

How to make your CV ATS-friendly

You've done your homework: [created a great CV](#), searched for a job on one of the online websites and discovered an intriguing open position for which you consider yourself as the ideal candidate. You wrote a [cover letter](#). You are now planning to submit your application to the company. But hold your horses for a moment! Read this post first, and make sure your application is ATS-friendly (*applicant tracking system*) and complies with automatic screening methods to avoid being filtered out without ever having a human being look at your application in person.

CV parsing tools or automated screening tools - so-called ATS - are applications that companies use to pre-screen applicants to save time and manual work reviewing CVs. The software analyzes the contents and keywords of your CV and generates a matching score based on the company's job posting and other parameters. This score is often decisive for making it to the next stage where someone will look at the application in person.

Here's what you need to know to make it through the automatic screening

Ensure you use *text in standard fonts*, not graphics or funky fonts. Oftentimes people are using tables or graphics in their CV (for example, to present their skills or provide a chronological overview). Although this looks very good on the eye, for the ATS it would be better to use fully spelled out words because the data in visuals is not readable and will therefore not be counted towards your matching score.

Headlines

Keep it simple. Sometimes people like to use creative titles in their CV, however it's not a good idea if an ATS is screening your profile because it will most probably not be able to classify the provided data. Stick to very clear titles to structure your CV, for instance: "*Professional experience*" or "*Work experience*", "*Education*" and so on.

Keywords from the job ad

Part of the analysis will be a keyword matching score. You can increase this score if you use the same terminology for important skills as the company does in the job ad. Some people recommend a trick to improve your matching score: you can include keywords in your application and turn them white so that they are invisible to a reader, but are taken into account by the ATS. White font keywords are an absolute no-go! The automatic screening is always followed by a manual check where you would be filtered out anyways. Make sure to use the right keywords, and adapt the language in your CV, but always use only real content.

Time frame

Always mention the full dates of your work and education history and present the data in chronological order, for instance if you started working at company X in January 2019 and left in May 2021, it should be clear. You could also write 01/2019- 05/2021.

It's always better to avoid big time gaps, but in case you had a gap, it might be a good idea to insert the time frame and then give a clarification on what you were doing during this gap.

Abbreviations

Because screening programs frequently don't recognize them, it's best to write the entire term unless it's a common abbreviation that is used globally. If you are unsure whether or not you can use an abbreviation, the language in the job posting provides good guidance.

Classification of language skills

As you know, we recommend [learning German](#), since it will boost your chances of finding a job (and just generally make your life in Germany easier). When indicating language skills on your resume, always indicate and spell out your language level classification. Be sure to use words like "beginner," "fluent," or "native speaker," and avoid standard classifications like A1, B1, or C1, or write them in brackets after the appropriate level. Why is this so important? Although these are standard classifications for language skills, they are also used in Germany for driving license categories. For example, there are also A1, B1 and C1 driving licenses and your language skills might not even be recognized as such but would be ranked as a driving license instead.

source: <https://hallogermany.com/blog/cv-ats-friendly>