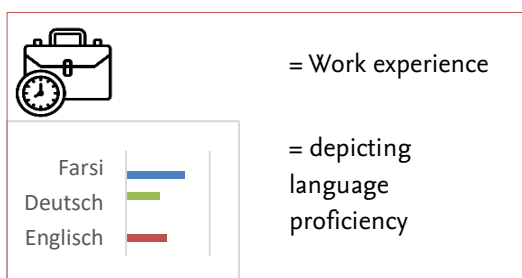
Currently rather problematic, because of still limited functionality of "applicant tracking systems (ATS)"; if used, must have clear significance or reference to section headline

Components in the CV:

The sequence is variable.

- **Personal details:** Name, date and place of birth (optional), address, e-mail, phone number
- **Practical experience:** jobs and internships
    1. Name of employer, place
    2. name of function/position
    3. keyword-like (max. 3-4 indents) description of special features/personal performance/positive work results
- **Education:** Study, school
    1. Name of the university, place
    2. name of the course of study, degree
    3. Focus or title of thesis (optional)
    4. average/final grade (optional)
- **Language skills** with self-assessment: e.g. native language / Fluent in spoken and written / Fluent / Very good knowledge in spoken and written / Good knowledge in spoken and written / Basic knowledge
- **IT skills** with self-assessment: e.g. beginner / advanced / expert
- **Interests / hobbies:** 2-3 specific interests

Optional:
- Other knowledge / further education
- Extracurricular activities
- Stays abroad
- References
- Date, place and signature

CHECKLIST FOR COVER LETTER

General tips:

- **Layout:**
  - max. one DIN A4 page
  - margins: approx. 4.5 cm from top and left and right 2.5 cm
  - order of text blocks:
    1. sender information
    2. recipient information
    3. place, date
    4. subject line incl. reference number or job ID
    5. text body in approx. 3-4 paragraphs
  - Formatting exceptions: cover letter must be inserted into a text field of a job application portal or sent as the body of an email

- **Personalized letter salutation:**
  Possibly, even combine the salutation of the responsible recruiter and the manager for whose team the position was advertised. The contact person is not specified? Ask or formulate in general: "Dear *"employer name"* team"
- Formulate briefly and concisely

Components in the cover letter:

Attention-grabbing opening:
- Reference to a prior contact with employer, e.g., on the phone or at a company contact fair, reference to an employer-specific vision or a current challenge for the potential employer; No "stating the obvious," e.g., "I herewith apply..." or "It is with great interest that I have seen..."

Main part:
- Enough focus on match with the job requirements and the potential benefits for the employer
- Refer to professional and interdisciplinary competencies, substantiating with concrete examples from internships/part-time jobs/studies

End:
- Information on the possible starting date or salary requirements
- Closing line with greeting without comma. In contrast to the Anglo-Saxon closing, e.g. „Kind regards,", no comma is used in German letters