Step-by-step guide to a successful CV

<u>Step 1: Heading</u>

- Don't write CV, curriculum vitae or résumé at the top. The recruiter can see what it is.
- Write your **name in 14 point bold** type so they can find you quickly in a stack of CVs
- Don't use German characters. Write Str. Or Strasse
- Use the English name for your city if there is one – Munich instead of München
- Use the (+) sign instead of 00 before the country code for Germany (49). International access codes differ.
- Use a serious email address: badboy@gmx.de isn't the image you want
- Include your nationality. If you already have permission to work or study in the country, say so.
- **Do not include your date of birth or age** unless specifically requested.
- **Do not include a photo** unless you are applying for a job where appearance matters such as acting or modeling.

<u>Step 2: Objective</u>

- Also called 'career objective' 'job objective' or 'purpose'
- **It's optional** for CVs sent in response to a job opening because the objective should be this particular job.
- An Objective can be helpful if you are applying to a company that interests you, but not in response to a particular job opening.
- It isn't necessary to write a full sentence
- Make it short and specific. A vague, general objective ('I want to contribute my outstanding communication and interpersonal skills and further develop them in a global company that is a leader in its field.') wastes space and the reader's time.

Step 3: Key Skills and Experience

- A very brief summary of your **most relevant** skills and experience. Employers or admissions officers scan CVs for 30 seconds or less before deciding if they want to read further. What should they know about you?
- Customize! For example, use 'Key Marketing Skills & Experience' for a marketing position
- Use phrases instead of full sentences
- Capitalize the first letter in each new bullet point

- Many companies and universities use computers to search for skills and experience that match their requirements. This is a good opportunity to include key words and phrases that the computer is looking for.

Step 4: Education

- As a current student or recent graduate, you will probably want to put the education section next. Applicants who have a lot of work experience place that section before education in their CVs.
- Starting with your most recent education, list
    - Your university degree or expected degree
    - The full name of the university in English, location - city and country
    - The period of time you have been there – month and year
    - Main subject (US – major)
    - Expected graduation date
    - If you are close to graduation and are quite sure of your final grade, you may want to include it here.
    - Do not include grades unless they are above average
    - You can list the grade in your main subject if it is higher
    - Use standard English translations of degree titles, courses or exams. If there are none, write the German name and give the nearest equivalent in brackets

- o Do not list anything earlier than *Abitur* or last results before entering university
  - o If you have received any academic honors, include them in this section

- At the end of the education section, list any additional training or courses that are relevant to the job or to understanding where you developed particular skills.

Step 5: Experience

- Using 'Experience' instead of 'Work Experience' enables you to include paid, and non-paid work, internships, volunteer work, and other experience that has helped develop your skill set. Employers care more that you have the experience rather than where you got it.
- Identify the employer or organization, the dates of employment (month/year), your position and your key responsibilities and accomplishments
- Use reverse chronological order: Start with your most recent experience and work backwards.
- Use the present tense for current positions and the past tense for work you are no longer doing.
- Use action verbs to describe your responsibilities and accomplishments.
- Include any work-related recognition you have received at the end of this section

Step 6: Additional Skills

- List language skills starting with your native language(s), then in order of proficiency.
- Computer skills
- Any other relevant skills

Note: Skills that are particularly relevant for this job application should also be listed under Key Skills and Experience

Step 7: Interests and Activities

- When work experience is limited, interests and activities can provide a way to show you've gained skills that relate to the position you are seeking.
- What you include also paints a picture of the kind of person you are.
- Volunteer activities are especially valued.
- Just writing a list of your activities doesn't reveal much.
- Are any of your interests or activities particularly relevant to the job?
- Do any activities highlight your leadership, demonstrate responsibility and organizational ability or show long-term commitment?
- Sports imply good health and an active lifestyle and can also demonstrate teamwork and leadership skills.
- Memberships and your roles in organizations can be included in this section.
- Do not include religious or political activities. For example, if you do volunteer work for your church, write about the activity – 'Volunteer football coach for 9 & 10 year-old boys', 'Led wilderness excursions for teen-age girls for three years'.
- The term 'hobbies' doesn't sound professional.
- Avoid 'loner' activities such as reading unless related to the job. The ever-popular 'Meeting with friends' may create a mental picture of clubbing and parties, prompting the recruiter to do a Facebook search.

Step 8: References

'References Available upon request' is optional. It is understood that you will provide them when asked to do so.