



“You will hear from us...”



What you should know when applying for a job in another EEA country



European Commission

"YOU WILL HEAR FROM US..."

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW WHEN APPLYING FOR A JOB IN ANOTHER EEA COUNTRY

European Commission

Directorate-General for Employment,
Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

Unit D.3

Manuscript completed in February 2009

The contents of this publication has been provided by the Public Employment Services in the EEA Member States. Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission may be held responsible for the use that may be made of the information contained in this publication.

Europe Direct is a service to help you
find answers to your questions about
the European Union

Freephone number (*):
00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

(*) Certain mobile telephone operators do not allow access
to 00 800 numbers or these calls may be billed.

More information on the European Union is available on the Internet
(<http://europa.eu>).

Cataloguing data as well as an abstract can be found at the end of this publication.

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2009

ISBN 978-92-79-11643-8

doi 10.2767/2838

© European Communities, 2009

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Printed in Germany

PRINTED ON 100% RECYCLED PAPER

Foreword by Dixie Dansercoer, Belgian explorer and athlete



© SOPAM

In our frantic modern world, everyone seems to hyperactively attempt to do more in less time.

Quality is forced to give way to quantity; grace, style and thoughtfulness dis-

appear with each hastily written e-mail or text message. The sheer volume of the information thrown at us daily can be overwhelming.

My intense and lengthy polar expeditions have shown me that nature does not follow this pattern. During the treks I was privileged to make in and around the North and South Pole regions, I was forced to slow down and humbly focus on those things which are truly important.

It takes a free, strong spirit to be able to endure nature's harsh conditions in the Arctic and the Antarctic, and I left each expedition a richer human being. I now view things from a completely different perspective, and find myself longing for diversity when life becomes too monotonous: such is the result of any exposure to different cultural or geographical conditions, and it can be enormously rewarding.

As with any pursuit of passion, hard work is necessary to achieve the dream. It takes a good three to four years to prepare for a polar expedition, a process which involves an intricate network of collaborators from around the globe. I imagine that looking for a job abroad, building up your contacts and making your dream a reality feels like a similarly mammoth project. The successes that I have enjoyed on my many expeditions have never been achieved alone. Besides my obvious expedition partner(s) and the technical support staff, we have often agreed to be accompanied by scientific and educational missions which add weight to our already

heavily laden sledges. This extra effort out in the field – whether we are asked to dig a 2-metre deep pit in the snow and ice or to record temperature readings from barren landscapes – may seem fatiguing, but it provides great satisfaction at the end of a gruelling expedition. We can't achieve our goals alone; a support network is essential and there is a great sense of satisfaction when we manage to overcome our obstacles. I urge you all to embrace the challenges you face, which can be exciting as well as daunting, and to consider how enriching and beneficial living and working in another country and experiencing things from a different perspective can be.

Dixie Dansercoer was born in 1962 in Nieuwpoort, a town on the Belgian coast, and is married with four children. In the mid-1980s Dixie travelled twice around the world in different directions. Since the end of the 1990s he has completed a 4000 km ski crossing of the Antarctic continent with Alain Hubert, and crossed the Arctic Ocean from Siberia to Greenland – over 1800 km in 106 days. He is experienced in long-distance and ultra-marathon running and has climbed Mont Blanc and Mount Everest. In 2008 he completed 'In the wake of the Belgica', a commemorative sailing expedition to the Antarctic peninsula, where he re-enacted the 20 landings made by Adrien de Gerlache 110 years previously. In 2009 he set up a project concerning the ecological consequences of climate change called 'Antarctic matters'. Dixie has published 13 books – some about his expeditions, as well as a book on how to run a business like an expedition, a motivational book co-authored by his wife, photo books and youth adventure books. Dixie Dansercoer is the ambassador for Unicef Belgium and has been awarded the title of High Officer in the Order of the Crown by the Belgian King HM Albert II. He was patron of the first Mont Blanc expedition led by one-legged female climber Kristien Smet, patron of the Umicore Solar Team in 2007 and a member of the EOS magazine (Scientific American) advisory committee. Dixie's extensive experience of exploration has taught him above all that co-operation and flexible adaptation to a new environment are indispensable for survival.

Visit Dixie Dansercoer's website at www.circles.cc.

Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction	7
Nurturing Europe-wide mobility.....	9
Application procedures in the EEA.....	11
1. Bulgaria.....	13
2. Belgique / België (Belgium).....	20
3. Česká republika (Czech Republic).....	26
4. Danmark (Denmark).....	34
5. Deutschland (Germany).....	39
6. Eesti (Estonia).....	45
7. Éire / Ireland.....	50
8. Elláda (Greece).....	55
9. España (Spain).....	59
10. France.....	64
11. Ísland (Iceland).....	68
12. Italia (Italy).....	76
13. Kýpros / Kibris (Cyprus).....	81
14. Latvija (Latvia).....	85
15. Liechtenstein.....	90
16. Lietuva (Lithuania).....	94
17. Luxembourg.....	99
18. Magyarország (Hungary).....	104
19. Malta.....	109
20. Nederland (Netherlands).....	115
21. Norge (Norway).....	126
22. Österreich (Austria).....	134
23. Polska (Poland).....	141
24. Portugal.....	153
25. România (Romania).....	166
26. Schweiz / Suisse / Svizzera / Svizra (Switzerland).....	172
27. Slovenija (Slovenia).....	179
28. Slovensko (Slovakia).....	191
29. Suomi / Finland.....	195
30. Sverige (Sweden).....	203
31. United Kingdom.....	208
A word of thanks	216

Introduction

The world is changing; people no longer expect to have a job for life, and accept that work may mean they need to move abroad. The experience of working abroad, either short or long term, enables individuals to gain essential skills, to expand their minds and to interact with many different cultures. Many people find it to be a very enriching experience which can enable them to find a better job when and if they decide to return home, due to the skills they have gained working abroad. However, going to work abroad is not a decision which anyone should make overnight – it is something which needs careful consideration and reflection. Being well prepared is essential.

EURES gives you the tools to fulfil this quest for enrichment. With web-based vacancy and CV databases and a human network of over 750 fully trained EURES advisers, the service works with employers and jobseekers to match skills with jobs on a European level, provide information to those who are interested in living and working abroad, and monitor the ever-shifting labour market. EURES has been matching skills and jobs throughout Europe for the last 15 years, having developed due to the need for a coordinated service to facilitate one of the four fundamental freedoms of the European Union – the free movement of people. We are able to provide essential advice, support and motivation in your home country, not to mention assisting you in your research and preparing you for interviews – but the help does not stop there. Because EURES is present in 31 European countries (namely the 27 EU Member States and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, not to mention over 20 dedicated services in cross-border regions), once you arrive in your host country you will still have access to EURES' expertise. We can provide advice regarding your social security arrangements, further information about the labour market, or local tips: EURES is always within reach.

This book has been produced because EURES would like to bring together in one place some of the pearls of wisdom that have been gathered by the network over the years, to enable all European citizens to benefit from this knowledge and to

refer to it as the need arises. This book is perhaps most useful for jobseekers, providing them as it does with a concrete resource to aid job-hunting and to break down some of the perceived cultural barriers in Europe. However, it will also be useful for employers to find out a little more about their applicants' cultural backgrounds.

The network is EURES' greatest strength. This manual has been coordinated by VDAB (the Flemish public employment service) together with the other Belgian public employment services, but the whole network has contributed; without their contribution and expert observations this book would not have been possible. We hope you find it useful, and wish you happy and fruitful European labour mobility!

Nurturing Europe-wide mobility

Life never stands still: every day we all learn something new or face a new challenge. The European labour market is no different – workers are getting older, while employment rates often change rapidly from year to year. Here at EURES we want to make sure that you get the best out of your rights and opportunities in Europe, whatever the next day throws at us.

European labour mobility is steadily increasing: although some countries initially put restrictions in place for workers from new EU Member States, most have now been lifted. Most people no longer have ‘a job for life’ – and this can be seen as an exciting opportunity to explore a whole range of sectors, roles and locations. With flexibility and an open mind, both employers and employees can benefit from the constantly developing labour market patterns in Europe: jobseekers can explore the exciting range of working patterns developing, including distance working and job shares, while employers can ensure a diverse, vibrant workforce by readily embracing applications from abroad and ensuring that employees are able to achieve a healthy work-life balance. With the right help and support, employers and jobseekers alike can find job and recruitment opportunities outside of their immediate environment. This book aims to give you a wide range of tips and background knowledge to allow you to benefit from these opportunities.

EURES is in a unique position to see the great opportunities available to everyone in Europe, but also, crucially, the remaining obstacles facing people before and after a move abroad. Many of these are related to cultural understanding – what makes Europe richly diverse can also cause confusion for those planning to explore its opportunities. As citizens of a united Europe, we can still seem foreign to one another, especially in such an important situation as a recruitment process.

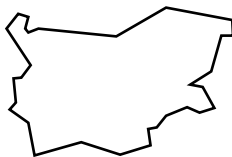
We wrote this manual especially for people who want to find a job outside their own country – either through moving abroad or becoming a cross-border worker – as well for employers, whom it will enable to become acquainted with the cultural

background of an applicant. This book offers an overview of each Member State, detailing the main information and essential dos and don'ts which you need to consider when applying for jobs, or recruiting from abroad.

EURES' labour mobility experts have proved to be an essential source of information while writing this book. It is thanks to the know-how of this 800-strong European network, as well as the regularly updated information on our website (<http://eures.europa.eu>), that we are able to present you with the information that follows, which we think is indispensable to those planning a move abroad. Of course, we would also encourage you to consult the network or the website for help with any further questions or tailor-made assistance. We hope you enjoy the book!

Application procedures in the EEA

→ **BULGARIA**



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Bulgarian

Parliamentary republic

110 910 km²

Sofia

Lev

EU

+ 359

.bg



1. Popular application procedures in Bulgaria

The normal application procedure is that candidates apply for a job and are then invited for an interview with the employer and/or his/her representative.

Applicants should be aware that the period between the moment the vacancy is published and the day the job starts is determined by the employers' requirements. However, the time between the selection period and the starting date of the job rarely takes several months. The only statutory period is determined in Article 17, Paragraph 4 of the Employment Promotion Act, which states that an employer is obliged to inform the local labour office in writing about the results of the selection procedure.

First contacts and general rules when a candidate looks for a job through a local labour office directorate:

- Listen to the jobseeker and get them to feel at ease.
- Review the documents submitted by the jobseeker.
- Introduce the documents necessary for registration at the labour office to the jobseeker.
- Input the jobseeker's data in the automated information system.
- Discuss job preferences.
- Give information about appropriate job vacancies to the jobseeker.
- Give a summary and obtain jobseeker's confirmation of the services of the local labour office directorate most appropriate for the candidate.

Points to be noted in electronic applications:

- It is very important for the candidate to assess whether the content of the job is compatible with his/her own interests. Some websites are oriented to specific occupations; other sites are oriented to jobseekers in specific regions.
- Another important aspect is that on some websites it may be possible for the candidate to post his/her CV and for the employer to register. If there is special interest in a particular company, a website for that company alone could be used;
- It is very important to look for a job on websites that are regularly updated.
- A candidate's electronic CV should be in line with the general European CV format.
- If an application form is to be filled in make sure it is done correctly.
- Electronic documents (CV, covering letter, application forms, etc.) should be sent within the period stated in the job advertisement.

Points to be noted in written applications:

- Make a paper CV using the European format.
- Write a covering letter.
- Apart from the CV, some other documents may be requested by the employer.

- Give a stylish layout to paper documents to impress the employer.
- Keep to the deadline for submitting the documents.

Points to be noted in telephone contacts:

In general it is not recommended to apply for a job by phone, as it allows the employer to rule out the candidate more easily. The aim of a phone call is to fix an appointment for an interview with the employer. The following things are important in the telephone call.

- Candidates should introduce themselves.
- Candidates should clarify which position they are interested in and their motive for the call.
- They should focus on why they are suitable for the position briefly and clearly.
- They should try to fix a date for an interview.

In general, for an application to be successful, the candidate should address the most important requirements mentioned in the job advertisement (without copying them word for word) in the description of his/her own skills.



2. How to prepare for the interview

The recruiter expects candidates to have the necessary education, qualifications and work experience. For some positions, it may be very important to have a command of one or more foreign languages, to show PC proficiency, a driving licence, etc.

The duration of the procedure depends on the employer's requirements as to the application period.

General rules for the application procedure via a local labour office:

- preliminary selection of appropriate candidates for the job vacancy;

- first contact with the candidates selected, who are invited to a meeting with the employment officer in the local labour office;
- meeting the jobseekers and interviewing them — the aim is to make a profile in accordance with the job vacancy;
- assistance for the jobseekers in preparing the CV and other documents according to the employer's requirements;
- preparing jobseekers for the interview with the employer;
- preparing references;
- organising an interview with the employer;
- carrying out the actual interview with the employer;
- feedback from both the jobseeker and employer on the result of the application.

The employer pays attention to accuracy, appearance, composure, confidence and gestures during the interview. The employer or their representative is in charge of the interview.

If the interview is held at the local labour office, the participants are the labour officer, the candidate and the employer or their representative. If the interview is held at the company, the participants are the employer or their representative and the candidate.

The meeting takes half an hour to one hour at the most. Where an employer insists on the candidate taking a practical test after the theoretical one, the procedure will be longer.

Do not show signs of nervousness (do not roll your eyes, do not wring your hands, do not tremble, do not play with your hair, etc.). Speak clearly and not too quietly. Do not smoke or chew gum. Do not use jargon. Do not be self-critical. Be brief in your answers. Do not criticise your previous employers. Do not use clichés. Do not compare yourself with the other candidates applying for the job. Do not discuss personal and financial problems.

During the interview, a drink of water may be offered and accepted.

A candidate can ask questions at the end of the interview. Questions may cover the following fields: the management structure of the company; a typical working day of the employee in that position; the deadline for receiving feedback; the company's staff training and qualification programmes.

The most common structure of this meeting is:

- The candidate and employer meet and greet each other.
- The candidate takes a seat.
- The employer and/or his/her representative ask questions, which the candidate answers.
- At the end of the interview the employer gives the candidate a chance to ask questions if they have any.
- During the interview, the employer will try to have a normal conversation with the candidate. The applicant is expected to be self-confident and composed.

The ratio between non-professional and professional topics addressed during the interview depends on the requirements of the job vacancy.

Candidates should explain their motivation, tell the employer more about themselves and about their strengths and interests. The Employment Promotion Act forbids direct or indirect discrimination in job application procedures. The employer does not ask for information on candidates' private lives. The Law on Personal Data Protection provides that private information is defined as any information about an individual person that can be traced through an individual number.

The applicant needs to know about the activity of the company, the management, the clients and competitors and the opportunities for development.

Frequent questions asked by the employer are:

- Why are you applying for this job?
- What can you contribute to our company?
- Tell me something about yourself. Who are you? What distinguishes you from other people?
- What sort of pay do you expect?

Some time after the interview the candidate can contact the employer (personally or by phone) in order to ask for the result of the interview, unless another agreement was made in advance.



3. Negotiate your benefits

It is not advisable for candidates to state their pay requirements immediately during the interview. Depending on the contract, payment is made by the hour or by the month. The level of pay is determined by the duration of the work or by production figures. The amount of pay for one item (the production quota) is negotiated between the employee and employer and cannot be less than the amount set out in the collective labour agreement.

Some companies ask candidates for a one-day trial period, but it is not widespread practice.

The application procedure finishes when a labour contract is signed or when the candidate hears that he/she has not been selected. An employer is obliged to inform the local labour office about the result of the selection procedure within seven days. When the local labour office has an active role in the organisation of the interview, they are expected to inform the candidates about the rejection by the employer.



4. Do you need references?

Previous employers can act as referees. These references prove that the candidate is suitable for the job vacancy.

A copy of the diploma may be insisted on during the interview. Some employers may require letters of recommendation.

Whether or not 'proof of good conduct' is needed depends on the nature of the work.



5. Making a good impression

The correct address of the company and how to get there by public transport must be checked beforehand. Make sure to write down the correct time and bring along all the necessary documents. Always confirm that you will be coming for interview.

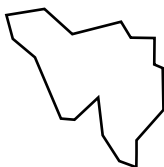
You can only be absent for the interview for a valid reason. In this case you should apologise for not being able to come to the interview and explain the reasons.

Clothes should be elegant: no sportswear, short skirts or bright colours. Clothes should be clean and shoes should be polished and should match the clothes. No strong deodorants and perfumes. Attention should be paid to details like clean hair, nails, hair style. Men should be clean shaven or have a well-groomed beard. Do not wear eccentric jewellery.

Candidates should be polite, friendly and smile, should make eye contact with the interviewer, listen carefully to the questions, answer each question (up to two minutes), speak distinctly, self-confidently and calmly, briefly summarise their strengths, compare their experience with the requirements of the position they are applying for, thank the employer for the time taken or even write a letter of thanks to the employer.



→ BELGIUM



Official language

Dutch (North), French (South),
German

Government

Constitutional monarchy

Surface

30 528 km²

Capital

Brussels

Currency

EUR

Member EU or EEA

EU

Phone code

+ 32

Internet code

.be



1. Popular application procedures in Belgium

An application procedure generally starts by collecting information about the vacancy or about the contact persons if you are applying spontaneously. You can contact the company to get more information about the vacancy and you can search for information about the activity of the employer. If you consider the vacancy to be suitable, you can write a covering letter and a CV, and submit these to the employer in the agreed way.

If the employer is interested in your profile, one or more interviews might follow. Assessments, skill and psychological testing may be applicable as well. The last phase is the decision phase by the employer and feedback. Follow-up

(feedback) can even be requested by the candidate and may show an extra factor of motivation and interest to the employer.

The most commonly used procedure is a selection on the basis of CV and covering letter. Note that all vacancies in Belgium are open for both males and females. There is no age limit.

The average recruitment period between publishing the vacancy and starting the job depends on several factors: the number of interviews or assessments, public or private sector, fixed vs. short-term contract, period of notice required for the employee at the previous employer, time needed for relocation, etc. The average recruitment time for all kinds of vacancies is six weeks, but for some jobs (e.g. vacancies where there is a shortage of applicants) this can be much shorter.

When you apply by e-mail, use a 'professional' e-mail address. Employers do not like too much imaginativeness in your address. Make sure you put a clear reference in your mail and use a covering letter. Take care with the layout of both covering letter and CV. Use Belgian standards (if known) to write your covering letter. Use clean paper if applying by regular mail. When you telephone the employer, introduce yourself briefly and clearly and speak in the required language. If you are making a spontaneous application, introduce yourself and make clear what kind of function you are applying for.

You show your motivation by knowing the function and the company. Also be sure to prepare answers to questions about your strong and weak points.

The CV is the most important document. Other documents are usually not required in Belgium at the time of applying. Employers believe what you say about your diploma, certificates, etc. However, some of them might need to be submitted when signing your contract. So be sure to have a translated diploma ready, but do not send a copy with your application.

Take the initiative yourself for the follow-up to the interview. This is an important motivational factor from the employer's point of view. You can contact the employer yourself if you have not heard from them after two weeks (unless you know that the decision period will be longer).

Be polite, honest and professional. Never lie to the employer. Speak only about facts that might be of interest to the employer. An interview can be seen as a form of negotiation, rather than as a question and answer session.



2. How to prepare for the interview

For the employer your attitude, assertiveness, politeness and the way you present yourself are the first points to focus on. You will be a representative for the company and you have to fit in with the team. The interviews may be attended by two or three persons. The first interview is mainly done by a psychologist. Afterwards you may have an interview with the manager who will be your direct superior or even with a future colleague. The last practical interview (negotiation of salary, etc.) will be carried out by a representative of the human resources department. Assume 45 minutes for an interview and half a day for testing.

Both verbal and non-verbal communication play an important role in the selection process. You can accept coffee or water, if offered. At the end of the interview you can ask for additional information about the position and the company. You can also ask for practical information about the job.

Interviews normally start with the interviewers introducing themselves. Then candidates will be asked to present themselves. The interviewer will move from very general to very detailed questions. At the end of the interview the candidate can ask additional questions and the interview will be concluded by making practical arrangements for the decision period and feedback.

The atmosphere at the meeting is normally formal and professional. Be sure to act professionally, both before and after the interview. Be consistent in your answers. Take note of the way interviewers presents themselves. Use their first name only if they do. The atmosphere at an interview does not always reflect general company culture.

The main focus during the interview will be on professional issues. Expect a ratio of 80:20 between professional and private questions.

It is important to convince the employers of your competence and skills. Talk about them during the interview. Expect to be asked to prove your motivation and skills by practical examples, hobbies, voluntary work, etc.

The employer needs to respect the privacy of the candidate. You do not have to answer questions about religion, sex, desire to have children soon, etc. A candidate is allowed to 'lie' about these topics, as long as they are not work-related. Not willing to answer too delicate questions can also be proof of being assertive towards the employer and can be a strong point. There is legislation against discrimination in Belgium. You can make an official complaint if you feel you have been discriminated against.

Employers appreciate it if candidates inform themselves about the company. You can search the Internet for information about the sector, recent company projects, etc.

Most questions will be about your motivation, personality and skills. Take care: there is a reason for every question. Always think to yourself: why does the interviewer want to know this?



3. Negotiate your benefits

Salary negotiations usually take place in the final phase of the recruitment procedure, when the applicant has the opportunity to ask questions. The salary in Belgium is normally expressed as

gross pay, per month or per hour, depending on the type of contract. Do not be afraid to ask for clarification of the exact content of your salary package. An extra 13th or even 14th month's salary may be negotiable within the annual salary. These are not included in the salary advertised. In Belgium salary negotiations are only possible in the private sector.

The main extras over and above statutory benefits in Belgium are: meal vouchers, hospital insurance, company car, mobile phone, computer, refunding of transport costs for commuters. Negotiations take place between the applicant and an HR representative. From a legal point of view, a one-day 'work trial' is not possible, unless it is arranged via a temporary jobs agency (This means that you will be paid for that day). Practical testing at the workplace is possible, but no longer than needed to test your skills.

The application procedure can be considered as being closed after the feedback. Take the initiative and ask for feedback yourself.



4. Do you need references?

There is not a culture in Belgium of working with references. They can be requested, but this does not happen very often.

A copy of your diploma is needed for certain registered jobs, or if the level of your diploma reflects your salary level (in the public sector).

Letters of recommendation are not used in Belgium. Proof of good conduct may be required in some cases: e.g. jobs where you will have to work with children, prison inmates, etc.



5. Making a good impression

Always be punctual. Be five minutes early, but never late. If you expect to arrive late, due to traffic, train delays, etc., let the employer know. Be sure to have a contact number with you when travelling to the interview.

It is very polite and professional to confirm that you can come for interview, so that employers know they can expect you. If you are not available at the time suggested for your job interview, contact the employers as soon as possible and arrange a new appointment.

In Belgium, most people commute to work every day. That means that most employers expect that you can be present at a job interview. Distances are so short that commuting to an interview should not be a problem.

There is no fixed dress code. Try to dress in the way you would expect someone to do in the position you are applying for. Do not wear a suit and tie if you are applying to be a plumber. Do not come in shorts or jeans if you are applying for a job as sales representative. Jewellery or perfume should match your clothes. Do not overdo it. Remember that the way you present yourself reflects your personality.

Asking for follow-up shows the employer that you are motivated. If an employer has promised to give you feedback within one week, do not call earlier, but if the employer has not called you after two weeks, you can call them and ask for the feedback.

→ CZECH REPUBLIC



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Czech

Parliamentary republic

78 866 km²

Prague

Czech koruna (CZK)

EU

+ 420

.cz



1. Popular application procedures in the Czech Republic

The normal application procedure is to respond to job offers that are published on the Internet, in newspapers and at labour offices. The employer usually mentions his/her e-mail address to which interested candidates are asked to send their CV and covering letter. Many of the employers use services of private employment agencies and you can get job offers when you register with them.

When you send your application to an employer, you can expect an answer within several days or weeks, and the employer will usually invite you to a personal interview. It is not exceptional that you do not receive any answer if the employer is not interested in your profile. There is a special obligation

for all employers in the Czech Republic to report vacancies that have not been filled within 10 days to the labour office. The labour office website contains the largest database of job vacancies.

The time between the moment of publication of the vacancy and the day the job starts may vary from one vacancy to another. The advertisement may state an exact starting date for the contract or the starting date may be agreed on by the employer and the applicant.

You should as soon as possible reply to a job offer you have chosen and take into account the basic criteria mentioned in the job offer. You want to attract the employer's interest, and the first contact with the employer is very important.

You can apply for the job electronically (structured CV plus covering letter by e-mail, online application on employer's website, job portals, etc.). Limit yourself to one page. Do not send your application from your present employer's mail box, by e-mail with a nickname or by mass mail. Fill out the subject of the e-mail, e.g. name of job position. You should clearly describe the attachments to the mail. Send your CV as a separate attachment.

Your written application should contain the correct address of the company, the date, the job you are applying for, information on where you found the job advertisement, what you can offer (qualifications, work experience), a request for a personal interview, your name and contact details. You should enclose a structured CV.

Telephone contact information can be found in the job advertisement or on the company's website. Be prepared for the employer's questions — make sure you have a pen, a notebook and your CV at hand. Try to speak to the person responsible for your field. Reply briefly and to the point to the questions and ask for the opportunity to visit the employer personally. Do your best to accept the time suggested by the employer. It is better to phone at the beginning of the working day.

If you want work in a particular company, even if it did not publish a job vacancy, you can still write an application and focus on your idea about a possible job in the company and your interest in working at that company.

Recruiters expect applicants to be informed about the company (company's structure, scope of activities) and about the details of the position on offer. They will ask the applicant why they want to work in the respective company. The applicant must also be prepared to answer the questions related to his/her expert knowledge and any other qualifications (personal qualities, ability to work individually or in a team, their reliability, adaptability, previous experience etc.). To verify an applicant's personality some employers also require that they pass some psycho-diagnostic tests.

During the job interview, the applicant is required to submit their qualifications and educational documents (diploma; language courses, driving licence, welding licence etc.); copies of diplomas and documents are usually submitted after signing the job agreement. Employers also usually require proof of good conduct.

To start the application procedure, applicants usually send a CV and a covering letter. After a few days or weeks the employer usually contacts the shortlisted candidates and invites them to a personal interview. The interview has the following structure: (i) presentation of the company and working position by the recruiter; (ii) test of the applicant's specialist knowledge and/or skills and/or a psycho-diagnostic test; (iii) individual interview. The result of the job interview is made known by letter or phone call.



2. How to prepare for the interview

When you come to an interview, you may expect approximately one to three interviewers there. The length of the meeting, behaviour and style at the meeting may vary ac-

According to the position you are applying for and the type of employer involved. At the 'average' interview you may be asked questions (especially about education, experience and motivation) first and be encouraged to ask questions yourself afterwards. Some interviews have more levels that you have to pass to get the job. It is important to behave confidently, show your interest in the job and the company. The question of pay may be tricky. It is better to wait with these questions until employers bring it up themselves or tell you that they want to employ you.

Generally, a meeting with applicants does not have a specific structure. It could be arranged as an interview, a test, a selection procedure or something else. The meeting is usually arranged as an interview. Depending on the company structure, the company owner, personnel officer or head of department (or all of them) may be present during the interview. Most meetings start with a short introductory interview about personal details, with the CV not yet being discussed at this stage. This is followed by questions which help the personnel officer to obtain additional and more detailed information about the applicant, their expectations and career aims. These questions focus on education and job experience. The next part of the interview is about the position involved. This part of the interview gives the applicant information about the company and internal relationships in order to allow the applicant to have an idea about the company's activities and working environment. The end of the interview can cover non-professional questions or the applicant is given the time to explain their motivation for the job, and to show their skills and knowledge. The ratio between non-professional and professional items is 20:80 %.

There are no separate anti-discrimination laws in the Czech Republic. Discrimination-related issues are included in several statutory regulations (e.g. Labour Code, employment law, etc.). Of course there are some questions you do not need to answer, e.g. questions related to religion, minorities, health, number of children, marital status, property matters, etc. You can respond by asking: 'How does this relate to the job I am applying for?'

You can prompt the employer's interest by proving your interest in working for the firm. You should try to learn as much as possible about the company. Knowledge of the company is very important (history, business field, exports, production, job description, number of employees, etc.) Sources of information are the company's website, for example.

The most common questions asked during the interview:

- Can you tell us something about yourself?
- Have you ever done the same (or a similar) job as the one you are applying for?
- Why do you want to work specifically for our company?
- What do you expect from a job in our company?
- Why do you think we should employ you?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Are you willing to travel?
- What kind of job are you looking for?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- What do you know about our company?
- What did you do during the time when you were unemployed?
- When can you start work?
- What are your salary expectations?
- Are you willing to work overtime?
- What is your relation to IT?
- Have you got any references?
- Have you got any questions?

The following questions should not be asked during an interview/test:

- What is your political orientation? Are you a member of a political party?
- Questions about religious affiliation
- Questions about family situation and property
- Partnership relations, weddings

For an interview/test it is highly recommended to make a preliminary appointment with the personnel department.



3. Negotiate your benefits

Some time after the interview at the employer's, you receive their decision (which should be in writing). If this is positive and you have decided to take the job, contact the personnel officer (HR manager) of the company, tell him/her about your decision to take the job and negotiate the date when you start work and other important details of the employment contract.

Employment is based on a contract between employer and employee. The employer is obliged to make a written contract (Labour Code). The employment contract must include basic conditions: kind of work, place of work, date when work begins, duration of contract. To avoid future misunderstandings it is recommended to incorporate the employee's/employer's duties and rights, description of work, working hours, trial period, holiday entitlement, period required when giving notice and salary scale and conditions into an employment contract.

You can negotiate your pay, but it depends on the situation. It is good to have salary/wage awareness. This differs from branch to branch and from place to place. It is better that the employer brings up the salary first during the interview and the applicant waits for his/her offer. There is a better chance to negotiate your salary/wage with private and smaller employers. In large companies, public or state administration or budget-dependent institutions, the salary scale is prescribed by the tariff level. Remuneration is expressed in hourly or monthly rates, rarely in annual figures — except in the case of top management positions.

The basic rules for paid holidays are set out in the Labour Code. Both can be modified by a general agreement between employer and trade unions in the company. In some cases, annual bonuses and conditions can be negotiated, mostly where managers' contracts are involved.

Special financial benefits based on results can be a kind of perk, e.g. the possibility for employees to purchase a company's product at a reduced price, reduced price luncheon vouchers, vouchers for theatres, swimming pools, for reductions, holiday allowances. There is room to negotiate between the employer and the trade union of the company.

It is stated in the Labour Code that the probationary period cannot be longer than three months. Employers mostly use a probationary period, including it in an employment contract. There is some room to negotiate the length of a probationary period (i.e. making it shorter than three months). Generally, however, applicants accept the company's proposal.



4. Do you need references?

References or letters of recommendation are usually not required. Employers verify information about the applicants' last jobs by means of a phone call to their former employer.

During the job interview recruiters usually check only diploma or documents. Copies of applicants' diplomas and documents are normally submitted after signing the job agreement.

Employers generally require proof of good conduct.



5. Making a good impression

It would be very undesirable for an applicant to be late for the job interview. Usually five minutes is acceptable but not more. Employers react on the basis of need. Normally, you will not get an interview if you are late. Attendance is mostly confirmed by both sides, mainly by e-mail or phone. You can be absent but only if you inform the employer in advance.

The most common type of interview is in person. The first round of interviews may be done by e-mail. New media resources are only just starting to be used.

It is recommended to wear clothes that are suitable for the position you are interested in. For top positions it is better to choose more conservative clothes, while for positions which require creative thinking, it may be acceptable to choose more original or individual clothes. A dark suit, plain tie, high-quality leather shoes and briefcase is generally recommended for men. For women, a sober two-piece suit, trouser suit or coat and skirt is recommended (the skirt should be knee-high) together with high-quality court shoes, discreet make-up and a hair style that suits you. Jewellery, only as an accessory to your suit, might be a small brooch, fine necklace and small earrings.

Do not bring anything to bribe the personnel. Do not come drunk, dirty, or dishevelled.

Try to find out as much information as possible about the company, people and company culture. Prepare well for the interview, be positive, try to adapt to the culture of the company. Do not talk too much. Be clear in your answers to the employer's questions.



→ DENMARK



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Danish

Constitutional monarchy

43 098 km²

Copenhagen

Danish krone (DKK)

EU

+ 45

.dk



1. Popular application procedures in Denmark

Employers will publish the vacancy online on their own websites or on the official website jobnet.dk. Vacancies for foreign jobseekers can also be found on www.workindenmark.dk where you can also submit your CV. Sometimes employers request vacancies to be sent to specific national websites or they might contact a recruitment agency to handle the first screening of candidates.

Contacts between the candidate and the employer are usually direct. The procedure for application is described in the job advert, and should be adhered to. The period between the day a vacancy is published until the job starts varies, depending on the sector, is approximately one to one and a half months.

When an application is sent (usually electronically) it is very important to personalise the application to the specific employer. Only contact the employer in the language requested in the advertisement. Always make the contact yourself. The recruiter expects the applicant to meet the qualifications. Documents in a foreign language must be proved to be authentic. The recruiter does not expect any follow-up to the application. Typically, candidates respond to an advertisement directly to the employer. This is always described in the advertisement.



2. How to prepare for the interview

Employers pay specific attention to the applicant's ability to meet the qualifications demanded. The employer is in charge during the meeting. How many people attend an interview or test varies, normally from one to five. A meeting will typically take up to one hour, with the candidate often being offered a cup of coffee or tea. It is not acceptable to smoke during a meeting.

At the end of the meeting, the applicant can ask questions about the position, salary, working conditions, contract, holidays, extra entitlements etc.

There is a specific structure for the meeting. First you talk briefly about the weather, how you got to the meeting, or another general subject. Then the company gives a short introduction and applicants have the opportunity to ask questions and to present themselves. Finally the meeting ends with information about what the next step will be. In general, the atmosphere is friendly and straightforward, and the applicant's attitude is expected to match this.

The professional topics during the interview are the most important ones. Topics might also involve non-professional items such as pets/children/sport and other interests as additional material, or as small talk at the end of the interview.

You need to prepare and explain your motivation for applying, why you are applying and what they will gain if they offer you the job. There are anti-discrimination laws in Denmark in conformity with EU rules, relating to sex, age, disability, race, religion and political opinions. You do not have to answer all the questions. Sexual orientation and whether you are going to have more children are considered to be strictly private matters. The most common questions include your weak and strong points, as well as where you will be three to five years from the time of the interview. There are no trick questions.



3. Negotiate your benefits

There are standard employment contracts, but the company might use their own. Use the standard contract to make sure that nothing will be forgotten in your individual contract. It can be purchased in any bookshop.

It is common to negotiate salary or working hours, as well as fringe benefits, depending on the level of the job offer. Remuneration may be per hour, week or month, rarely annual. Holiday pay is according to the statutory requirement. If there is a bonus system, it should be mentioned separately. There is room to negotiate extra benefits, depending on the level of the job. The most common ones are free telephone, newspapers, car, Internet, etc. Negotiation is with either the head of the company or the HR department.

It is not customary to be asked for a one-day trial period, except in very few professions. You can refuse. It is common to have a probationary period of three months in your contract.

There is no compensation for costs incurred in attending interview. At the end of the meeting you will be informed by the employer of the subsequent procedure.



4. Do you need references?

The need for references depends on the situation. Referees will be contacted if the employer is uncertain or if a vacancy is involved where a high level of professionalism is needed, managerial, academic post etc. References may be from former employers or colleagues (they are expected to answer a possible request for a reference from the employer).

A copy of your diploma is needed and must be sent with your application and CV.

A letter of recommendation can be useful. A good recommendation is always helpful. If you wish to work with children or the elderly or in the financial sector, proof of good conduct is needed.



5. Making a good impression

Danes are very punctual. Preferably turn up five to 10 minutes in advance. You are not expected to confirm your attendance. You cannot be absent and make a new appointment unless you hold unique qualifications worth waiting for. Dress fairly conservatively, not too flashy, not too relaxed. Jewellery should be discreet and generally no visible piercings.

It is common to call or meet again for evaluation, in order to know in which areas the applicant can improve.

What is absolutely not done during an application procedure?

- Misspelling of name and address of company.
- Errors in the application.
- Being disloyal towards former employers.
- Turning up late for interview.

Think about:

- Good eye contact at interview.
- Firm handshake at interview.
- Write the application yourself.
- Answer in the language suggested in the vacancy.
- You do not need to be able to cover all the qualifications, but you do need to speak the language suggested in the vacancy.



→ GERMANY



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

German

Federal parliamentary
republic

357 021 km²

Berlin

EUR

EU

+ 49

.de



1. Popular application procedures in Germany

In Germany, a written application is customary. Before you start writing your covering letter, you can ask in advance for some more information about the vacancy by phone. Make sure that, for your written applications, you create a complete file containing your application letter, your CV, a photo and some letters of recommendation. Make sure that there are no spelling mistakes in any of your documents and that your file looks perfect.

You can also apply directly through the job offers that are published on an employer's website. Make sure that you answer all the questions if there is an application form that is to be completed. If you send your application by e-mail, it is recommended that you send your covering letter, CV, photo

and letters of recommendation all in one document. If, during your application procedure, you make one or more telephone calls with the employer or the human resources department, make sure you are always polite, always give them your full name (= first name and surname). Prepare your answers in advance and answer to the point.

In cases where you are considering spontaneous applications without properly knowing if there are any job offers, prepare what you want to say very well and be sure that you can sufficiently explain why you are applying in this way.



2. How to prepare for the interview

There is no general way of preparing for an application, the documents you need and the different steps of an application procedure. Every situation is very specific and depends on the individual situation of the employer who published the vacancy.

It is very important for the employer that you turn up to the interview on time. The employer pays a great deal of attention to the way you present yourself at this meeting. Clothing, hair style, jewellery, etc are looked at very closely. During the interview you have to pay attention to your attitude, your body language, eye contact and the way you express yourself.

Interviewers expect you to shake hands when you enter the interview room. Before entering you must switch off your mobile. If they offer you something to drink (coffee, water, etc.) feel free to accept. Persuade them that you are very motivated to get the job. You can prove your motivation by asking different questions during the interview. Be careful not to criticise things or people. Even if they ask you to express criticism about something or someone, try to make the best of it and put things as positively as possible.

On average, the interview is conducted by at least two people. Depending on the size of the enterprise the number may increase up to six and the following people may take part in the interview: the company's owner or general manager, people in management functions, HR staff, peer colleagues. The interview usually takes about an hour, but it may vary, depending on the sector and the individual situation during the interview.

The interview is usually very well structured. It starts with the introductions, including the representatives of the company, followed by a short presentation about the company itself. Then it is the applicant's turn. From that moment on a company representative will ask all kinds of questions. Towards the end of the interview the applicant has the opportunity to ask the firm's representatives some more questions. At the end of the interview, the applicant is given some more information about the application procedure and the time taken to inform the applicant of the company's decision.

After a company has decided to hire you for the job, it will normally communicate the decision by phone. Once you have signed your contract you can be absolutely sure about the agreement.

During the interview the representatives of the company may ask you a wide range of questions about various items. You can be pretty sure that you will be asked one of the following questions:

- Why did you choose to work for our company?
- Why should we select you instead of someone else?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you expect from your job, your team, etc?
- Can you tell us some success stories about yourself or examples of good practice?
- Why do you want to work in Germany?
- What does your family think about you working in Germany?
- How long are you intending to work for us?
- Why did you leave your job or your country?
- Why were you fired by your last employer?
- Are your qualifications not too high for the job we have to offer?
- Are your qualifications not inappropriate for this job offer?

Always bear in mind that some of these questions are tricky. Especially questions about strengths and weaknesses or about inappropriate qualifications need to be answered carefully and diplomatically. Try to present your weaknesses as strengths. For example when you know that one of your weaknesses is that you are impatient with your colleagues, tell the employer that you are used to keeping your colleagues to deadlines or frequently asking for their results. Employers might think of this as a strength, especially when you are applying for a job.

If you are asked whether you are not over-qualified for the job you are applying for, you might answer that it is quite possible that this is the case at the moment, but that you are sure that after you have become integrated in the company, the employer will no doubt find a job or task that is a more suitable match for your qualifications.

In the event that the interviewers ask you some questions about your knowledge of their company, always try to know in advance what the company specialises in and what products it makes, an estimate of the number of employees, their locations inland and/or abroad.

In general, employers or interviewers expect you to answer all their questions. Germany has anti-discrimination laws known as the AGGs, i.e. Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (General Equal Treatment Law). This law lays down that questions about strictly private situations that have nothing to do with the job are not permissible. Questions about your general health, a planned pregnancy, financial situation, religion, sexuality, etc. are considered to be strictly private matters.



3. Negotiate your benefits

Contract negotiations very much depend on the company and the sector in which the company operates. Apart from fixed payment jobs, pay can be taken as negotiable. When you

start to negotiate, remember that in Germany pay is expressed as hourly or monthly rates. Questions of pay are negotiated by the executive responsible (zuständige Führungskraft). Besides your pay, you can negotiate some extra benefits in addition to the statutory requirements, such as holiday pay and annual bonuses — provided they are not already included in the company's contract.

Some companies may ask you for a one-day trial period. It is recommended not to refuse. Some companies might compensate you for the costs incurred when coming for interview. There is no general rule on this and it is not considered to be a right for which reimbursement is due. You can only wait and see if they offer you reimbursement of your expenses.



4. Do you need references?

Testimonials that prove that you are an efficient, hard-working employee are a must to convince your potential employer that you should be hired for the job. References and letters of recommendation are not used in most sectors or companies. Only in very exceptional cases will your new employer contact your employer to find out something about you or your job performance.

You must send the testimonials and the copies of your diplomas together with your covering letter and your CV.

For a job in the public sector, you will need proof of good conduct, available from your local police station. For other jobs, you usually do not know in advance if you need this proof of good conduct. The employer may ask for it when you sign your contract.



5. Making a good impression

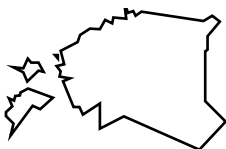
Punctuality is very important to the employer. Employers expect you to confirm that you will be attending the interview. Normally employers will ask you themselves to confirm. If things go completely wrong and you are not able to make it to the interview, you can apologise by phone and try to make a new appointment. Only in very exceptional cases can you use e-mail to apologise and make a new appointment.

Application interviews are mostly organised on the company's premises. In some application procedures, where companies are looking for several new employees at the same time, they might organise the interviews in hotels or other public buildings near the company's headquarters. In exceptional cases and depending on the kind of job it is possible to make your first interview by phone. SKYPE or other VOIP-tools are only used by very few companies and even there it is only very exceptional.

When you turn up for an interview make sure that you are dressed in line with the business and function that you are applying for. For example, bankers or bank employees need to wear a tie. Eye-catching jewellery is to be avoided.

Normally, at the end of the interview, the employer will explain to you the subsequent steps of the application procedure and the time they will take. They expect you to respect this timing and wait for them to take the initiative to inform or invite you. If the period that you agreed on has elapsed without you hearing anything from the employer or recruiter, you can contact them yourself and ask for some more information.

→ ESTONIA



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Estonian

Parliamentary republic

45 228 km²

Tallinn

Estonian kroon (EEK)

EU

+ 372

.ee



1. Popular application procedures in Estonia

In Estonia, finding a suitable job vacancy, sending a CV and covering letter and making an appointment with the employer are the most common steps in an application. You should expect an average of one month between the publication of the vacancy and starting the job.

Electronic applications should be short and specific. It is advisable to use electronic applications, but do not add attachments, as some companies might not open them for fear of computer viruses. A written application should be legible, grammatically correct, short and to the point.

When you prepare a phone call, be sure to have the vacancy, skills list, CV and a notebook to hand. Find the right contact person — a human resources specialist. Show interest in the vacancy and ask where you can send the necessary documents to. Be polite, listen, speak slowly and clearly, giving specific answers and information about references. Be proactive.



2. How to prepare for the interview:

The applicant must be familiar with the company's background, field of activity and the vacant position. You should bring diplomas and qualification certificates with you if possible, copies are accepted. You should present the diploma of highest qualification only. You do not need to present a diploma older than 10 years if it is not related to the vacancy and the skills required.

Keep a record of the vacancies you have applied for, as you will need this in case the employer contacts you.

During the interview, the employer will try to discover more about your motivation, previous background, previous employment experience, why you want to work in this company, what you have to offer the company etc.

Normally the official representative of the employer and personnel specialist(s), sometimes other applicants are present when a group interview is involved. If you are taking part in a test, expect there to be two to 10 candidates. Tests usually take 30 minutes to one and a half hours.

A handshake is acceptable as a greeting; remember to wait for the employer to offer you the handshake first. Be friendly and open, stand or sit up straight, speak audibly and clearly, keeping eye contact. You can accept non-alcoholic drinks (for example water); alcohol and cigarettes are not acceptable. Additional information about the vacancy and the company is usually asked for at the end of the interview.

At the beginning of the meeting expect a short warm-up (general questions), then specific questions about your personality and motivation. You then give a brief introduction about yourself. You may then be asked about your strengths and weaknesses, why you are interested specifically in this vacancy, with questions about education, training and previous employment experience, hobbies, job conditions and salary. You are expected to be frank and friendly but not too familiar.

According to the Constitution there should be no discrimination on grounds of sex, age, race and nationality. It is desirable to answer all the questions asked, especially those that concern the job. Questions about private life (e.g. information about sexual orientation, creed, pregnancy, sickness, financial circumstances) are considered to be strictly private matters.

A candidate should have some basic knowledge about the company, i.e. a general profile of the company: scope of activity, conception of development, number of workers etc. Expect questions about duties, job conditions, future colleagues, bonuses, salary and general information about your previous job, your duties there and the reason for leaving your previous job.



3. Negotiate your benefits

Contract negotiations can involve the date you start work, salary and bonuses. The salary may be negotiable, but that depends on the position and company. Pay is generally expressed in weekly terms. Holiday pay is included in the remuneration and regulated according to Estonian law. Yearly bonuses cannot be negotiated separately.

The following perks are common: company car, reimbursement of travel expenses, compensation for sporting activities (gym, pool, etc.). In the private sector these extras can be negotiated. Extra benefits are negotiated with your direct superior.

There are no trial periods of work in Estonia; the duration of a probationary period is usually four months and six months for state/government positions.

There is no compensation for costs incurred when attending interviews. Most (60 %) companies let you know the result of the application procedure during the two weeks following the interview. The others (40 %) do not send any feedback.



4. Do you need references?

References can be from previous employers (name, company, profession, work number). They can confirm the CV and give background information about the candidate (professional only).

You should bring your diploma with you to the first interview, copies are accepted.

Proof of good conduct is obligatory for policemen, public service employees etc. Some professions need police confirmation of a lack of criminal record (e.g. drivers with regard to previous traffic offences etc.)



5. Making a good impression

You should confirm that you will be attending the interview. If you cannot attend, it is advisable to inform the employer as soon as possible. Interviews preferably take place on the company's premises. Being punctual at the interview is highly recommended. Delay without a valid reason is not permissible. You should arrive a few minutes early; this will show your punctuality and interest in the vacant position.

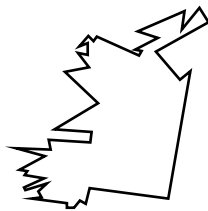
Normally there is no dress code. Usually it depends on the function. Dress in a conventional and comfortable style. Jewellery can be worn.

The employer may expect you to do the follow-up yourself. You can ask after the interview when you can expect feedback. If you do not receive any feedback within the promised time you can call the employer and ask for the results. After the interview you can send an e-mail to thank the employer for the interview — this will show that you are interested and will help the employer to remember you.

Be self-assured, focused, smile and do sufficient preparatory work. Take a pen and notebook with you so that you can make notes during the interview. Do not take a seat before it is offered. Chewing gum is not advisable. Do not use slang words. Be self-confident and persuasive.



→ IRELAND



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Irish, English

Republic

70 273 km²

Dublin

EUR

EU

+ 353

.ie



1. Popular application procedures in Ireland

There are two types of applications procedure normally in Ireland:

- (i) Candidates will be asked to submit their CV for a job.
- (ii) The company may supply an application form relating to the position on offer.

The time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job depends on the type of job. Some jobs can be advertised one day and filled the next. However, the employer may wish to make background checks, validate certificates and qualifications and seek references. In this case it would normally be necessary to allow six weeks between the vacancy being published and starting the job.

In an electronic application it is essential that all the fields are correctly completed and that all the contact details of the jobseeker are available. All qualifications should be clearly specified and a note should be made stating that qualification certificates are available on request.

A written application would normally consist of a typed CV, with an accompanying cover letter. Photocopies of relevant qualifications should accompany the CV.

It is not normal to telephone an employer other than to ask for an application form or for details of how to apply.



2. How to prepare for the interview?

The recruiter will expect the applicant to have spent some time researching the company. They will also expect the jobseekers to be very knowledgeable about the position on offer.

Recruiters will expect copies of all relevant diplomas, etc, and will normally check their authenticity. The applicant may also be asked to bring originals of diplomas etc., with him/her on the day of the interview.

The recruiter will be expected to clearly outline the timetable of the procedure to the jobseeker, and will also be expected to inform the jobseeker of any further interviews or tests associated with job.

Recruiters will expect applicants to submit their application before the end of the closing date. They will expect the applicant to respect and obey the criteria outlined in the original advertisement.

During the interview, the employer will pay attention to applicants' appearance, their level of preparation, that they are clear and articulate and that their qualifications are appropriate to the post. The employer is always in charge of the process.

Normally two or three people will conduct the interviews and, if testing is involved, this will usually be conducted by one or more personnel members. Interviews are normally of about 40 minutes' duration. The time taken for tests depends on the type of test being used.

Applicants should be clear and concise in their answers. They should avoid using jargon or acronyms. Eye contact is very important. While a coffee or water may be offered, it is not normal practice. You will be offered the opportunity to ask questions but if there is a second interview in the process you should wait until this interview to ask any relevant questions.

Usually an interview will be held in a private office. One of the interviewers will take the role of chairperson and introduce themselves, the panel and the interview procedure. Normally you can expect a very formal atmosphere, and the applicant would be expected to treat the process formally and with respect.

The vast majority of the interview will concentrate on professional items, with perhaps 10 % of the time being spent on non-professional issues. It would be important for the candidate to be able to show his/her reasons and motivation for applying for the job.

There are very strict anti-discrimination laws in Ireland — these laws form the basis of the process. You cannot be asked a question which would be considered discriminatory and you can refuse to answer such a question — e.g. What age are you? Most personal matters, such as your age, religion, skin colour, sexual orientation, etc. are considered to be absolutely private.

In general applicants will be expected to have researched the company, to know their product and market, etc.

Any question can be asked, e.g. why did you apply for this job, what are your expectations, what can you bring to the position on offer, etc. It is not normal to try to 'trick' the applicant. The purpose of the interview process is to find the most suitable person for the job. However, you may be asked questions like 'Where do you see yourself in five years' time?'

The employer will explain the follow-up procedure at the first interview and your obligations will be made very clear to you at that point. Employers will offer feedback to unsuccessful candidates on request.



3. Negotiate your benefits

Normally the remuneration package is stated before the process takes place. For this reason, there is not a lot of room for financial or other negotiations. Remuneration can be expressed in hourly, weekly, monthly or yearly terms. Usually professional and clerical jobs are expressed as a yearly salary, while jobs in building, retail, hotel and catering are expressed in hourly terms. Holiday, benefits and other non-pay issues are included in the pay listed. In general, the personnel officer/manager negotiates pay and any extra benefits. You may be asked to work for a trial period of three to six months or do a probationary period of anything up to one year. The process will continue up to the time you receive notification of success or failure.



4. Do you need references?

In Ireland it is very common to use references — usually two — one of which will be a personal reference about your character, etc. and the second from your previous employer about your work. Employers will not contact referees unless they are going to make you a job offer. Candidates should have cleared the inclusion of a referee with the person in question prior to including them in their application. Previous employer, priest, vicar, Garda (police) could be good references. They are expected to complete a written or telephone reference with the employer on behalf of the applicant.

A diploma is needed at the time of application.

While all jobs require that the applicant is of good moral standing, there are nevertheless certain jobs which will require greater proof of character, e.g. childcare, care assistant — some of which may require Garda references.



5. Making a good impression

Employers will not tolerate candidates who are not punctual for their interview, as it may intimate that there is a problem with their pattern of work.

You should usually confirm your attendance pre-interview and at reception on arrival for interview.

Dress neatly and tidily is the rule of thumb, face and body piercings are not desirable.

Employers expect people to present themselves in the best possible way. You should be respectful and courteous. Any other behaviour will not be tolerated.



→ GREECE



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Greek

Parliamentary republic

131 990 km²

Athens

EUR

EU

+ 30

.gr



1. Popular application procedures in Greece

Normally you send a CV, contacting the employer by phone, e-mail or in person. Then wait for an interview, meet the employer, agree or decide to look elsewhere. The time between publication of the vacancy and the day the job starts can be up to one month.

In electronic applications, send an e-mail to the human resources department or to the company's relevant department. A covering letter signed by the applicant and giving the reasons for applying must accompany the CV.

The main points to remember in telephone contacts are that you should be polite, show that you are interested, listen carefully and be honest.



2. How to prepare for the interview

The recruiter expects the applicant to deal with language issues as well as accommodation and family issues and to be on time. He/she should have all the necessary documents (diplomas, certificates, letters relating to job experience) available and validated. Show professionalism and dignity.

During an interview, the recruiter wants to learn what the skills of the applicant are and the possible terms of recruitment. The department manager or the HR manager is in charge during this meeting. On average one or two people attend these meetings or the tests that are normally organised twice and last about one hour. Drinks are acceptable. During the first meeting you can ask your questions about the job profile, shifts, company profile.

In general the atmosphere during interviews or tests is relaxed, friendly and exploratory. The ratio of non-professional to professional items which are addressed during the interview is about 30:70 % respectively. You have to answer all the questions asked, but questions about your political position and personal life are considered strictly private.

Normally the employer takes the initiative in organising a follow-up to the interview.



3. Negotiate your benefits

Standard contracts include terms of duration, general remuneration and holiday pay. You can negotiate your pay and annual bonuses separately. The most common additional benefits are extra salary at the end of the year, extra medical coverage, a company car and commission. These subjects are negotiated by the HR staff or a department manager.

Usually you will be asked for a three-month paid probationary period. If you refuse you may not be offered the job.

These procedures usually take about a month.



4. Do you need references?

These are not normally needed, but a previous employer could be a referee. They are expected to strengthen the applicant's position, to confirm the good quality and skills of the applicant.

A copy of your diploma is not always needed. It can be shown at a second stage of the procedure.

Letters of recommendation are not usually required. Proof of good conduct might be necessary for security jobs and high-level jobs.

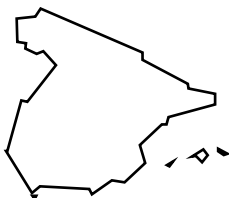


5. Making a good impression

What do you have to know about making an appointment for an interview?

- Be sure to know the name and address of the company and the name of the interviewer when making an appointment for an interview.
- The applicant must be punctual. You should not expect the same punctuality from the employer's side.
- Confirm that you will be attending the interview.
- In the event that you cannot attend the interview, you must ask for a new appointment, two to three days in advance, if there is a valid reason.
- In Greece you are expected to present yourself for the interview on the employer's premises.

→ SPAIN



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Spanish

Constitutional monarchy

504 030 km²

Madrid

EUR

EU

+ 34

.es



1. Popular application procedures

Depending on the worker's qualifications, job application procedures can vary. However, the most common application method is: send the CV, do an aptitude test on practical training for professions to show skills and knowledge, have an interview with the person in charge of the human resources department. Depending on the size of the enterprise, interviews will be conducted by the employer or one person belonging to the executive level of the enterprise or HR division. The time between the publication of the vacancy and the day the job starts depends on the needs of the employer.

For electronic applications, unless you are told to do it by mail, do not send large files or files that you did not test before using

the mail. (When someone receives photographs or scanned documents it is necessary to have a lot of space on the computer: remember that there is usually more than one candidate). It is better to only send a CV first, referring to the possibility of sending more information or more files or photographs.

If your application is handwritten, make it legible, as employers are not graphologists. Try not to use very small or very colourful letters as the person reading it may be not very young.

For telephone contacts, find out who the person on the phone is and say who you want to talk to before stating who you are. Sometimes people have to go back to the initial information when they hear a name and profession before knowing what it is all about.

When applying spontaneously, try to make the employer think that having an interview with you will be worth it. Try to give first the skills, knowledge and experience you have that match the employer's requirements, and then go on to tell them all your other information.



2. How to prepare for the interview

How you prepare for the interview depends a lot on the position. If experience is important, it is useful to have worked at well-known enterprises or with well-known brand names — bear in mind that they may not be the same as in your country of origin and explain this point as soon as possible. It helps to know the name of tools, software, protocols etc. in the original language and if possible in Spanish or at least their equivalent in Spain.

In the case of university degrees, due to the differences between universities it always helps to give a brief description of the main subject areas or, if you know this, a brief description of those that match better with what you are expected to do or to use at work.

It is usually best to have the authenticity of documents confirmed by the Spanish authorities, if possible.

When you come to Spain, prepare yourself for a waiting game, while remembering to take into account regional differences. An employer who comes to the PES needing personnel yesterday can wait more than one month before making an initial response. (Remember that business is business and recruitment is not usually so urgent.) Of course, you may be fortunate enough to experience a 'perfect' situation, with candidates sending good CVs that actually meet employers' needs and with employers answering yes or no within three or four days, but this is not the norm.

Depending on the size of the enterprise, interviews will be conducted by the employer or another person belonging to the executive level of the enterprise or HR department.

As anywhere in the world, remember that your non-verbal communication is almost as important as things you actually say: do not make rocking movements, do not talk too much, do not be so shy that the interviewer becomes nervous, listen carefully to what you are told, try to answer the actual question, ask for more explanation whenever you are not sure about the questions, remember to go to the toilet before the interview and that drinking anything increases the likelihood that something will go wrong. Remember also that, in Spain, people 'like to be close': Spanish people usually leave less space than north Europeans when meeting someone. People usually shake hands at the beginning and the end of the meeting. It is usual to 'touch' the other person (shoulders, arms) and, whenever there are women in the group, it is not uncommon to kiss each other (twice). If the Spanish person opposite you tries to do it, try not to run away, but you should not be the first one to do the kissing.

Smoking is banned by Spanish law almost anywhere, and there are Spanish people who actually hate smoking, but there are others who do smoke and who do it during a long interview if they feel it would help to create a more relaxed environment or if they are tired, provided they are allowed to. What this means for candidates is that you should not do it, even if you are

invited to, unless the employer insists or will not smoke unless you do, but it is something you should avoid. Saying anything negative about smokers, non-smokers or anybody else is of course not recommended.

Being motivated for the job is a very essential point. Foreign jobseekers should know that Spanish employers are not willing to train either anyone who will leave in a short period of time or 'marry' the candidate (in Spain it is not easy to end a labour contract).



3. Negotiate your benefits

Salaries are normally thought of in terms of monthly salaries (12 months + 2 extra basic salaries in December and June/July) or an annual total (ask whether you will be paid for 12 or 14 per year).

Normally it should be mentioned in the job vacancy. If it is not, it would be a good idea to ask a trade union (it does not matter if you are registered or not) about the legal and the normal salary you could expect (in Spain there is a national minimum wage and collective agreements that vary a lot, depending on the region). If the employer asks you how much you want to earn, try to give two figures or keep open the possibility of negotiating: at the initial stage n euros, but when you have demonstrated your competence, it will change.



4. Do you need references?

A candidate should bring all these documents along when attending the interview (in case the employer asks for them). It is better to have them and not need them rather than being asked and having to answer 'I will send them to you' or 'I don't know if I can'.



5. Making a good impression

Spanish people are often not very punctual, but candidates should not be late (but try not to come too early: arriving 10 or five minutes beforehand is good enough to have time to look for the person you are going to meet).

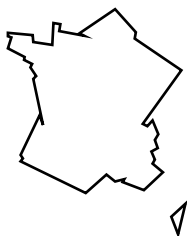
If you cannot come, please phone. You should have the contact details with you just in case the bus is late or something prevents you from coming.

Depending on the size of the company it is normally necessary to turn up at the company's premises for the interview, but in some cases it may be possible to use one of the new media resources (e.g. video conferences, SKYPE etc.).

Going to an interview is not like going to a party. You should attend the interview thinking that you are going to work there. Too formal or too casual dress is not appropriate. It is usually sufficient to be clean and tidy. Graduates or executives usually wear ties, if they are men, and heels, if they are women. Spanish people dress in neutral colours but not black (in Spain black clothes are for funerals, parties or waiters and waitresses). Avoid eye-catching things (gold jewellery, bright red clothes, etc.).



→ FRANCE



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

French

Presidential republic

674 843 km²

Paris

EUR

EU

+ 33

.fr



1. Popular application procedures in France

The most common way of applying in France is by handwritten covering letter (as the employer may want to do a graphological analysis), accompanied by a typed CV, or by e-mail (this is still a minority of the cases, depending on the type of job you apply for).

The application procedure generally includes an initial interview, although it is possible for the candidate to make the first contact by phone. This first interview may be followed by a second or third interview. The time between the publication of the vacancy and actually starting the job can vary from eight days to three months.



2. How to prepare for the interview

During the interview, the employer will be sensitive to:

- the punctuality of the candidate (be on time, etc);
- the dress code and general presentation.

The first interview (in larger organisations) is generally conducted by a representative of the HR department. The second one might involve other persons: future boss, manager, etc. The interview can vary from half an hour to two hours.

Smoking is absolutely out (there is a ban on smoking in companies and public places in France), nor should you present yourself as a smoker. The same goes for drinks. Do not even think about bringing presents to the interview in France.

During the first interview it is customary for the employer to outline the company and the future job. Then it is the candidate's turn to show why they should be given the job. Questions are generally asked by the employer, but the candidate can also ask the interviewer for additional information. The interview almost exclusively deals with professional aspects, i.e. whether the interviewee is the ideal candidate for the position.

There is very clear anti-discrimination legislation in France. It is desirable to answer all the questions, but some could be considered strictly private, provided they are not relevant for the job (such as do you have children, what age, etc.).

It is advisable that candidates inform themselves about the company before the interview (activity, structure, etc.). Tricky questions should not be any problem for a sincere candidate.



3. Negotiate your benefits

Financial aspects are in general negotiable at the end of the interview (should be appropriate to the candidate and the post). The salary may be negotiable or, in some cases, fixed by the salary tariffs of the company. Remuneration is expressed as a monthly or annual gross rate.

In France, the probationary period normally lasts one month (three months for managers).

Transport costs for the interview are only very rarely refunded.

The recruitment process can be considered to be finished on the first day of employment, when the contract is signed, but the agreement is often made orally and the contract itself comes at the end of the process.

It is generally the employer who decides on the steps to take before recruitment (phone call, second interview, etc.). However, the candidate should not leave the employer before being sure that the next step in the procedure is fixed. It is a bad sign when this point is not addressed.

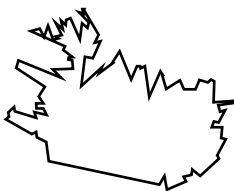


4. Do you need references?

It is recommended to mention some references if they are relevant. Letters of recommendation are traditionally common in France. However, in the last 10 years their use has decreased. Some employers try to investigate whether the information given by the candidate is true, although this is forbidden by law.

Copies of diplomas are very rarely used in the first interview. They are normally required at the moment of recruitment.

→ ICELAND



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Icelandic

Parliamentary republic

103 000 km²

Reykjavik

Icelandic krona (ISK)

EEA

+ 354

.is



1. Popular application procedures

The best steps for people who do not speak Icelandic to take are to use the EURES services. There are a number of ways of starting your job search. Visiting the EURES job mobility portal is a wise first step: www.eures.europa.eu. You can find more specific information on the Icelandic EURES website www.eures.is. For all EURES job vacancies in Iceland, you are requested to fill in an online application form at www.vinnumalastofnun.is/eures. Make sure that you complete the form in as much detail as possible. It is important that you list all previous job experience and education, both in your home country and abroad. It is very important that your contact details are accurate and the telephone numbers and the e-mail addresses active. If you have a CV, you can attach it to the application form. Nevertheless you should

fill in all the fields in the form as it enables EURES to find your application when a job that meets your qualifications becomes available. The form must be completed in English.

There are also other ways of applying for a job in Iceland. You may, free of charge, register with one or more private employment agencies (*ráðningarþjónustur*). They often have vacancies for specialists. Read the (classified) job advertisements in the local newspapers: in some cases it may pay to put in your own advert for employment.

Note that almost all job advertisements are in Icelandic. You can contact the local branch of your trade union (*stéttarfélag*): they have information on the current employment trends within your profession and can give advice on where to start looking.

However, reading the job advertisements in the newspapers and then sending a CV and a covering letter is the most common procedure when applying for a job. This may be difficult for people who do not speak Icelandic since most of the vacancies are published in Icelandic. Also word-of-mouth is a very powerful tool in a small community like Iceland, and many jobseekers find work through family contacts or other personal networks. This is also difficult for people who are not Icelandic, as they usually do not have a large personal network in Iceland.

Icelandic employers have a tendency to look for employees after they find out that they need help. This means that there is usually a short period between the publication of the vacancy and the day the job starts. When filling out an electronic application it is very important that you fill out all the appropriate fields, listing your most recent experience first and making sure that your contact information is correct. A CV in Iceland should never exceed two pages and should be to the point and recently updated. The CV should be accompanied by a covering letter stating why you are interested in the particular vacancy and why you are the right person for the position. When applying by phone you need to know that Icelandic people are not very formal, but even so it is usual to state your name and the reason for your phone call at the beginning of the

conversation. Please be careful that you do not speak for too long and never interrupt the person you are talking to.

When you apply spontaneously or speculatively, it is very good if you hand in your application directly to the person who will be in charge of the recruitment/selection procedure. Of course this is often not possible, but if you can, then you will make a better impression, as that person has seen your face and has even exchanged some words with you.



2. How to prepare for the interview

Recruiters/employers expect their applicants to know something about the company, about the job they are applying for and have the necessary skills to successfully complete the tasks they are asked to do.

You should have your diploma assessed for equivalence and recognition in Iceland. The basic principle is that valid qualifications for practising a particular profession in your homeland are also valid in other EU/EEA countries. Higher degrees, three years of academic studies (BA, BSc, BS) and vocational studies with a secondary school education, should be ones recognised all over the EU/EEA.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is responsible for the coordination of recognition procedures in Iceland. However, the ministry does not process all applications for recognition. Individual ministries handle the recognition for their respective spheres, for instance the Ministry of Health is responsible for the recognition of medical and health professions. The best place to begin collecting the information you will need is on this website: www.menntagatt.is which is the national reference point for assessment and recognition of qualifications.

An assessment of equivalence of your diplomas will make it easier for Icelandic employers to evaluate your knowledge and

skills. It may also help you to get a better job with higher pay. It is wise to follow up on an application as soon as possible. If you have not received a confirmation that your application has been received it is better to contact the employer and ask if they have received your application. That will also be a good opportunity for you to ask if they have any idea of when the applicants will be contacted. Usually only applicants who are being considered for a job are contacted.

There are no overall rules about application procedures. There are some privacy rules regarding the handling of applications but none that applicants should be concerned about.

Before you go to a job interview it is good to do your homework first. Do some reading about the company. You can usually find good information on the company's webpage. Be prepared to answer any question they might bring up. These questions could be: What are your strengths and weaknesses? How would you describe yourself as a worker? Why did you leave your last job and so forth. It is also very important to show up on time and to be dressed casually but smartly. Show that you are interested in knowing as much as possible about the company and the vacancy.

Usually there are one to four persons from the employer's side present during an interview. This varies very much, but it seems that the more specialised the job the more people conduct the interview. This is by no means set in stone, though. Interviews usually take about 30 minutes to one hour. Any questions from you regarding the nature of the job are appreciated, but it is better to wait until you know for sure that you have got the job before asking about the salary, unless the employer brings it up first.

There is no specific structure for interviews. The atmosphere depends on who is conducting the interview. It is good to bear in mind that the person you are seeing will be meeting you for the first time and therefore might be just as shy and uncomfortable as you are. The best thing to do is to present yourself as honestly as possible and not to 'oversell' or 'undersell' your skills. Be polite and try to be calm.

Employers want to discover who you are during the interview. Do not be surprised if they ask you questions regarding your personal life. The non-professional items usually take up a small part of the interview and are normally used simply to make the atmosphere more relaxed. If you are at an interview the employer should by then know basic things about your experience from your CV. Use this opportunity to speak in greater depth about your skills and why you are the suitable candidate for the job. Also try to convince them that you will contribute something that will enhance the quality of their company and that you are willing to work hard to do this.

There are anti-discrimination laws in Iceland and they are quite clear. There are some questions that employers can ask and some that they cannot ask. They can ask you if you are married or if you have children. They cannot ask you questions regarding your sexual orientation, your political views or if you intend to have children or not. The best thing to do if these questions come up is to point out politely that these questions make you uncomfortable and that you question if they are legal. At the end of an interview the employer usually tells you when you can expect to hear from them again. If they do not, the odds are that they are not interested. If the employer has not contacted you within the period you were told, the best thing is to simply contact them and ask for feedback.



3. Negotiate your benefits

The kinds of contract negotiations that take place vary. Sometimes salaries and contract length may be negotiated in the job interview and sometimes negotiations take place after the recruitment has been decided upon. Icelandic labour law states that you should have a job contract not later than two months after your job has started. The job contract should state what your salary is.

There is always room to negotiate your pay. You are entitled to one interview with your employer every year to discuss pay. The

most common criterion on pay is that you discuss your monthly salary. If you have a job where you often work overtime, negotiating an hourly rate would be a good idea. Holiday pay and bonuses are fixed, so that they do not have to be negotiated.

Who is in charge of negotiations varies from one company to another, but usually it is the human resource manager or the general manager.

In Iceland you should be paid for every day that you work. It is common to have a one-month probationary period, but you should be paid during that period. Ask if you will be paid for your probationary period. If the employer does not intend to pay you for it then you should refuse and inform the Directorate of Labour or a trade union about this employer's practices.

Applicants are hardly ever compensated for any expenses incurred as a result of the interview. If that is the case, the employer will tell you. It is completely up to the employer.

Employers do not like to contact people to tell them that they have not been hired. Therefore it is a good idea to contact the employer one week after the application deadline is over to find out what the status of the vacancy is. A good rule of thumb is that if you have not been hired one month after the application deadline has elapsed, they do not want to employ you.



4. Do you need references?

It is very important to name at least two people who will give you a good reference. State the names, company, job title, telephone numbers and e-mails of these individuals. Contact your references and make sure you have their approval. These references should be from people who know how you work and can attest that you have the skills and attitude to work which you claim. These can be your previous employer and/ or your teacher.

You should be able to present a translated copy of your diploma at your job interview if the employer wishes to see it. You will have already listed your diplomas in your CV, so that presenting them is simply a matter of verifying that they are valid. The best thing to do is to get them validated. Use the www.menntagatt.is website, as mentioned above.

Letters of recommendation can help you a lot. However, they should not be sent in the initial application phase when you send in your CV and covering letter. Bear in mind that employers need to go through a lot of applications and therefore do not want extra reading. You should mention that you have these letters of recommendation in your CV and then present them at your job interview.

Some employers want verification from your local authorities that you do not have a criminal record. This is particularly common in care and cleaning jobs, where you are left on your own, often in private homes or offices. Therefore it is a good idea to ask for confirmation from your local authorities that you have no previous criminal record.



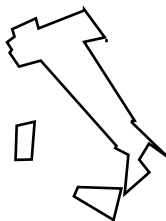
5. Making a good impression

Icelanders are very punctual. It is therefore imperative that you show up on time for your interview.

If you are contacted and scheduled for an interview, confirm that you will be there on time. If you are not able to attend let the employer know as soon as possible and in good time. Also use this opportunity to apologise for your absence and schedule another interview. Try to do this at least one day before the interview.

Video conferencing is not common but is growing in popularity in Iceland. If you cannot attend the interview check if the employer can conduct the interview as a conference call. Remember that you can always present yourself better in per-

→ ITALY



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Italian

Parliamentary republic

301 338 km²

Rome

EUR

EU

+ 39

.it



1. Popular application procedures in Italy

The most common steps in an application procedure are searching for job vacancies in the field of interest and sending an up-to-date CV together with a covering letter, by e-mail or regular mail, in which they briefly explain who they are and why they are applying for that particular position.

The time between publishing the vacancy and starting the job depends on the employer, but usually the job begins as soon as possible, depending on the availability of the newly recruited employee.

Usually the first contact is made by a phone call or by a short e-mail.

The most important points to note for electronic applications are: making reference to the job position you are applying for; checking the e-mail address of the recipient of your application so as to avoid it being lost; activating the reading confirmation option in the settings of your e-mail account.

In written applications the layout and the appearance of the covering letter itself are very important. The covering letter should be better structured than an electronic application.

If the first contact is made via phone call you should give the impression that you are polite and speak fluently and correctly. Ask for a personal appointment right away and do not forget to ask for their contact details.

If you are applying spontaneously for a job that has not been advertised as vacant, your application must be correct in grammar and choice of words, but it must also be really motivating. How else could you capture the attention of an employer if the position for which you are applying has already been filled?

If the application you sent is of interest to the company, the employer should contact you within a few days. If not, it means that you have not been selected. However, CVs are often stored for a long time, and you might receive a phone call for a job vacancy which you applied for the previous year.

A common rule for an application procedure is to prepare and send a well-written (check grammar and choice of words) covering letter with your most recent CV. Check the receipt status of your application by a phone call.



2. How to prepare for the interview

Before leaving your home country, you should bring all the documents that prove authenticity with you. Recruiters expect you to have them. (Italian bureaucracy is very strict).

During an interview the employer pays attention not only to the way you speak and act, your previous job experience, but also whether your appearance and dress are suitable for the kind of vacancy involved.

Depending on the job vacancy, the person in charge of this meeting may be the employer, the head of department, human resources officer or even a person specially appointed to conduct such interviews. Thus, either one person or a group of people could be attending the interview with the job applicant. In the case of written tests, they are usually carried out by all candidates in groups at the same time. A meeting or a test usually lasts from 15 minutes to a maximum of one hour.

Your poise, the way you speak, your vocabulary, your appearance, your behaviour in general (the way you move your hands, the way you sit, whether you make eye contact with the interviewer, etc.) are all very important aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication. It is better not to accept or offer things, or to drink or smoke during your interview.

After the employer has explained the duties and the work that has to be carried out, the applicant can ask questions on whatever issue is not clear. They can ask about the nature and duration of the contract proposed, pay conditions and anything else they want to know about the job.

Interviews or tests are usually held on the company's premises. Generally they take place in a meeting room or in the office of the interviewer (HR manager, head of department or employer). Often interviews are held in a separate room from the place where the job is carried out; the candidate sits in front of the person or persons who conduct the interview, which usually starts by talking about the previous job experience listed in the candidate's CV.

The overall attitude of both sides during the interview is formal. It is up to the interviewer/employer to make the atmosphere more relaxed. Professional items are discussed in more depth than non-professional ones during the interview (consisting of between 70 % and 90 %).

As a candidate it is always worthwhile giving a better explanation of your motivation for the job and some brief information about yourself.

Normally every applicant should feel free not to answer questions about their personal life. The employer should not ask for strictly private information (the right to the protection of privacy).

If you are hired, it will be up to your new employer to communicate this to you. If you want to have follow-up of your interview or ask more questions, you can do so by phone or by e-mail.



3. Negotiate your benefits

In Italy, financial and contract conditions are not negotiable. If you take the job, you will sign a contract, where you will find all the information and the description of financial and work conditions.

Negotiation of pay, holidays, bonuses, etc. depends on the employer and on collective agreements (CCNL). Some examples of the most common non-statutory benefits in Italy are meal vouchers, a company mobile phone or a car. Negotiations on pay and non-statutory benefits are conducted with human resources staff.

The employer may ask for a one-day work trial or a probationary period. You have the option of refusing if the period exceeds the statutory period.

In some cases, for some positions, the candidate may be offered a refund of the costs incurred by coming for interview. The employer may reimburse some of the travel expenses.

The application procedure can be considered to be finished when the job interview takes place. The employer should specify how much time will be needed to make a decision.



4. Do you need references?

It is always an advantage to the candidate to provide references or letters of recommendation to support their previous job experience. Former employers or university professors can write references to testify to the applicant's skills and abilities.

Candidates should be able to present a copy of a diploma together with the CV, if requested.



5. Making a good impression

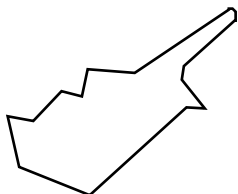
It is advisable to confirm that you will be attending the interview. Punctuality is very important. If you are prevented from coming to the appointment you should give notice as soon as possible.

In some companies there may be a dress etiquette. The same goes for jewellery. The general rule is: if you do not know anything more specific, go for the smart casual look.

If you are particularly interested in the position offered, collect information about the company or the employer; think about what they would like to hear from you. Being sociable, willing and enthusiastic could be an advantage.



→ CYPRUS



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Greek, Turkish

Presidential republic

9 251 km²

Nicosia

EUR

EU

+ 357

.cy



1. Popular application procedures in Cyprus

In Cyprus the application procedure can differ, depending on the kind of job that applicants are seeking. However, the most common procedure is a typed letter of application accompanied by a CV. For unskilled occupations the application procedure is usually verbal. In cases where the applicant is sent by the public employment services, a standard reference letter is issued which has to be completed by the prospective employer (stating their final decision) and submitted to the labour office.

After the agreement between the two parties, the job usually starts by the beginning of the next calendar month (for occupations paid on a monthly basis) or by the beginning of the following week (for unskilled occupations paid on a weekly basis).

It should be noted that in Cyprus most establishments are small-sized units where the owner is at the same time the director and the personnel manager.

The first contacts are usually made by phone. Candidates look for vacancies either through the EURES site (Cyprus section), the public employment service offices (if they are already in Cyprus), private employment agencies or newspapers.

For electronic applications, where the vacancy is found on the EURES site (Cyprus section), the national reference number of the vacancy should always be mentioned. Both electronic and written applications should include a covering letter which should be short (no more than one page) and to the point and must be typed. This covering letter, addressed to the organisation advertising the post or the potential employer, should contain important data not included in the CV and, unlike the CV, should always be signed.



2. How to prepare for the interview

Usually recruiters expect candidates to be suitably qualified and available for the specific job. Of course the possession of relevant qualifications, language skills, etc. is also important.

Authenticity of documentation is rarely necessary except for regulated professions for which registration is required (i.e. doctors, architects, engineers, etc.).

Usually employers pay attention to the candidate's general appearance/dress. Therefore candidates are advised to dress in a 'smart casual' style and to avoid extremes. They should present themselves self-confidently and politely.

There is no specific structure for the job interview. Usually the interview is conducted by the director or the personnel manager of the company. Interviewees may be asked to present

themselves, discuss their positive and negative sides as well as the qualifications and experience they have in relation to the work that needs to be done.

In Cyprus there are laws against discrimination and for the protection of personal data. During an interview the candidate is not obliged to answer strictly private questions or give confidential information (e.g. sexual orientation).

The applicant should have a general idea about the company (activities of the company, size of the company).

Questions are most often related to qualifications and experience (e.g. Why do you feel you are suitable for this job? What is your experience in this field? What are your expectations of this job?). Of course for low-skilled professions, the employer may ask the candidate to demonstrate their skills on-site.

Usually the follow-up to the interview is carried out by the employers themselves.



3. Negotiate your benefits

The relevant legislation lays down that the employer is obliged to inform their employee in writing about the terms and conditions of employment offered within one month from the commencement of employment. This document should include the salary, hours of work, annual leave, etc. In Cyprus, terms and conditions of employment are usually determined in collective agreements. Candidates are encouraged to be informed about the terms of these agreements.

Remuneration is usually negotiated with the personnel manager of the company. Most companies ask for a probationary period of one month. No compensation is paid for expenses incurred by attending a job interview.

The application procedure is completed when the employer informs the candidate that the final decision of whether or not to hire the candidate has been made.



4. Do you need references?

References and letters of recommendation are commonly used for high-level jobs. These references are given for work which the applicant is proud of and give a positive image of the applicant. When listing such references, the applicant should inform the relevant person in advance, and ask for their permission to include their name, phone number and position in the company in the applicant's CV.

A copy of the diploma is always needed, usually at the very beginning of the application.

Regulated professions usually need proof of good conduct (no record of criminal convictions).

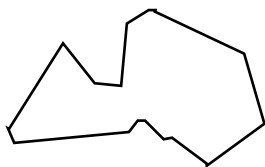


5. Making a good impression

In Cyprus most employers ask for a personal interview. Punctuality is important, therefore candidates are encouraged to be on time for their interview. If you cannot attend the interview, it is better to give notice of this in advance. Video conferences and SKYPE are rarely used in Cyprus. The dress code used is smart casual.



→ **LATVIA**



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Latvian

Parliamentary republic

64 589 km²

Riga

Lats (LVL)

EU

+ 371

.lv



1. Popular application procedures in Latvia

The normal application procedure starts with finding appropriate vacancies. It is advisable to use every possible means and method to this end — Internet, media, personal contacts (very effective in Latvia). You cannot be sure of being invited to an interview even if you have sent your CV to different companies. It is more effective to establish close contact with the personnel manager of the company and to make a phone call to find out more about the application procedure. The covering letter is a very important part of the application procedure; it describes the jobseeker's experience, knowledge and literacy skills. Letters of recommendation, CV and covering letter have become increasingly common in the formal application procedure in Latvia during the last few years; there are no particular standards for writing them.

As mentioned above, the most common way of finding work is social networks and personal contacts. A CV and covering letter are usually required to support the application. They are usually sent by e-mail, sometimes by post, but rarely delivered personally. If you apply for seasonal work or unqualified work you can so do by phone, because employers usually pre-select for jobs like this.

The optimum time between publication of the vacancy and starting the job is one month. However, it depends on the position, on the labour market situation, occupational field, etc.

It does not really matter which way you apply, (by handwritten letter, telephone, e-mail, etc.). The most important thing is to define precisely which job you are applying for and proceed as requested. Do not forget to enclose a covering letter (explaining who you are and why you are applying). Although most Latvian businesses are keen to adapt their process to west European standards, which are less formal (in most cases), most Latvian companies are still hierarchical in structure and management culture. This is also true of their attitude to the application procedure.

A covering letter is considered a very important part of the application because for employers and personnel selection specialists it is like the candidate's voice. Therefore the letter should be reliable and convincing. Employers look for a person who understands their business, mission and market. Fraudulent job experience or other incorrect information is not acceptable. The candidate should not talk to the employer in a high-brow, 'bookish' way.



2. How to prepare for the interview

Interviews and tests to elicit psychological features, character traits or practical skills are generally used in all companies. Employers not only focus on professional aspects but also on human qualities. The kind of interview that is held depends on the position, the specific job and company policy or on

whether it is a small local company or international company. Usually there are three interviewers, including the head of the company or a particular division and a personnel specialist. An interview usually does not take more than half an hour for one candidate. Still or sparkling water may be available. Questions are very similar for all applicants if the interview is official and formal. The candidate is expected to have prepared for the interview, and to know the company and the position. Candidates are allowed to ask questions about the job, the duties etc. to which they have not yet obtained an answer.

Interviews are usually formal in Latvia, but it depends on many factors — job, employer, staff, shortages, human factors, etc. Employers may conduct so called 'test interviews' which may be conducted by phone or in a group for the purpose of identifying the leader. 'Off-peak' interviews are becoming increasingly popular e.g. over dinner.

It is very important to show your motivation for the job, your ability and willingness. You must be honest and explain what you can improve and how. You must show that you would really like to work for the company.

There are various documents banning any discrimination on grounds of race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, sex, social class, language, political opinions, etc. One part of Latvian society considers that there is no discrimination in Latvia, at least that it is not a problem. The other part usually associates it with national issues. At any rate, in reality statutory rights are usually not impaired, but there is some hostility to diversity.

People usually try to answer all the questions in an interview with a potential employer, even those that they do not want to. They feel that concealment may seem negative or affect the employer's attitude to them. This is a matter of self-confidence.

Discriminatory questions and queries about people's private lives are those which ask the candidate about marital status or the possibility of children. Questions regarding age, marital status, personal information (height, weight

and shape) may also be considered to be discriminatory. Sometimes tricks are used: employers can ask to be sent a full body photo; employers can conduct a 'stress interview', during which they test how a potential employee behaves in an uncomfortable situation, how creative a person is, etc. This is an interesting method, but the boundary between legitimate techniques and the violation of applicants' rights is slim.

The potential employee should know the image of the company, for example whether it is an international company or not, what language is used, etc.



3. Negotiate your benefits

According to Latvian labour legislation, only written work contracts can protect employees' and employers' rights.

If an employee agrees on working conditions with an employer orally, their labour relationship will only be governed by civil laws, and the employee may lose rights to social security.

Before a written employment contract is concluded, employee and employer discuss all the working conditions: salary, how often the employee receives a salary, working hours and overtime, probationary period, extra benefits and other topics. Working conditions can be accepted or refused by the worker. The decision is up to the individual. Usually salary is paid once or twice a month in Latvia.

An employer can ask the employee for a probationary period. This is usually included in the employment contract, and it may last one to three months.

Benefits in addition to statutory rights may include health insurance, travel expenses or living costs, visits to a sports complex, etc. All bonuses depend on the goodwill of the employer.



4. Do you need references?

In Latvia letters of recommendation allow the jobseeker to find a job more easily because personal contacts are a very common and effective way of finding a job. References and letters of recommendation can also be part of a formal application procedure. They can come from your previous employer or colleagues, but not from relatives.

If requested, copies of your diplomas and other proof of your qualifications are necessary.

For some positions it is compulsory to supply proof of good conduct.



5. Making a good impression

The employer expects you to be on time for the interview. It shows your punctuality and sense of responsibility. It depends on the company whether you have to confirm that you will be attending the interview. If you have a plausible reason for not being able to make it to the interview, you can make a new appointment. However, it usually depends on the willingness of the employer.

Dress code rules depend on the field of occupation and on the specific position. If the employer is a bank or a state institution or you apply for an office position or similar, your dress style should be conventional. In general, you should be neat and well groomed.

It depends on the employer whether you are given feedback, but candidates can usually call or e-mail the employer and ask for the results or feedback.

Impolite behaviour is of course completely out of the question.

→ **LIECHTENSTEIN**



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

German

Constitutional monarchy

160.4 km²

Vaduz

Liechtenstein franc

Swiss franc

EEA

+ 423

.li



1. Popular application procedures in Liechtenstein

In Liechtenstein, you usually apply for a job by submitting a written application. You can ask for feedback by phone about the vacancy. After applying you will receive an invitation for an interview or a (written) refusal. After the interview you can expect a test or assessment. There may be one to three interviews before the contract can be signed.

The average time between publication of the vacancy and the actual start of the job is one to three months.

If you apply by e-mail, use a pdf file, if possible. Send your complete recruitment file: covering letter, CV with photo, references and letters of recommendation, diploma and other

documents that are relevant for the job. Do not forget to include your contact details.

Handwritten applications are only used if explicitly asked for by the employer.

When you phone the employer, call the contact person mentioned. Do not ask too many questions, and keep these to the point. Do not make your call longer than needed.



2. How to prepare for the interview

The applicant should know the future area of work: information about the company, turnover, size, sector, geographical position, organisational culture, etc.) and wear clothes that are appropriate to the type of position the company is offering. Write down questions.

Every person in the interview is important, otherwise they would not be represented at the interview. Usually one to three persons attend the interview (consisting of at least an HR representative and supervisor). An interview takes one or two hours. After that tests or assessments may take another few hours. During the interview you can accept drinks, but not cigarettes.

You can ask any question during the first interview. Normally they are asked at the end of the interview, or if the occasion arises at other points in the interview. Questions about salary are usually dealt with during the second interview.

There are structured (fixed questions — easy to compare the candidates), semi-structured and non-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are used most. A possible structure could be:

- introduction;
- presentation of the company;

- questions to the applicant: job, education, interests, extra courses, skills, team spirit, etc);
- hobbies and non-professional occupations;
- personal goals;
- contract negotiations;
- summary and next steps.

During the interview, the candidate talks more than the recruiter. The atmosphere will be cooperative, open and frank. The ratio between non-professional and professional questions will be half and half. It is important to prove your motivation. The employer wants to know as much as possible about candidates' motivation, knowledge, skills, but also about their personality.

Questions about a planned pregnancy, illness, religion or political allegiance should not be answered, provided they are not relevant for the job. Prepare for questions like: Why do you want to work for our firm? What do you know about our company? Be careful with personal or professional information that the employer can find on the Internet.



3. Negotiate your benefits

You can negotiate your benefits. It may be useful to contact a trade union first, to inform yourself about the range of salaries in your potential future occupation. Normally salaries are expressed on a monthly or annual basis. Holiday pay is included, bonuses are not, at least not in the fixed salary. The most common non-statutory benefits are: meal vouchers, company car, mobile phone, sports vouchers, company restaurant, laptop, etc. The personnel manager is usually the person to negotiate with.

The use of a one-day work trial is not common, but can be useful in certain situations. You can refuse a work trial, but, on the other hand it may also be useful for the candidate to get to know the job.

At the end of the interview the deadline for the decision or the future steps will be announced. If not, you should ask about it.



4. Do you need references?

Every former employer or teacher could be a reference.

A copy of your diploma is needed. It is preferably sent with the application or at the latest brought to the interview.

Letters of recommendation, diploma and references are very important for the recruiter.



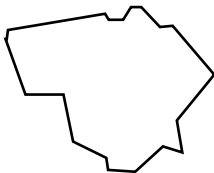
5. Making a good impression

It is usual to arrive about 10 minutes before the actual time of interview. You should report on arrival. Not attending an interview is only accepted for very urgent and important reasons. Make a new appointment as soon as possible. Personal interviews are the most common way of selecting staff in Liechtenstein.

The dress code is adapted to the company and the job you are applying for. Do not wear colours which are too bright. Women should not wear skirts which are too short or plunging necklines. Use modest amounts of make-up. Do not overdo the jewellery.



→ LITHUANIA



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Lithuanian

Presidential republic

65 200 km²

Vilnius

Lithuanian litas (LTL)

EU

+ 370

.lt



1. Popular application procedures in Lithuania

Lithuanian employers mostly want to have a written CV and ask for an interview. If, therefore, you want to apply, you should send the CV and wait for the interview. The time between publication of the vacancy and starting the job is usually one to three months. Nowadays it is popular to use the Europass CV.

Telephone contacts are a very common method for the first contact with a jobseeker. Employers ask about personal data, educational background, etc.

When you apply spontaneously, it is advisable to choose the largest companies and send blind applications, adding a covering letter. Limit your typed CV to two pages, including only

the most relevant details, giving the most recent activities first. You can add copies of your original passport or ID card, diplomas or qualification documents.

For the follow-up to the application, employers usually inform the applicant of their decision within one month after the application was sent.

The CV and a covering letter should be written in Lithuanian and, in the case of international companies, in English.



2. How to prepare for the interview

Most often in Lithuanian companies, one interview is supposed to be enough. This is an in-depth conversation between the person responsible for employment and the candidate, by which the suitability of a candidate is assessed. Usually, a mixed group interview, which is not prepared in advance (non-structured), is used in order to save time. In larger companies, when the list of candidates is long and the position is important, a preliminary interview may be conducted by the personnel manager. The second interview is often conducted by a line manager, as he/she knows exactly what work-specific questions to ask, and is the person who the applicant will be working for directly. Selection centres (assessment centres) are not very widely used in Lithuania, but some employers use the services of recruitment companies for the pre-selection of staff.

Expect questions such as:

- What did you do before?
- Tell us something about yourself. (Here you have a good chance to present yourself, to give some more important information to the prospective employer, to make them interested.)
- Why do you want to work for us?
- Why did you leave your previous job?
- How do you see your responsibilities in our company?

- What can you offer us?
- What are your strengths/weaknesses, interests outside work?
- What are your future ambitions?

Find out as much about the company as you can.



3. Negotiate your benefits

Usually employers ask about the pay desired. In Lithuania, there is a monthly remuneration system. Holiday pay is included in the contract and strictly defined by labour law. Salaries are negotiated with the employer or staff manager.



4. Do you need references?

Previous employers could be asked for a reference.

It is advisable to bring original documents of your diplomas with you to the interview, not copies.

Letters of recommendation are uncommon in Lithuania.



5. Making a good impression

It is advisable to arrive 10 minutes early for the interview. Punctuality and a smooth start to the meeting is appreciated in Lithuania. Face-to-face interviews are the most common.

The dress code depends on the position you are applying for. A suit or dress is always appropriate. Jewellery and cosmetics should be used in moderation.

For evaluation you can call the employer back after a few days.

Some things to remember:

Keep calm. You may be faced with two or three interviewers, so if you do not know who to look at, give most of your answer to the person who asked the question, with a few brief glances at the others.

Demonstrate enthusiasm. Make it clear that you want the job. Show that you are prepared. Include evidence that you have found out more about the company in your answers, but do not make it too obvious.

You should be dressed neatly and formally.

Arrive punctually.

Take your CV (for your own use), copies of diplomas, letters of recommendation (if in a foreign language, they need to be translated).

Do not sit down until invited.

Do not discuss your former employer, colleagues or company. Be tactful. Droning on about the vices of your former boss will only make you look bad in the eyes of a prospective employer, who may wonder if you will say the same things about him/her some day.

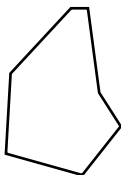
Do not try to gloss over anything that may have happened in the past. If it comes up in the interview, be direct about it, but you do not need to volunteer information that would be better left unsaid. Make past mistakes look like learning experiences that can only be of benefit for future employers.

Be ready to explain each point that is listed in your CV.

Your answers to the questions should be specific.

Do not volunteer information that the interviewer does not ask for.

→ LUXEMBOURG



<i>Official language</i>	German, French, Luxembourgish
<i>Government</i>	Constitutional grand duchy
<i>Surface</i>	2 586,4 km ²
<i>Capital</i>	Luxembourg
<i>Currency</i>	EUR
<i>Member EU or EEA</i>	EU
<i>Phone code</i>	+ 352
<i>Internet code</i>	.lu



1. Popular application procedures

Job offers can be consulted on the bulletin boards ('ad valvas') in the Luxembourg PES, in Saturday editions of national newspapers, on websites of private employment organisations and on the websites of recruitment organisations and large companies.

A very common application procedure is to send a CV and a covering letter to a company that has announced a job offer. The covering letter is not just a letter that accompanies your CV. The letter of application must be personal, relevant and attract attention. In this letter it must become clear that you understand very well what type of new employee the company wants and that your skills and qualities match the job offered. In this letter you also have to explain your motivation for the job and the reason

why you want to work for the company. Many companies still insist that this covering letter is handwritten. The letter should be written without any mistakes and in the same language as the offer was published, unless otherwise specified.

You are expected to put a photo of yourself on your CV. The curriculum vitae is typed or done on the computer and must contain at least your education, training courses and job experience, language skills, computer skills and fields of interest. Your CV should be no longer than two pages.

Taking into account that Luxembourg is in the centre of Europe and, as an individual country already has three official languages (Luxembourg, German, French) many job offers insist that candidates know different languages. While companies in Luxembourg have many activities and cooperate with other companies all over Europe, knowledge of extra languages such as English, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese are indispensable or very much appreciated. To be able to find a job it is necessary to be bilingual, including at least one of the official languages of the country. Spontaneous applications are very commonly used in Luxembourg. This technique is especially common among young graduates or people who apply for a job in large companies. Do not hesitate to apply in this way and make yourself noticed by a company. They will probably put you on a database that is used by the HR department in the event that they want to recruit new employees.



2. How to prepare for the interview

Finding a job is hard work. You have to put a lot of time into it in order to be successful as quickly as possible. Things you must definitely do to prepare for the interview are the following:

- Make a good self-analysis: strengths and weaknesses, skills and competences, your assets.
- If you were unsuccessful in previous application procedures, persist in your efforts and be certain to show clearly why you are applying.

- Make sure you can tell the employer more about the job and working conditions that you are looking for.
- Inform yourself about the company, their products and their image.
- Show the employer that you have prepared the interview. If the employer has the impression that you did not prepare well he/she will consider you to be sloppy and unprofessional.

If you are asked about any bad experience you have had, always try to make the best out of it. Never be negative about former employers or colleagues. Counter the bad experience by giving several examples of things that worked out well and that you managed to cope very well with. It is quite possible that the person who is in charge of the interview will ask you some tricky questions, especially about the reasons why you left other jobs or former employers. Make sure you are prepared for these answers in advance. You can always try out the answers with your family or friends. They will tell you very honestly if the answer you give is convincing.

If there are any questions you consider to be strictly private or that in your opinion do not have anything to do with the job and working conditions, it might be important to know that Luxembourg has legislation to protect the individual's private life.



3. Negotiate your benefits

Financial aspects can be negotiated in some companies. In other companies it is not possible to negotiate remuneration because these employers have agreed on a collective labour agreement for pay or pay is determined by a pay scale. For white-collar employees or administrative and managerial positions, pay is expressed in monthly rates. Blue-collar wages are expressed in hourly rates. Holiday pay is not standard and annual bonuses depend greatly on the company or the sector. In some cases they are included in collective agreements.

Choose a level of pay that really rewards your abilities. It is important to persuade the employer to reward you for these abilities. You will therefore have to prove the added value that you can provide to the employer once you have been hired. It is not always necessary to name figures when asked to state the level of pay you have in mind. Inform yourself in advance about the remuneration that is usual in the sector or the company. The pay may consist of a mix of cash payment and non-statutory benefits.

Asking people who have the same position in other companies or looking things up in specialist HR magazines can help you to define your negotiation standards.



4. Do you need references?

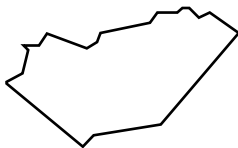
There are no general rules regarding the use of references or letters of recommendation. It depends on the individual conventions in the company. Normally it is mentioned in the job offer what documents or references are needed to be accepted for the job. It is often advised to bring copies of these documents to the interview. This is also true for the need for proof of good conduct.



5. Making a good impression

Be aware that the interview involves a future employer. If you want him/her to have a good impression of you and want to persuade him/her to hire you for the job, show a positive attitude, keep your head up and make eye contact with the person in charge of the interview. Punctuality and respect for the appointment you have made for the interview are considered to be very important. Make sure you can supply a short, clear summary of yourself, your motivation and your advantages compared with the job requirements.

→ HUNGARY



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Hungarian

Parliamentary republic

93 030 km²

Budapest

Forint (HUF)

EU

+ 36

.hu



1. Popular application procedures in Hungary

Most positions are filled by personal contact, but the ones that are published also show a diversified picture. Most vacancies are published in newspapers printed for this purpose or put on the Internet.

Sending a CV with a covering letter is the most typical way to apply, but in the case of blue-collar positions it is often enough to call the employer as an initial step. Larger companies may require an application form (sometimes online), but it is not common. They prefer to ask for further materials, information (practice, references, etc.). Normally it takes one to two weeks after

the deadline for applying for the position to make the decision but it also depends on the position and number of applicants.

In the case of electronic applications you should either use the online application (if there is one), or send (only) the documents they require. In this case you should never use a jokey or eccentric e-mail address. Remember also that the size of the e-mail box is limited, so you should not send large picture attachments. It is best to ask for feedback on your application (or tick the automatic 'read by' function).

Written applications should be made as required (mostly it is a Europass type of CV with a picture), and you should also take care with the layout and the quality of the paper. Do not be too personal or provide too much extra information.

You should prepare for telephone contacts, as you need to have your questions answered (do not forget them) and also respond spontaneously. Also always make sure you are told what the next step should be.

For spontaneous applications, you should be polite and enthusiastic about the company. Attach a good photo.

Applicants should have prepared properly by finding out about the activities and profile of the company and the position to see if they are really interested and know what the position is about. The authenticity of documents is not taken too seriously initially, but for certain positions (e.g. for doctors) the contract cannot be signed without it being checked.

It is advisable to make contact some time after the application has been sent to show that you are really interested. It is also a good move because it helps to remind the company of your name. After the application has been received the employer will notify you by mail or by phone of an appointment for interview or you may be informed that you have been rejected on the basis of your documents. Rejected applicants are, however, often not informed.



2. How to prepare for the interview

Employers mostly want to see your personality and commitment during the interview. They also want to see how you react in professional situations (how well you are prepared) and in unexpected circumstances. Typically there is one person to conduct the interview, but there may be a group of people (usually not more than three) to conduct the interview. It usually takes half an hour, but some companies do several interviews or tests (e.g. one professional, one personal etc.). You can accept everything offered, but you should never offer anything. You should not smoke, either. Almost anything can be asked about the job, but you should not ask about the salary first. Normally this is raised by the employer. You should be prepared to answer if you are asked about your salary expectations. Nowadays the applicant is the one who has to state a price for his/her work as an office employee.

The structure of an interview may vary from company to company, but the atmosphere is almost always formal (even if it is friendly). You should be slightly reserved and see if the employer adopts a more relaxed attitude as well. The content of the interviews is usually very job-oriented, but there is an increasing tendency to cover personality, skills and attitude, intelligence, and general behaviour. You should always try to sell yourself, explaining your motivation and why they should choose you, without of course being too pushy. Often the CV is referred to during the interview. In addition candidates are almost always asked why they left their previous job, and what their five best and worst characteristics are.

There is anti-discrimination legislation in Hungary, which means that you do not need to tell employers 'sensitive' information about yourself (religion, political allegiance or sexual orientation, a planned pregnancy, etc.). You can simply refuse

to answer these questions, or if you are uncertain about their relevance to the job, you can simply ask why it is important for these to be revealed.



3. Negotiate your benefits

Contract negotiations usually take place at the end of the application procedure. You can negotiate your pay, but you should always justify this. You should also take into consideration that in some fields (e.g. civil servants) wages are stipulated by law. Salaries are expressed as a monthly rate, and the contract should also mention holiday entitlement (the minimum is fixed by law). Bonuses are negotiated separately, but if it is a huge proportion of the earnings, it is covered in the contract. Remuneration and non-statutory benefits are discussed by the director. The probationary period is usually three months or less and cannot be extended. Costs incurred when coming for interview are hardly ever reimbursed.



4. Do you need references?

References are not common in Hungary, but they can involve anything relevant to the job. They usually contain a written statement about your previous employment (and also an assessment of your abilities). Sometimes the employer phones the referee, but this is very rare, and is restricted to specific fields of work (e.g. airport staff).

A copy of your (relevant) diploma is always required.

References and letters of recommendation are not common, but they may look good if from a well-known company with a reputation, especially if from the same field. Some jobs require proof of good conduct (it may even be asked for where it is superfluous), but this is then stated in the advert.



5. Making a good impression

Punctuality is a must unless you have a good excuse. If you are late, inform the employer if possible. You should confirm that you will be attending the interview. You can make a new appointment, but you should make sure to be there the second time. New media facilities are not often used. You should therefore only use them if requested.

Dress code depends on the job, but it is usually formal (suit, dress, etc.). Jewellery is tolerated in moderation, but only for women.

Follow-up of the interview for the applicant is very rare, but the employer may do it for you. Asking for evaluation as a form of feedback is not usual — you either get the job or a rejection.

You should not reveal yourself to be unmotivated, and you should not be too frank. Do not ask about the salary first. You should only do this if it is at the end of a one-off interview and you have not received information about it.

A few days after submitting your application you may phone the company up to see if they have received it and to show your interest.

Listen carefully to the questions and do not provide too much information. Answer all questions. Smile, and do not be afraid. If there is something you do not know, then say so. Be prepared for questions like 'What would you like to know about us?' and surprise them a little, e.g. 'Do you like working here?'



→ MALTA



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Maltese, English

Parliamentary republic

316 km²

Valletta

EUR

EU

+ 356

.mt



1. Popular application procedures in Malta

Vacancies are usually published on the Internet. Interested candidates can apply through the channels indicated by the employer. Usually the employer contacts the applicants by phone for a first interview. Then a face-to-face interview is conducted. One month after the publication of the vacancy is generally the time span to start a job.

Applications are usually sent by e-mail, accompanied with the necessary attachments. Usually a CV is requested by the employer and, in most cases, there is no need to send your photo with the CV. Your application should also contain a covering letter. This letter and the CV should be submitted in English.

Make sure attachments are sent and can be accessed. Specify clearly for which job you are applying. No animation or fancy design should be sent, especially if the job is a specialised one.

Make sure that your letter is clear and concise and that you use correct spelling when you send handwritten applications.

Try to find out the name of the contact person and use the correct name of the company during telephone contacts. You should be polite at all times during the conversation. Talk briefly and to the point, but do not leave out important information. Clarify what the next step will be.

When applying spontaneously, specify which job you are interested in. Mention your availability. Add relevant qualifications.



2. How to prepare for the interview

The recruiter expects availability, company knowledge and — in the case of a foreign candidate — knowledge of the culture of Malta from the applicant.

Relevant documents for the particular job should be proved to be authentic. Submit original certificates. Have your qualifications recognised (if any).

Presentation skills are sought most by the employer, together with politeness and commitment. Usually the employer is present during the interview, unless it is a large organisation, and the HR manager and, in that case, the section supervisor will also be present. Usually it is a one-to-one interview. If the job is not a specialised one, there will only be one interview, but if it is a vacancy for a specialised occupation which requires experience, then shortlisting is the order of the day, followed by one or two additional interviews. The interview usually lasts a few minutes, but again if it is a specialised one, this may take longer, since the applicant has to prove that he/she has specific skills.

In some cases the applicant is expected to do a presentation. During the interview applicants must keep to the point of the discussion/questions and must not invent skills that they do not possess. They should show that they are willing to learn. Eye contact is important as well as body language. If you are offered a drink or a smoke, it is better to decline the offer. During an interview you can ask certain questions, although such questions are better kept to a minimum and, if asked, they should be very relevant to the position offered. Asking for a job description would not do any harm as well as questions on working conditions. If there is a second interview, it is better not to discuss pay at this stage. The best time to ask questions is at the end of the interview, where the employer usually asks whether the applicant has any questions.

Usually interviews are held in a board room, but this can vary according to sector. The applicant is asked to take a seat, and in most cases the employer conducts the interview. As mentioned above, it depends a great deal on the type of job a person is applying for.

The interview is usually very friendly and the applicant is made to feel at home. The applicant is expected to show respect to the employer at all times.

There are no anti-discrimination laws in Malta. You have to answer all the questions unless they are too personal and irrelevant. There are also democratic ways of not answering particular questions. The status of the individual may be considered as private (married, separated, etc.).

The more applicants know about the company they want to join, the better. This shows that they have taken an interest in getting to know the company and what it does and its past performance, especially if a company is expanding because of a big contract it has won. An applicant's enthusiasm to join a successful company may enhance his/her chance of being selected for a job. The most common question an applicant is expected to know and answer is the core function of the particular company they wish to join. Another question is

whether the company is a subsidiary of another company or whether it exports its products and to what countries, if this is the case. One tricky question an employer might ask is what pay the applicant expects. There are various ways of answering this, especially if you have done your homework/research and have sufficient/long experience.

An applicant is not expected to organise a follow-up to the interview. However, there is the possibility of meeting for an evaluation if the company offers this service. This can also be done on the phone.



3. Negotiate your benefits

A contract should include the working conditions, especially the hours of work and the pay bracket/s. The duration of employment is also expected to be shown in this sort of contract.

You can negotiate pay, particularly if you have a lot of experience in the job you are applying for. Pay is usually expressed as a weekly or monthly rate. Holiday pay and annual bonuses are included in the remuneration offered.

The staff member who is negotiating pay and non-statutory benefits will be the HR manager if it is a large company or the employer himself/herself if it is a smaller firm.

You will not be asked for a work trial because this runs counter to current legislation. This means that you can refuse if asked to do this. Employment should be legalised from the very first day of employment by sending an employment form to the public employment service, which in Malta is the Employment and Training Corporation.

Usually the employer will inform the applicant about the result of the interview at a later date. The employer will also state whether another interview is to be expected. If the applicant is

selected for the job, he/she is usually contacted by a phone call if it involves an ordinary job and the company is small, but in the case of large companies he/she will be notified by regular mail, using the letter head of the company.



4. Do you need references?

This depends on the type of job. References are usually required if the vacancy is connected with the service industry, finance and the like. Employers usually check such references, especially since Malta is a small country and this can be done easily. A previous employer or a reliable professional person or a parish priest could be good referees. References usually confirm that the person in question is a reliable person who can be expected to perform this type of job without problems.

A copy of the diploma is needed. This is usually expected on the first day of the interview.

Letters of recommendation may be requested, but these are only needed if the employer asks for them.



5. Making a good impression

The applicant has to know the date and time of the interview and who the interviewer will be.

Punctuality is taken very seriously in an interview. If you do not know the exact place, you should leave earlier in order to arrive on time for the interview. If a vacancy is one that involves reliability, the employer might easily select an applicant who was on time, provided of course that he/she has the required qualifications.

→ THE NETHERLANDS



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Dutch

Constitutional monarchy

41 526 km²

Amsterdam

EUR

EU

+ 31

.nl



1. Popular application procedures in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands an application procedure starts from the moment an employer announces a job vacancy. The vacancy may be the result of the growth of the company or because the employee who did the job is leaving the job or holding another position.

Another application procedure is the presentation of CVs from jobseekers by intermediate organisations such as temporary work agencies or headhunting offices.

If you apply for low paid or unskilled jobs (hotel and catering industry, retail industry) it is very common to apply by phone or arrange a meeting with the employer.

The latest tendency on the labour market, which is being followed by an increasing number of jobseekers, is to hand in what is known as an open application to find out about job opportunities in a company. These jobseekers are very much oriented to their own skills and only look for jobs that respond perfectly to their own skills.

The job offer is announced on the company website or a specialised jobsite, in a newspaper (in general the jobs supplement of a weekend edition), through an intermediate organisation or public employment service (UWV Werkbedrijf). Candidates can write a covering letter with attached CV to the employer. Nowadays applications can also be sent by e-mail. Intermediate organisations, which may be employed by a company to fill its vacancies, often pre-select their candidates and present several selected CVs to the employer, who can then make his/her choice. People who send a covering letter receive confirmation of receipt by the employer. They may be invited for an exploratory interview. If the candidate is introduced to the employer by an intermediate organisation, this organisation will make the appointment for the interview.

As a rule you are invited for an exploratory interview. As a result of this interview your application is rejected or you are invited for a second interview. This second interview is usually meant to negotiate your working conditions and remuneration. In most cases you will be informed by the employer or the intermediate organisation whether or not you are hired very shortly after the interview. For some jobs more interviews are planned or assessments form part of the selection procedure.

Dutch employers are increasingly asking for competences instead of diplomas or testimonials. Prepare for questions about your competences by practising the so-called STAR-method (Situation, Task, Active, Result). This method may involve asking you about specific situations. You may, for example, be asked to describe a duty or role you had in a previous job and what you did to achieve your goals or deal with a problem and what the final outcome was.

The time span between the publication of a job offer and filling this vacancy may vary a great deal. For unskilled and low-skilled jobs, the vacancy can, in a manner of speaking, be filled on the day. In general you have to expect a period that may vary from two to three months. This period may be longer if the selection procedure is much more comprehensive and involves more interviews or assessment centres. Intermediate organisations usually take about the same period of time.

First contact by phone is very common, although the use of e-mail is increasing rapidly. You can send a covering letter. Mention clearly in this letter which vacancy you are interested in and explain why you are an appropriate candidate. Always add your CV as an attachment. When you send your application by e-mail, send your CV as an attachment. It will then be much easier for the employer to print this document.

If you contact the company by phone, always ask for the contact person or department that was mentioned in the job advertisement. Make sure the timing of the call is convenient. If it is not, always ask for a more appropriate moment to ring back. Tell them briefly and clearly whether you are calling for more information or to apply for a job. Speak up and speak clearly and prove to them that you have prepared the phone call. If you are a foreign applicant and are calling from abroad, make this clear and ask if the phone call can be held in your own or in another foreign language.

The first impression you make is decisive: present yourself both orally and non-orally in a manner that is appropriate to the job you are applying for.

If you want to apply spontaneously to work for a company, it is useful to contact the department or person in charge who can tell you more about the company's vacancies. Explain your plans, the job(s) you are looking for and what skills and experience you have. Ask if you can send a covering letter and a CV. If they confirm, you can send a targeted letter to the right person or department. This approach offers you a lot of possibilities for being invited for an interview. Bear in mind that this application procedure may be very effective in the Netherlands.

Your CV must mention your job experience and training. You do not need to include other documents. If the employer needs other documents they will ask for them when you start the job.

The employer expects you to fill out your personal data, work experience and education level truthfully. During the interview, the employer wants you to show that you know the job conditions, the company and its activities.



2. How to prepare for the interview

The employer wants to learn more about the candidate: the standards and values of the candidate, qualities, skills and characteristics, his/her ability to work as a team member. Based on your letter of application and CV, and on the information from the phone interview if there was one, the employer will gain some idea of the candidate. The employer will look for confirmation of this impression during the first exploratory interview: your tone of voice, the way you shake hands (a firm handshake is a necessity in the Netherlands), expression, eye contact and body language.

The number of people who attend the interview depends on the size of the company. Usually one or two company representatives take part in the interview. On average, the interview takes one to one and a half hours. In normal circumstances you will be offered coffee, tea or water. Cigarettes or food will not be offered and are completely forbidden during the interview. As a sign of respect for your future employer, you should switch off your mobile phone before going into the interview.

An application procedure generally encompasses two interviews. For highly skilled or management jobs there are more interviews and/or assessments. In the Netherlands an application interview is more like a dialogue. The interview is seen as an opportunity to get to know each other. The employer wants to find out if you are the most appropriate person for the job, the team or the company and wants to learn more about your motivation to work for the

organisation. The candidate tries to get a clear view of the company and wants an answer to the question: Do I want to work here? The candidate makes an effort to make a good impression. The employer or a representative of the company is in charge of the interview. During the first interview questions are mainly related to your experience and your skills. The follow-up interviews are in-depth interviews about the context of the position, your problem-solving skills and your experience from previous jobs. The application procedure will never start with an assessment. Assessments are only used as tests after the first or second interview.

The job interview in the Netherlands is mostly structured as follows:

- Introduction: meant to make you feel at ease.
- Presentation: the interviewer presents himself/herself and the company. Afterwards it is your turn to tell him/her who you are.
- Company information and CV analysis: your interviewer will tell you more about the company and the job offered. After that, your CV will be analysed and questions about various aspects of the CV are asked. Some questions may also be asked about your private life.
- Questions about your skills relating to the job conditions: you will be asked questions about the qualities, skills and competences you have acquired elsewhere (e.g. in your country of origin).
- Questions about your motivation: the interviewer will ask you to explain clearly why you chose this job and this company.
- Other questions: this is the part of the interview where you can ask questions about topics that have not yet been addressed or where you can ask for things to be clarified if there is something you have not understood.
- Closing: the interviewer decides to end the interview and will explain the further steps in this procedure to you. You will find out if a second interview or an assessment is planned. The interviewer may tell you at that moment if you are selected for one or more steps in the procedure or even if you have the job. This is also the moment when you will learn how many candidates there are for the job and how much time the procedure is likely to take.

Although an interview is a serious thing, there is room for laughter. The employer will try to have a dialogue that is as open and relaxed as possible.

In normal interviews you will quite soon have the impression that the atmosphere is somewhere between formal and informal, and based on equality between the discussion partners. The interviewer knows and accepts that you are a little nervous about the interview. Despite being nervous, try to show and express your enthusiasm for the job and the company.

In the Netherlands prevention of discrimination is fixed by legislation. You are not obliged to answer all the questions asked, no matter what level you have reached in the application procedure. It is up to you to decide whether or not you answer them. Some questions are not allowed:

- What is your race or the colour of your skin?
- What is your religion? (NB: A question like 'Do the hours of work fit in with your religion?' is permissible)
- What is your nationality?
- Where were you born?
- Are you pregnant?
- Are you healthy?
- Do you want to have children or a family?

Many Dutch companies have accepted a code of good behaviour in application procedures as laid down by the Dutch Union for Personnel Management and Organisation Development (NVP). This organisation ensures that this code of good behaviour is respected in recruitment and selection procedures. If you feel that a company that has accepted the code did not treat you well, you can make a complaint. The Union guarantees that there will be an independent investigation of your complaint. You can also make use of the Commission for Equal Treatment in the event that you think your rights to equal treatment were violated.

To prepare for a covering letter or an interview, it is always a good idea to learn more about the company and its activities or sector. A lack of basic information about the company is

for Dutch companies often one of the main reasons for not inviting you for a second interview or for not offering you the job. If you want to learn more about the company you can call them. But only do this if the vacancy description mentions that you can do so. Consult the company's website, read its annual report and social report, and look for flyers and brochures. Try to have a good idea of the sector that the company is part of, finding out the latest news about the sector and any changes announced for it. Knowledge of all these things is very much appreciated by the employer or representative and proves to them that you are very motivated to become their new employee.

The most frequently asked questions during the interview are:

- Tell us something about yourself.
- What are your ambitions?
- What did you learn and do in previous jobs?
- In your covering letter you write that you do not hesitate to take the initiative. Please give me an example to prove that statement.
- What do you know about our company?
- How do you keep yourself informed about ...?

Tricky questions are:

- Do you have an idea of what the position involves?
- Compare the position we offer you with analogous positions in other companies.
- Why should we choose you instead of someone else?
- Can you explain this gap in your CV? What was the reason for this gap?

If you are not selected for further participation in the application procedure or for the job, it is normal to contact the interviewer to evaluate your application procedure. You can ask for the things you did well and what went wrong so that you can learn from these for other interviews.

Companies that have accepted the code of good behaviour in application procedures will inform the unsuccessful candidates within a fortnight in a letter that sets out why the company

did not select them for the job. Even then it is still possible to contact the company to ask for more information. If you applied via an intermediate organisation, ask them to inform you about your performance.



3. Negotiate your benefits

If the company offers you the job, you can negotiate your salary and your probationary period with your new employer. If you are hired through an intermediate organisation, they will probably negotiate your remuneration request and discuss your other conditions and benefits. In the Netherlands both salary and non-statutory benefits can be negotiated. Think twice about your salary request and make sure it is in accordance with your job.

Different kinds of jobs have different salary scales. These scales are each divided into what are known as periodicities. Your job experience is used to calculate according to what scale and periodicity you will be paid. All this can be negotiated. Remember that temporary work as a volunteer can be valuable work experience for you and can influence salary negotiations. For many professions and most larger companies, working conditions are agreed on in collective labour agreements (CAO in Dutch). In the Netherlands there is a minimum wage for youngsters up to 23 years of age and a minimum wage for older people. Earning less than this level of wage is prohibited. Remuneration is expressed on a monthly basis. Remember that when starting negotiations.

Your holiday entitlement and the formula for calculating your holiday pay are fixed by law. Depending on the central labour agreements or your age, the amount of holiday entitlement may increase. For some occupations bonuses are negotiated the moment you start the job. The bonuses can also be negotiated in your annual work interview.

In some collective labour agreements commitments have been made about participation in profits or dividends.

Apart from primary working conditions such as remuneration and holiday pay you can also negotiate your secondary working conditions: company car, travel costs, retirement insurance, training costs. In many cases the collective labour agreements have also fixed these secondary labour conditions.

Jobs in the Netherlands always start with an obligatory probationary period. This means that, within the period agreed on, both employer and employee can end the job without needing to give notice. On average, the probationary period is two months, but this may vary depending on the duration and nature of the job contract. Once this period is over, resigning or quitting the job is subject to specific regulations on the amount of notice to be given. This period depends on the type of job and the time the employee has already worked for the company.

Compensation for the costs incurred in taking part in the application procedure is not automatic. Asking for compensation is not considered to be impolite and is possible. Companies that have accepted the code of good behaviour in application procedures will most probably indicate this possibility in their job advertisement. Companies may reimburse the person they hire for these costs. The costs for an assessment always need to be paid by the company.

The application procedure is concluded when the company has chosen its new employee(s) or when it decides to annul the job offer. In most cases the employer or a representative of the company will call you to inform you about the results of your application. In many cases, and certainly if you are selected for the job, you will receive a letter or written confirmation. In this written confirmation you can also find the date you have to start and the procedure for negotiating your contract and pay. If you applied via an intermediate organisation, they are responsible for giving you this information.



4. Do you need references?

References are not obligatory. It is your own choice to mention them in your CV. References are expected to give information about your work in previous jobs, training courses or companies. Your new employer can only contact them after you have agreed to this. If you are an experienced employee, name a former boss or colleague as a referee. If you are a graduate you can ask a teacher or professor for a reference. Never give your family as referees. Personal matters or reasons for resigning are not to be discussed in references.

Diplomas, certificates and qualifications should not be sent as an addendum to your letter of application and CV. The company will ask for these copies, if they are relevant and needed, on your first day at work. If you come from abroad it is wise to have your diploma translated into Dutch or English and to have your qualifications validated.

When you leave the company, whether you are dismissed or you resign yourself, the employer must always give you a certificate. This certification may have a neutral content but must never say anything negative about your personality or your work.

If proof of good conduct is needed, it should be mentioned in the job advertisement. In general you can assume that this proof is needed for jobs as security agent, money transporter, in the police or other public services and for jobs at airport(s).



5. Making a good impression

Prepare for the interview and show that you have done this preparation, e.g. by showing that you know a lot about the company and its activities. Make a good, clear personal presentation.

Take care that your answers are short and to the point. It can be an advantage if you already have a translation of your diploma, a validated title or registered profession. If you have a Europass CV to prove your job experience, training courses, skills and competences, do not hesitate to use it.

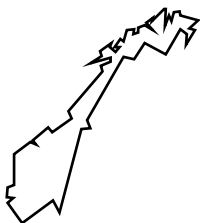
Appointments for interviews are very often made by phone. If you receive a letter with a suggestion for an appointment, you are expected to confirm the appointment in writing or by phone. Only for very serious reasons (e.g. illness or the death of a relative) can you ask for a new appointment. You have to take the initiative yourself and call the contact person of the company to suggest a new time. Fixing a new appointment can only be done once.

There is no strict dress code for an interview. It is very much appreciated if you are dressed for the occasion and look neat. Try to choose clothing that fits in with the company culture rather than the latest fashion. In banking men have to wear a suit, women are expected to wear a two-piece suit. In general you are expected to wear appropriate clothing. Jeans and leisure outfits are not appropriate.

Jewellery is a visible part of your presentation. Modest use of jewellery is advised. It is accepted that men wear a ring, but bracelets are considered to be overkill. For women one or more rings are acceptable or even favourable. Earrings, necklaces and bracelets should be adapted to the rest of the outfit.

Do not get angry and remain polite, no matter what situation you are in. Punctuality is necessary. Do not chew gum during an interview and make sure your mobile is switched off. Show as much respect as possible and do not talk negatively about persons or situations. All these things will help you to make a good impression.

→ NORWAY



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Norwegian

Constitutional monarchy

385 252 km²

Oslo

Norwegian krone (NOK)

EEA

+ 47

.no



1. Popular application procedures in Norway.

Applying for an advertised job vacancy is the most common procedure in Norway, but sending a spontaneous application is also possible.

When applying for an advertised job vacancy, send an application in English (or in a Scandinavian language if you speak one of them) with a covering letter and a CV (maximum one page, but CVs for technical candidates might be longer and more detailed, e.g. to list the different technical tools and applications you are familiar with).

When sending a spontaneous application, find the website/address of companies via the Yellow Pages (available in English).

If possible, find out the name of an HR representative to send your application to. As above, send the application in English (or in a Scandinavian language if you speak one of them). Write a covering letter in English (maximum one page), and match your qualifications and competence to the sector/products/services of the company. Enclose a CV (same recommendations as above).

Make one application for one job vacancy/company. Do not send the same 'standard' application for all job vacancies/companies. Match yourself to the job vacancy/company. If you have applied for a job in a big company, you can call or send an e-mail to the recruiter/HR department about eight to 10 days after sending your application to show your interest in the job, to ask the recruiters if they have read your CV and what they think of it, whether they have received many applications, when you can expect a reply etc. It is most common to apply for advertised job vacancies by e-mail.

The time between publication of the vacancy and starting the job depends on the vacancy. Some vacancies mention a starting date three months ahead, some mention 'start as soon as possible'. The same goes for last dates of application. The length of this part of the recruitment process will also depend on the number of applications received by recruiters and the number of interviews they want to have, and if they intend to run one or more interviews with the same candidate.

Electronic applications are mostly used by recruitment agencies. Fill in forms carefully and in as much detail as possible.

A written application can be sent in English (or in a Scandinavian language if you speak one of them) with a covering letter, maximum one page — with reference to the job advertisement (where found, reference number if applicable), and brief overview of your qualifications. It is important to match your qualifications and previous job experience/studies with the qualifications required. Make your competence clear and easy to notice at first glance by the recruiter. No photo is required.

It is possible to call the recruiter before sending your application, for instance to find out more about the job. Prepare questions relevant to the job/company before calling. Call between 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. (Monday–Friday), i.e. at the times when you are most likely to reach the recruiter.

Familiarise yourself with the company before you send off your spontaneous application, in order to be able to match your qualifications and competence to the company's sector/products/services.



2. How to prepare for the interview

The applicant should know at least a bit about the company and should show that they will add real value to the company.

Applicants can provide the necessary translation of their documents into English or Norwegian, together with certified copies. If applicable, you should also show that you have obtained the necessary authorisation to practise your profession in Norway.

Be brief and concise in the description of yourself and your qualifications. Be honest and do not pretend to be better than you are. Norwegians' philosophy of life is 'I must not think that I am better than anybody else'. Keep your CV simple and modest. Do not exaggerate, which could sound arrogant to a recruiter. Be honest about your language skills, especially in English. 'Good' English skills are not the same as 'school knowledge' of English.

It is important to remember that your CV and covering letter are your 'entrance ticket' to an interview. This is where your competence has to show. An interview is based more on your personal abilities and personality in a working situation. Here the 'personal chemistry' between you and the recruiter might be decisive. Your competences, but also to a great extent your

personal skills, are very important for the employer: if you are interested, motivated, keen, if you ask the right questions, if you dare to speak for yourself, if you dare to give your opinion. Personal abilities are often mentioned in the requirements for a job vacancy.

The head of HR, the head of the department where the position is or the director of the company is usually in charge of the meeting. Expect between one and five people to attend the meeting. How many there are depends a lot on whether it is an employer in the public or the private sector, and on the size of the company. In a big company it could be the head of HR and the head of the department where the job position is. In a small company, only the director may be doing the interview. In the public sector, the interviewing team very often consists of a representative of HR, a trade union representative, sometimes a representative of the employees at the office and the head of the department where the position is. So be prepared to meet more than one or two people.

The number of meetings before actual recruitment depends on the employers and on how many good candidates are competing. It may be only one interview (most common pattern), or two or even three (for highly qualified staff). The average time for the interview will be 45–90 minutes.

Keep calm and be yourself. Do not try to impress the recruiter, be honest, modest and down to earth. You can accept coffee, tea or mineral water. You will not be offered any cigars or cigarettes (it is forbidden to smoke in all public buildings in Norway) or alcohol.

The person responsible for the meeting will first tell you about the company and the job. Then you will be given time to present yourself and explain why you have applied. Do not hesitate to ask professional questions about the company and the job. You are then asked various questions. At the end of the interview, you can ask about the salary and the working conditions. Then the recruiter should inform you about when you will get feedback or a reply.

You can, and should, ask professional questions directly relevant to the job itself when the person responsible for the interview has finished telling you about the company and the job. You can also ask about administrative aspects: opening hours, working hours, number of employees, etc. You can ask about the salary and the working conditions at the end of the interview.

Be yourself. A job interview is a meeting and a conversation with a recruiter, not a test.

You will mainly discuss professional items, but the recruiter will evaluate you most on your personal way of presenting your professional qualifications.

Discrimination on grounds of political allegiance, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability or trade union membership is illegal, unless these topics have direct relevance for the job itself. This means that you do not have to answer private questions about pregnancy or future plans for pregnancy, whether you are on some kind of benefit, whether you have children and how old they are, etc. Here, however, you must use your common sense. In Norway, honesty predominates as a basis for good human relations, including at work.

Prepare to answer questions such as:

- Why did you apply for this job?
- What is your previous employment experience?
- Why did you leave your former job?
- What competence can you give our company?
- What kind of professional tasks do you prefer, new ones every day or regular ones?
- Why are there gaps in your CV?
- Can you work under stress?
- Do you prefer to work in a team or independently?
- Why do you think you are the right person for this job?
- Where do you think you will be working in five years' time?
- What are your salary expectations?
- What is the most positive and the most negative thing you can say about yourself?



3. Negotiate your benefits

It is not often necessary to negotiate, as there are standard work contracts, and in many cases they are permanent. But it may be wise to check in advance the salary level in your profession or in the kind of job you are applying for with the trade union responsible for this field so that you have an idea of what salary range to expect. Of course you can negotiate, as long as you can support your expectations. Pay is generally expressed in monthly terms, but in cases where it is a seasonal job it may be expressed in hourly terms.

Holiday pay is regulated by law and is therefore included in the remuneration, which means that it cannot be negotiated. Annual bonuses, if any, can differ from one company to another. Some may be included, some may not. The most common non-statutory benefits are: use of company car, (free) mobile phone, car allowance, mileage allowance, home PC, private retirement pension scheme (if the company does not have a collective agreement), etc. Note that some of these might be taxable. Trade unions negotiate pay and extra statutory benefits at national level. Trade union representatives are responsible for local negotiations at the work place, but only for their members. It is not common to do a one-day work trial. You can refuse if it is unpaid.

Regarding compensation for costs incurred as a result of attending interviews, practices vary, but many companies do refund travel expenses for interviews. If the company does not offer this, you should ask for help to cover your expenses anyway.

If you are hired, you will receive written confirmation from the recruiter, often with a draft of the work contract. Sometimes the recruiter might even call you before sending the documents. If you have been rejected, you will be notified by post or e-mail. If you are rejected, you can call the recruiter and ask why, or ask which qualifications the person who got the job had that you did not have. This at least gives you some idea of where you stand professionally.



4. Do you need references?

Yes, you need references, which should be listed at the end of the CV. Norwegian employers do check references systematically: it is an important part of the recruitment process. A previous employer or head of department, or a former tutor if you do not yet have any job experience, could act as a referee. They will tell the Norwegian recruiter (in English or a Scandinavian language) about your previous professional duties, and your professional and personal abilities.

Employers need a certified copy of your diploma and a certified translation (into Norwegian or at least into English). Send copies of diplomas/certificates with your application and CV only if this is mentioned in the job vacancy. If not, send them when the recruiter asks for them: either after receiving your application or during the job interview.

Normally letters of recommendation are not required by Norwegian employers, who prefer referees that they can contact themselves. But it is advisable to provide at least one if you do not or cannot supply any references.

Jobs in the security and education sectors require you to show proof that you have no previous criminal convictions, but this will be mentioned in the job advertisement.



5. Making a good impression

You must be punctual. The recruiter will be punctual too. You do not have to confirm attendance of the interview. If you are prevented from coming at the given time, ask as soon as possible for a new appointment, by phone or by e-mail.

In most cases, you will be asked for an interview in person. In some cases, the first direct contact may be a telephone interview. Video conferencing is not very common.

Norway has a casual dress code. Dress normally but nicely. The 'white shirt and tie' is only for candidates applying for high-level positions (managers), most especially in finance, real estate, consultancy, etc, where being representative is a big part of the job. A hint is to check the company's homepage for possible photos of staff and see how they are dressed. Avoid strong perfume and flashy make-up. You may use your ordinary jewellery, but do not overdo it. A handshake is quite common, and has to be firm. But do not be surprised if the recruiter only says 'Hi' and does not shake your hand, which also happens. There should be no hugging or kissing.

The recruiter does not particularly expect you to follow up the interview yourself. However, it might be a good idea to send a short and simple e-mail to thank the recruiter for the interview.

Generally speaking, do not try to impress recruiters by the way you look. Impress them by your professional and personal skills. Do not try to bribe the recruiter in any way. Do not show off. Be natural, do not exaggerate. Keep things simple and get to the point. Norwegians are quite down to earth, natural and modest. Norway is a country with very little hierarchy, even at the workplace.



→ AUSTRIA



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

German

Federal parliamentary republic

83 872 km²

Vienna

EUR

EU

+ 43

.at



1. Popular application procedures

The application procedure used depends on the qualifications required. For low-skilled jobs, after the publication of the vacancy in a newspaper or online, initial contacts are made by phone. However, online applications are increasing. Try to make an appointment for an interview. After the company has interviewed all the applicants they will inform you about the results of your interview. For skilled jobs you need to write a covering letter and send your CV to the company. After the company has analysed all the written applications they will contact a selection of candidates for an interview. For management jobs you may be invited for an assessment.

When you contact a company by phone it is important to know the name of your contact person. You need to call them

by name. Prepare a short, clear, personal presentation, explain what kind of job offer you are calling about and try to make an appointment for an interview. Avoid a noisy background or people talking to you when you are calling. You should take care to avoid these inconveniences especially when you are using your mobile phone.

Covering letters are in general computer-printed. Handwritten letters are only used when the company explicitly asks for them. Your written application should always contain a formal covering letter in which you indicate the job offer that you are applying for. Make sure that the address and the name of the contact person are correct and included in this letter.

Your CV must be short, to the point, chronological, synoptic and complete. A personal profile adapted to the job offer and copies of your training certification should be enclosed. (Certification means your latest vocational training, additional qualifications, labour certification or at least confirmation of periods of work). All certificates should be translated into German, except in cases where you are applying for a job in an international company. Proof of good conduct may be required. Employers are used to applicants enclosing their photo in their covering letter. No notes should be written on the documents that you send to the employer.

When you apply spontaneously to a company, be aware that there may not necessarily be any need for new staff at that moment. This means that you have to take the initiative yourself to make sure that if there are no current vacancies your application will be stored in a database of spontaneous candidates. If the company needs someone, this database is often the first to be consulted by the HR department.

Depending on the job profile, the overall time of an application procedure may vary. For jobs that require special qualifications (management jobs, very highly skilled jobs that need a lot of experience), the procedure usually takes a long time and candidates will need to go through several interviews and possibly take part in an assessment. This procedure might take three

or more months. In some cases, job offers announce that the contract will start six months later. Offers for low-skilled jobs are usually filled within a month. A survey of AMS Austria in 2006 showed that 64 % of the vacancies are filled within one month and 91 % of all job offers are filled within three months.



2. How to prepare for the interview

If a lot of people are interested in a job offer, companies tend to organise pre-selections or invite jobseekers for a test on knowledge and skills (e.g. a computer test) before they start the interviews. For key positions or management jobs, assessment centres are often used.

Employers who are looking for a new staff member want the candidate to match the profile they are looking for and have described in the job advertisement as closely as possible. They expect applicants to show how their qualifications and experiences fit in with this profile. Applicants are also expected to talk about their professional and personal strengths and weaknesses during the interview. During the interview you may also expect questions about your motivation, your social skills and your prospects as an employee. You also have to be prepared for questions about your curriculum vitae (e.g. if you have changed your job a lot). You can generally expect employers to be looking for a dialogue in which they can learn more about you, your qualifications and your expectations of the job. This means that, during this interview, there will also be room for your questions about working hours and days, activities and job content. The atmosphere during the interview is friendly but objective and impartial.

Employers certainly want you to be well informed about the company: what they do or produce, the size of the company, whether it is centralised or decentralised and whether it is based abroad, its image and philosophy.

Companies expect applicants to keep to the formal application procedures: being on time and keeping to the given timing for tests and application procedures, respecting the formal test and interview regulations as given by the company.

An interview takes about one hour on average. Except for highly skilled jobs, the employer decides after one interview. The number of participants from the company in the interview varies, depending on the size of the company. The following people may attend the interview or tests: the head of the department that offers the job, the HR manager, a representative of the employees' council. The employer himself/herself, the head of section or the HR staff member is in charge.

Regarding verbal communication, the following aspects are important during the interview: articulation and presentation must be in line with the job applied for (clear motivation for the job, social skills, teamwork skills, authority and leadership skills, stress resistance, flexibility). Non-verbal communication focuses on punctuality, attitude, eye contact, gestures and facial expression. Do not hesitate to accept coffee, tea or non-alcoholic drinks if they are offered. You are not allowed to accept alcohol or cigarettes during the interview.

In a normal interview, it is obligatory that questions are related to the conditions as they were described in the job offer and aim to find out if you have the right skills and qualifications for the job. For the sake of objectivity, all the applicants should be asked the same questions. However, it is permissible for the employer to ask for more information on an individual basis or according to the individual responses from the applicant. The employer should make a report in which a summary of the interview or some key words are written down. Federal legislation on equal treatment forbids discrimination on grounds of age, sex, religion, sexual orientation or ethnicity. The law regulates all the procedures for publication of job offers, application procedures and the relationships between employer and employees. Questions that do not comply with the law do not need to be answered. Nor do you have to answer questions about pregnancy, family planning or illness and diseases. In Austria there is also a federal law that forbids discrimination

against disabled people. According to the Chamber for Employees there is no experience with trick questions or proof that they are used. Nevertheless, there is an overall impression that employers are not aware that they are asking prohibited questions.



3. Negotiate your benefits

Normally there is room to negotiate both your pay and your working conditions. This is not possible in public employment organisations, which have fixed pay scales.

Your contract is drawn up in line with the basic conditions of the collective labour agreements that were confirmed in the labour laws. In general, your wage is expressed in monthly terms, including holiday pay and Christmas bonus. Other non-statutory benefits need to be negotiated individually. For some jobs, the employer will offer you a fixed minimum remuneration and add a variable remuneration that depends on your performance or results at work. For those jobs where it is very common to receive a tip from customers (e.g. guesthouses, hotels, etc.) you are also very often offered a small minimum wage. The tip is considered to be a way of increasing your wage, depending on your own efforts.

In the case of working conditions, there is often room to negotiate your hours of work, flexibility about times and work locations, adapting working time to childcare (kindergarten) availability, etc.

You have to negotiate your pay and non-statutory benefits with the head of the department that offers you the job. The labour contract, including all the agreements you negotiated, is made by the HR department of the company.

This contract can include a probationary period of one month at the most. During this trial period, the contract can be ended from one day to the next without any reason being given. You may be asked to do a one-day work trial. It is absolutely out of the

question to refuse to do this, but the employer must pay you for it. There is no compensation for the costs you incurred in coming to the interview. If you can prove financial hardship, public employers may offer you financial help for the application procedure.

Employers expect you to contact the company by phone to learn more about the results of the interview after a specific time. Companies will not always take the initiative themselves in informing you about the results. If the results are not favourable you can ask for more information. If you can prove that the law on equal opportunities was not respected, an official intervention is possible.



4. Do you need references?

References from former employers are normal. They can confirm your qualifications and your experience. The reference needs to be translated into German.

A copy of your latest and most advanced diploma should be handed over to the company at the latest during the interview.

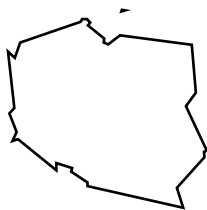
Letters of recommendation are only used when you apply for an academic post. Some professions require proof of good conduct. If needed, this will probably be mentioned in the job offer conditions.



5. Making a good impression

Employers take punctuality very seriously. Do not arrive late and only postpone or cancel the meeting if you have a valid reason. In such cases (e.g. illness) employers expect you to inform them in advance and to arrange a new appointment for an interview yourself. Normally the employer expects you to present yourself at the employer's premises for the interview.

→ **POLAND**



Official language

Polish

Government

Parliamentary republic

Surface

312 679 km²

Capital

Warsaw

Currency

Złoty (PLN)

Member EU or EEA

EU

Phone code

+ 48

Internet code

.pl



1. Popular application procedures in Poland

A jobseeker wishing to take up employment with a particular employer usually responds to a vacancy advertised by the public employment services (regional and local labour offices), a newspaper advertisement, a radio announcement, an Internet advertisement, etc.

The normal and most usual application procedure requires the applicant to prepare a proper CV accompanied by a covering letter addressed to a specific employer. It is quite useful to find out some information about the company that is offering the vacancy.

The next step is a job interview, after which the employer chooses suitable candidates. The time between the moment

the vacancy is published and the day the job starts varies depending on the employer, the position and the number of interested candidates. The successful candidates usually have to wait up to a month.

After finding a published job vacancy that he/she is particularly interested in, a jobseeker must follow the instructions that are given in the advertisement. The employer usually asks the application form to be sent via e-mail or by regular mail. The next step is to inform the shortlisted candidates either by e-mail or phone.

When jobseekers are asked to submit their application electronically, they must make sure that the employer knows which particular vacancy they are replying to. It is useful to state this in the subject field of the e-mail. The application form should be edited in a logical and chronological order so that it is easy to read and understand. It should also be kept short (the covering letter up to one page and the CV up to two pages long).

A written application should be subject to the same standards as an electronic one.

In telephone contacts applicants should introduce themselves and state why they are calling. They should not ask anybody to call on their behalf. They should be prepared to write down all the necessary information that they might receive from the employer.

When applying spontaneously the jobseeker should send in their CV together with a proper covering letter. They should also be prepared for a spontaneous interview.

The recruiter's expectations towards the applicant differ depending on the type of job vacancy. Generally the applicant must be properly trained to meet the employer's needs and be prepared for the type of work they would be required to perform. The applicant should be prepared to discuss their educational background and work experience in detail as well as emphasise their strengths.

The relevant documents should be presented in the original if possible. The most common procedure is to show the original documents together with a photocopy that can be left with the CV and covering letter. The employer might ask the applicant to confirm the authenticity of the copy by signing it.

The overall rule of the application procedure is to present yourself in such a way that the employer is willing to interview you and finally offer you a position in the company.



2. How to prepare for the interview

Employers focus on whether a candidate has appropriate knowledge and can think creatively. All the other conditions connected with the job depend on the kind of activity which would be performed by a person. This means that an employer is looking for a person who possesses skills, qualifications and appropriate experience. Furthermore, almost every employer is looking for communicative persons with a positive attitude to the job.

The employer's representative is definitely in charge, but the interview is a meeting of two or more persons, so a lot depends on the partners in the discussion, i.e. a good atmosphere, involvement and creative communication.

The number of people who take part in the recruitment activity depends on who is invited to the meeting or tests. A candidate can do tests alone or attend a group testing session. Usually two representatives of the employer are present at the interview.

All aspects of the case, including the publication of the vacancy and job interview, are completed when the vacancy is filled. Finding the right person takes time, so the recruitment process is not over after one meeting. Usually one meeting takes about 45 minutes to an hour. This changes when the employer does tests during the interview in which case the meeting takes two to three hours.

Verbal and non-verbal communication are very important during the job interview. During the interview, employers are usually looking for persons who can communicate their thoughts — they are looking for persons with fluency in communicating. In some cases the employer may hire specialists in non-verbal communication for the interview. They verify the coherence between these two channels of communication. During the interview you can accept mineral water, tea or coffee. Smoking is not allowed. During a first meeting you can ask questions, such as about employment conditions, the range of duties and culture of the organisation. Usually the person who conducts the interview gives the applicant time to ask questions at the end of the interview. In general, each interview has a specific structure.

(i) Introduction: The first part of the interview has an informative character. At this stage, the main goal of the person who conducts an interview is to give information to the applicant about the conditions of the meeting, job, range of duties, etc. Building a good atmosphere with the applicant is essential.

(ii) Exploration of job experience: At this stage the main goal is to acquire information about the following things from the applicant: personal data, work experience, education, profession, etc. Mainly factual questions are asked.

(iii) Interpretation of facts: This stage consists of an interpretation of the facts collected during the second stage. The persons who conduct the interview ask applicants about their opinion and interpretation of the facts from the educational and work sector and how it influences the job offer. Furthermore, it helps them to see the candidate's motivation, the attitudes they have and the value they attach to the job.

(iv) Personal opinions, thoughts, point of view: During this stage, candidates give their personal opinion and show the way they think in relation to work decisions made (the employer or person who conducts the interview asks questions about the motives for personal decisions and the family situation).

(v) Summing up — the end of the interview: At this stage, candidates can ask questions about things which have not yet been dealt with and are important for them. It is, therefore, a summarising stage. The employer or person who conducts the interview should give information about the subsequent stages of the recruitment process.

The atmosphere during job interviews or tests should be friendly. Building an atmosphere based on openness is probably the most difficult aspect when running the interview. The atmosphere is created by the emotional involvement between partners interacting with each other. The following attitudes are usually expected during the interview:

- involvement;
- creativity;
- communicativeness;
- professionalism;
- self-esteem.

The ratio between non-professional and professional items during the interview is 20:80 respectively.

A person should gather as much information as possible about the company where they are applying for a job. Motivation is the key to being a good worker. This means that during the interview each person should explain their motivation for the job and answer the questions (what they can do, what they know or who they are). This kind of information shows professionalism, self-esteem and creativeness on the part of the applicant.

In Poland there are laws against discrimination on grounds of sex, age, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, political beliefs, religious affiliation or trade union membership. During the interview an applicant should answer all the questions. However, he or she has a right to refuse to answer discriminatory questions. Questions about your sexual preferences, political allegiance, pregnancy, religion are not acceptable.

The most common questions are:

- Could you tell me something about yourself?
- Why are you applying for this job?

- Please describe what motivates you in a job.
- Could you name your strong points?
- Could you name your weak points?
- Why did you choose this educational path?
- What does being mobile and creative at work mean for you?
- Where do you see yourself in five years' time?
- What are your salary expectations?
- Please tell me what type of work you prefer.
- What is your hobby?

In each interview there are also some tricky questions:

- What will you be doing in five years' time?
- Please describe how you would solve a conflict situation at work.
- Please describe what you usually do during your spare time.
- What are your salary expectations?
- Do you intend to have a family?
- Do you smoke?

If you were told that the representative of the employer would contact you after the interview and the deadline has already passed, call the employer and ask for the result of the interview. There is nothing wrong with asking. It proves that you are interested in this job.

If you are not accepted by the employer, you may ask for the reason for this decision. Try to find out what factors made them decide to reject you. This will help you in future to avoid the mistakes that you made. Remember, practice makes perfect. The more job interviews you attend the more chances you have that will enable you to 'sell' yourself.



3. Negotiate your benefits

An employment contract is a very popular type of contract in Poland. It is also the most favourable contract as regards

additional rights, the so-called employee's rights. All the issues related to employment contracts are regulated by the Labour Code Act.

Both sides (employers and employees) have the right to negotiate. The employer is obliged to:

- give an honest presentation of the requirements regarding the job offer
- treat all candidates equally
- not persuade an employee to reveal information protected by law
- protect the privacy of information obtained.

The employer may also:

- ask the candidate to give information about previous employment
- put the candidate through the recruitment and selection procedure, including psychological tests.

In turn, the employee is obliged to:

- give all the data and information regarding work status;
- do the psychological tests during the selection procedure.

The employee may also:

- receive information regarding the position vacant;
- receive information on rights and obligations related to the vacancy;
- refuse to answer discriminatory questions.

Remuneration should be fixed in such a way as to correspond to the type of work performed and the qualifications required to perform it, and also to take into account the amount and quality of work performed. Terms of remuneration are fixed in:

- company agreements or collective bargaining agreements (made by the employers with active company trade union organisations);
- pay regulations (in the case of employers with at least 20 employees who are not subject to a company agreement or a collective bargaining agreement);
- employment contracts.

Employees are usually paid per unit of time worked: an hour, a day or a month. In some cases piecework may be used, where employees are paid per units of work completed. The employee is paid at least once a month, on a fixed pre-arranged date. In order to protect remuneration, the Polish Labour Code Act contains a provision which says that an employee cannot waive his/her right to remuneration or transfer the right to another person. Each candidate should negotiate their pay with the employer before signing the contract. Bonuses depend on results achieved. During holiday leave an employee receives the normal pay agreed on in the employment contract.

You may expect an attractive salary package in accordance with your education and experience, including non-statutory benefits such as luncheon vouchers, pension scheme, health insurance, a Christmas bonus, a reward for special achievements and performance and also an encouragement of personal development, especially for working in the private rather than the public sector. You must therefore be prepared for the inconvenient side to this distinction. If you apply for a job in the private sector it is good to negotiate special benefits, but if you want to work in the public sector there is no room for negotiation.

The recruitment process depends on the company's size and the position applied for. It may consist of a few stages, but you will be informed about them at your first recruitment meeting. After the last interview (usually the third interview) you will have to wait approximately one week to receive the final decision on whether you have been hired or rejected.

There are no statutory requirements relating to reimbursement of costs incurred by attending the interview, which is why the candidate should negotiate it separately with each employer. Usually the costs are not refunded by the employer.

Employers in Poland prefer to ask for a month's probationary period rather than a one-day work trial. It is possible to refuse, but it may result in the employer aborting the candidate's recruitment process.



4. *Do you need references?*

In Poland you normally do not need references. It is not common for an employer to call someone to check your qualifications. Instead it is advantageous to submit confirmation of your employment in written form and documents connected with your education. If you wish to submit references anyway, you can, of course, and in such cases it is advisable to cite your former employers or teachers as referees.

Copies of your certificates, diploma, etc. should be attached to your CV. Employers take these into consideration when deciding whether or not to invite you for interview.

It is normal for candidates for all the professions that involve special responsibility (e.g. working with children, the elderly, the sick, handling weapons, etc.) to prove their ability to comply not only with statutory regulations but also with the moral standards accepted by society.

In Poland you normally do not need a letter of recommendation. It can be helpful, however, if it is written by some prominent employer.



5. *Making a good impression:*

The first impression is important.

Remember your manners:

- if you call, introduce yourself, say who you are and what the reason for your call is;
- if you send an e-mail, address it to 'Dear Sir or Madam';
- be flexible (adjust your time to the employer's requirements);

- ask if you need to confirm that you will be coming to the interview (especially if the interview is in one month's time).

Prepare for the interview:

- learn something about the company you want to work for;
- prepare some questions about your future post;
- always be on time; respect the time of your interviewer;
- if you are prevented from turning up for interview, remember to call and apologise for your absence and to make a new appointment; be sure you can make it this time;
- you are expected to be present in person during the interview. In Poland it is not common to use other forms of interview: the employer expects a face to face meeting.

Take care of the way you look: dress suitably. It is important to dress professionally for a job interview, even if the work environment is casual.

For men:

- suit (unobtrusive colour — navy or dark grey), long-sleeved shirt (white or coordinated with the suit), belt, tie, dark socks, conservative leather shoes;
- little or no jewellery;
- neat, professional hairstyle, not too much aftershave, neatly trimmed nails;
- portfolio or briefcase.

For women:

- suit (navy, black or dark grey) (the skirt should be long enough so you can sit down comfortably), coordinated blouse, conservative shoes, neutral tights;
- modest amount of jewellery (no dangling earrings or arms full of bracelets);
- no jewellery is better than cheap jewellery;
- professional hairstyle;
- go easy on the make-up and perfume;

- clean, neatly manicured nails;
- portfolio or briefcase.

Do not bring or wear:

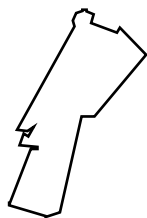
- chewing gum;
- mobile phone;
- i-pod;
- coffee or water;
- lots of jewellery, leave some of your rings at home (ear-rings only is a good rule);
- flip-flops or sneakers;
- underwear (bras, bra straps, briefs, boxers, etc.) that is visible;
- shorts, jeans, trousers that are too low-rise or too tight;
- blouses that are too low-cut or too short — do not show your cleavage or your stomach.

Cover any tattoos.

Also:

- Do not give the impression that you are only interested in the salary; do not ask about salary and benefits issues until the subject is brought up by your interviewer.
- Do not make errors in your application forms.
- Do not make negative comments about previous employers (or others).
- Do not falsify application materials or answers to interview questions.
- Do not give the impression that you are only interested in an organisation because of its geographical location.
- Do not act as though you would take any job or are desperate for employment.
- Do not chew gum or smell of smoke.
- Do not allow your mobile phone to ring during the interview. (If it does, apologise briefly and ignore it.) Do not take a mobile phone call.
- Do not bring up or discuss personal issues or family problems.
- Be honest and be yourself. Dishonesty will be discovered and is grounds for withdrawing job offers and for dismissal. You want to get on well with your employer.

→ PORTUGAL



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Portuguese

Parliamentary republic

92 345 km²

Lisbon

EUR

EU

+ 351

.pt



1. Popular application procedures in Portugal

The most common application procedure is still to reply to specific job advertisements, either published in the (daily and weekly) newspapers or in other media, such as job centres, temporary employment and private placement agencies, professional and trade union associations, supermarkets, municipalities, parishes, other public facilities and, increasingly, in job banks made available on the Internet. The reply method may vary: by regular mail, e-mail or telephone.

However, many other procedures are increasingly being used involving more proactive techniques, namely:

- spontaneous applications to selected companies;
- placement of personal advertisements, in newspapers and magazines or in other media: supermarkets, professional, trade union or employer associations, yellow pages (mostly if you are freelance or self-employed), etc;
- registration at the job centre (public employment service);
- registration with private placement agencies or temporary employment agencies;
- CV advertisements in the main Internet job banks, in university careers offices, on professional associations' websites and, increasingly, in Facebook and other social network tools, mostly the ones dedicated to professional contacts, on the Internet;
- some larger companies make their own job opportunities/CV bank available on the Internet, through which jobseekers may directly transmit their applications;
- for artistic and/or some highly qualified profiles (e.g. architects), the development of a portfolio, a personal webpage and its placement on the Internet.

In a country where more than 90 % of the companies are small, personal contacts, via friends, relatives and/or ex-colleagues, are still one of the most effective means of finding out about job opportunities and reaching a potential employer (since these work as positive references). This means that if you have a social network in Portugal, you should use it.

The time between publishing a vacancy and starting the job varies enormously, depending on how urgent the employer's need to fill the vacancy, on the more or less seasonal or temporary nature of the job position, on the scarcity of the required skills in the national, regional or local labour market, on the number of applications, on the number of jobs available, on the existence of initial training periods which must be simultaneous for all the newly hired workers, on the complexity of the screening and selection procedures, etc.

Although a considerable number of job vacancies published state that the job is to start 'as soon as possible', you should always bear in mind that the selection process takes time, on average perhaps two to three months.

With less skilled jobs, or temporary jobs which can easily be filled at local level, the time may be considerably reduced to less than a week. A more permanent recruitment need, the need for a highly qualified profile or very specific skills, or a post requiring a significant training investment by the employer, may take much longer, even more than a year.

It is assumed that candidates have already gone through the stages of getting to know themselves, their skills, motivation, interests and expectations, as well as getting to know the labour market in Portugal and, in particular, the job opportunities for their professional profile, level of experience and language levels.

The most common steps for an application in Portugal are:

- Select the most suitable job ads for your profile and expectations, or the companies to which you want to apply.
- Prepare your CV (if possible, in Portuguese). This should be clear and short (no more than two pages) and adapted to each circumstance, job requirements and/or company recruitment needs.
- Write a covering letter.
- Reply to job advertisements and/or apply spontaneously by submitting a covering letter (by regular or electronic mail) and by attaching a CV (depending on the job advertisement requirements); if necessary, the reply can also be made by phone.
- Check receipt of the application by the employer and/or (following a spontaneous application) try to make an appointment for an interview by phone or wait for the employer to give you an appointment for interview.
- Prepare for the interview.
- If you are selected, negotiate contractual arrangements (usually during a second interview or meeting).

When replying to a job advertisement by e-mail, you should write the covering letter directly in the mail and not as a separate attached file. Only the CV should be attached, to which reference is made in the letter. When writing this e-mail, you should:

- clearly indicate the subject;
- write short paragraphs, with spaces between them and without spelling errors;
- avoid informal symbols and abbreviations commonly used in e-mail messages; the language level used should be conventional;
- use only one letter type and colour (preferably black);
- state that the CV is enclosed in the attachment.

Never send the e-mail to more than one company at the same time or to more than one e-mail address.

When submitting a spontaneous application by e-mail, the same rules apply.

When replying to a job advertisement in writing, you should firstly take into account the application deadlines given in the advertisement and adhere to them. If replying to a PO box (remember that most job advertisements do not mention the name of the employer), try to ensure that it will be delivered in a five-day week period. If replying directly to the employer, you should also submit it as soon as possible, so that your application arrives at the beginning of the selection process. Otherwise, the company may already have chosen its future employee. This time issue is particularly relevant if you are talking about applications from abroad, for obvious reasons.

A written application will generally consist of a covering letter and CV. The CV may be omitted if it is not explicitly required in the advertisement, and if the profile requested is not too complex.

The covering letter should be a short, simple letter, no more than one A4 sheet of white paper, written on a word processor. Handwritten applications have gradually been abandoned in the last few years, although there are still some employers

who may have a preference for it (mostly if the job involves the regular use of handwriting). Please try to check this if you have a preliminary phone contact with the company. The covering letter should include the following items:

- your personal contact data (name, address, phone number and e-mail address);
- the employer's data (name and/or position of the addressee, name of the company, address);
- place and date;
- reference to the source of the advertisement (name of the newspaper, date published, possibly the advertisement's reference number);
- short, clear sentences referring to your interest in the job and/or the company involved, by outlining your professional experience, your technical and occupational skills relevant to the required profile (especially important if you are not sending a CV);
- your availability for interview;
- conclusion and signature;
- if it is accompanied by a CV, it should mention this by adding 'Attachment: curriculum vitae' in the bottom left hand corner.

Try to avoid:

- spelling errors;
- banalities, false compliments, extremely complicated sentences;
- using a 'PS' — if you forgot to mention something important, you should re-write the letter.

The Portuguese CV is generally drafted in reverse chronological order on no more than two to three pages. A passport-size photograph may be required. The following items should be included:

- personal details (name, address, telephone number, e-mail, etc.);
- educational level (highest level of schooling);
- vocational training (a different category than basic education; list of training courses attended and practical training; mention professional certificates attesting membership of a particular profession);

- professional experience;
- other skills (language and IT skills, driving licence);
- leisure activities (optional).

When replying to a job ad by telephone, make sure that you:

- go through the questions beforehand which you intend to ask during the phone conversation;
- read your CV, which includes your main fields of professional experience;
- have your CV at hand in case they ask some questions about it;
- have a diary or notepad where you can write down all the information, particularly the date and time of an interview;
- choose the right time to make the phone call during company working hours (try to avoid the beginning or the end of the day);
- make the phone call from an appropriate place (quiet, where there are no interruptions from other people);
- greet the person who answers the phone and explain the reason for your call: 'I'm calling about the job advertisement...'; if possible, you should speak in Portuguese;
- ask the person answering the call if they are the right person to speak to about the job advertisement (if they are not, you should ask them to pass the call on to the right person and ask for that person's name);
- ask for an interview and try to agree on a date and time; you should also ask which documents are needed to assess your application;
- thank the person you have been talking to for their time.

During the conversation:

- speak slowly;
- respond clearly to all the questions;
- make sure that all the questions you ask are pertinent (you should have written them down beforehand).

After the phone call make your own assessment of the conversation and write down all the relevant information. Put the date and time of the interview in your diary.

This method should only be used when it is specifically referred to in the advertisement. Many of these rules also apply if you wish to follow up a spontaneous application.

There are many good reasons why you should apply spontaneously:

- it reveals that you are pro-active, take the initiative, are interested and well informed, qualities in great demand among most employers nowadays;
- many of the available jobs are not advertised in the regular channels; in a labour market where more than 90 % of employers are small or very small companies, recruitment procedures using advertisements, presentations and lengthy screening and selection stages may be too expensive;
- even if companies intend to advertise the job at a certain stage, the first step will be to analyse the archived CVs (most Portuguese companies will save spontaneous applications for at least six months, even if they do not reply to you immediately);
- it is always a safe investment to be well informed about the potential places where you would like to work, as it will enhance future application procedures (if recruitment opportunities arise).

When applying spontaneously, you should take into account most of the points mentioned above as regards electronic and written applications. You should also remember the following:

- address it to the head of the human resources section in the case of larger companies, to the company manager or owner in the case of small to medium-sized enterprises (if possible, try to find out their name), or, if the recruitment procedure is being conducted by a selection and recruitment agency, to the agency;
- develop only one idea per paragraph;
- if sent by e-mail, always remember to send it to only one company/employer at a time, as it reveals your interest in that particular company;
- this application is your visiting card, so despite using conventional language you should give it your personal touch, so that it will set you off against all the other potential applicants.

The recruiter expects you:

- to be well informed about the company to which you are applying, its core business (products or services), its size (e.g. number of workers), its market position, the culture and values of the organisation and its members (e.g. a more formal or relaxed environment), and about the market in which the company operates, its situation and trends;
- to be well informed and curious about the job involved, its main duties and responsibilities;
- to be well prepared to promptly answer questions on your CV, mostly on your education and training, professional and non-professional experience (e.g. voluntary work or sporting activities); you should therefore read through your CV the day before you go for interview;
- to be ready to demonstrate how your experience, knowledge and profile may be of added benefit to the company and particularly for the job involved;
- to 'dress for the occasion': even if this is not an important issue for the job you are applying for, it will show your professionalism and respect for the employer or interviewer; if you do not have enough information on the 'dress code' of the company, conventional and sober may be the best choice; avoid too much make-up or jewellery, piercings, visible tattoos, radical hairstyles;
- to be on time; in order to avoid delays caused by too much traffic, parking difficulties, transport delays, your lack of knowledge of the area where the company is located, you can call the company the day before and confirm the time of the interview, the address, the best way to get there; on the day of the interview try to leave home with enough time to arrive at least 10 minutes before the time of the interview so that you are not too stressed before the interview.

In general, unless it is mentioned in the advertisement or when making an appointment for interview (more common in larger companies), most interviewers do not expect you to leave (certified) copies of all the documents you mention in your CV or application (e.g. diplomas, training and/or professional certificates, language course diplomas, driving licence,

letters of recommendation, etc.), during the first selection interviews, although you might take them with you and show them if it is pertinent to the issue. Try not to get lost in too many documents (be organised).

However, if you mentioned a particular diploma/training certificate, a letter of recommendation, a language diploma as an additional skill in your application, you should generally be prepared to leave one copy, if you have not already attached it to your application. Documents such as the Europass diploma supplement or certificate supplement may be more relevant when considering transnational recruitment, since Portuguese employers may lack information on your country of origin's education and training system and on the relevant knowledge and skills content. Try to be very selective though.

If your application is successful many of these documents may be requested at a later stage, when formalising the contractual arrangements.



2. How to prepare for the interview

You should remember that it is the interviewer who is in charge, not the interviewee. Try not to interrupt. This does not mean you cannot ask pertinent questions. You should interact, but never forget who is in charge. The number of people interviewing varies. Very often, particularly in small companies, there will only be one interviewer, who will be the company manager or owner. A selection interview should never last more than 45 minutes, but it may be shorter.

Regarding tests, whether they are included in the screening procedure depends on the type and diversity of the tests. They very frequently take half a day, breaks included.

As a general rule you should only drink something (water, coffee or tea) if the interviewer suggests it — and if they are going

to take one as well. You should never offer any gifts, drinks or cigarettes at interview; it is not considered appropriate in this situation. Relax, but not too much. You must appear self-confident, but not arrogant. It should be part of your aim at interview to present yourself.

There is no fixed ratio of non-professional to professional questions. It depends on the interviewers' profile and on the screening and selection method. Questions about religious affiliation, political preferences and sexual orientation are considered to be a strictly private matter. There is, however, a general perception that these are more frequently addressed than in some other European countries.



3. Negotiate your benefits

Usually pay is expressed on a monthly basis. Bear in mind that in Portugal if you are in a regular employment situation, you are paid for 14 months per year (i.e. including holiday pay and Christmas bonuses, usually paid in May/June and in November/December respectively). If you are recruited for a multinational company, pay may be negotiated as an annual package as well, which will include all the subsidies and other fringe benefits. As a rule, holiday pay is already provided for as the pay for the 13th month, in addition to the Christmas bonus (14th month).

The employer does not normally provide annual productivity bonuses, considering that the vast majority of employers in Portugal are small enterprises, and as a rule are not indexed to levels of pay. There may, however, be scope for a bonus payment at the end of the year if the company is making enough profit. The amount will depend on a more or less arbitrary assessment by the employer, based on your performance and contribution to the company's success. Thus there is no room, in general, to negotiate annual bonuses when negotiating the contractual arrangements, but you may

ask if this practice exists in the company. Only in medium-sized to large companies, mostly multinationals, are annual bonuses well integrated in the companies' remuneration policies.

Other common benefits are: improved health insurance cover or medical services, in the case of larger companies. A mobile phone may be offered, as well as a company car, mostly for senior staff (managers and directors).

It is not very common to be asked to do a one-day work trial, but if it does happen, you should not refuse — otherwise you run the risk of being eliminated from the selection process.

In general, Portuguese companies do not reimburse applicants for travel expenses resulting from attendance for interviews or any other costs related to the application procedure. There is definitely no statutory obligation to do that, and an applicant should not expect it. You might have your expenses refunded in very specific circumstances, if employers are desperately looking for that particular skill, professional qualification or profile, they may be willing to cover travelling costs or accommodation (partially or totally). This may occur, particularly in transnational recruitment situations.



4. Do you need references?

A copy of your diploma will be needed at some point. You should bring at least one additional copy with you for the interview.

Although letters of recommendation may be considered an additional advantage, it is not current practice in Portugal to go through them and to cross-check the references (unlike in other European countries). Thus their value is relative. However, employers are increasing their demands.



5. Making a good impression

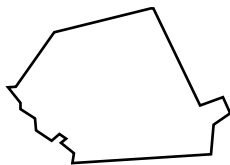
It is advisable to confirm the time and place of the interview the day before (it shows your interest in the job). Only in very extreme situations (e.g. illness, death of a relative, accident) would it be acceptable to make a new appointment after not having turned up for a previously scheduled interview. In any case, if possible, try to inform the recruiter beforehand (or immediately after the event) and explain the reasons for your absence. The new appointment will depend on the recruiter's availability and on the selection procedures.

Portuguese companies are still not prepared, as a rule, to make recruitment interviews using new communication tools such as video conferencing and SKYPE. They may, however, be willing to make a first selection interview on the phone and/or resort to the new media (if both sides have them). However, the final decision will, in general, only be made on the basis of an interview where the applicant is physically present — mostly when talking about more permanent and more qualified jobs. This situation is, however, changing quite fast, and many small and medium-sized companies already have access to these new media. It is therefore likely that they will be increasingly used in individual recruitments which require significant (transnational) mobility.

A follow-up is not generally organised. It might be appreciated, though. It is not common to make an appointment for an assessment if you are not selected to continue the recruitment process.

It is very important to be selective in the advertisements to which you reply, based on relevant coherent criteria, as it may be quite time-consuming to undergo an irrelevant application and selection procedure.

→ ROMANIA



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Romanian

Presidential republic

238 391 km²

Bucharest

Leu (RON)

EU

+ 40

.ro



1. Popular application procedures in Romania

A candidate interested in a job vacancy can apply directly to the employer by sending an e-mail, a fax or making a phone call. It depends on the recruitment procedure of the recruiting organisation.

The most common steps for applying for jobs are:

- Employers promote their vacancies through newspapers, the Internet, websites, etc., giving details on how to apply for their respective vacancies.
- Jobseekers apply using the internet, e-mails, specialised websites for recruitment, making phone calls, sending faxes.
- Jobseekers are contacted by employers in order to arrange the initial interview.

- Employers may organise more than one interview, depending on the type of job. Nowadays, they usually have the first interview with the candidate on the phone.

The most common procedure when applying for a vacancy is for highly qualified and highly educated jobseekers to do this via the Internet and for low-skilled persons by reading the newspapers.

The time between the vacancy being published and the day the job starts can vary, depending on the job involved. The usual period is from two to four weeks.

From the point of view of the recruiter's company, the job advertisement contains all the relevant information such as the name of the company and the activity profile, the main responsibilities of the position, a list of personal and professional characteristics needed to be able to perform the job, the advantages offered by the company such as salary or other benefits, how to contact the company and apply for the job.

From the candidates' point of view, they should include all their personal and professional characteristics, knowledge and skills in the CV in order for the employer to decide whether the candidate meets the requirements of the vacancy or not.

The points to note for written and electronic applications are the following. The recruiter analyses the applications by evaluating the CVs received. He/she verifies if the details from the CVs correspond with the requirements of the job. For example, if the employer requires that the new employee is a person with at least two years' experience in practising law, the recruiter will focus on the relevant job experience section of the CV.

In phone interviews the recruiter verifies if the information on the CV is authentic and asks for more detailed information about the skills, the abilities and professional experience. A phone interview lasts approximately 10–15 minutes.



2. How to prepare for the interview

The recruiter expects a professional attitude on the part of applicants and an honest and frank discussion with them. Candidates should focus on the details of the CV. As regards the authenticity of the document, employers know that the skills and abilities section is usually somewhat exaggerated. Many jobseekers have the tendency to write on their CV what the employer wants to see.

During an interview the employer focuses on both verbal and non-verbal communication skills. The recruiter is in charge throughout this meeting.

At the interview, the participants are usually the human resources staff in charge of the recruitment process, the head of the department for which the company is recruiting and in some cases even the general director/president of the company. Some interviews last from 30 minutes to two hours. For some vacancies, the human resources department shortlists candidates (generally about five persons). These are considered to be the most suitable applicants after analysis of their CV.

Usually all aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication are important. Communication represents the basis of an interview. The recruiter observes the positive and the negative communication skills of the candidate and has to analyse them all in order to make a realistic assessment of the interviewee.

At the first meeting the following aspects are usually covered:

- There is a presentation by the recruiter and applicant.
- The introductory part of the interview is used to put the candidate at ease by small talk such as The weather is very sunny today, Did you find our office easily?;
- There are questions about the candidate's experience.
- There are questions about skills and knowledge, the verification of information in the CV.

- The recruiter informs the candidate about the requirements and main duties of the job and about the company in general: which sectors it operates in, what the achievements of the company are, etc.
- The recruiter asks/expects questions which clarify aspects not well understood by the candidate.
- The candidate asks questions. The usual questions are: What is the work schedule? What salary are you offering? Is there a lunch break?

The interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. The semi-structured interviews are used most by employers. You can have some questions prepared before the meeting but you can also be flexible and think about some other important questions that crop up during the interview. The atmosphere during interviews should be open, relaxed and communicative. The attitude of interviewees should be professional. It is very important that they explain their motivation for the job. There is anti-discrimination legislation in place in Romania.

Generally the applicant should know the field in which the company operates and what the recruiter's requirements for this position are.



3. Negotiate your benefits

You can negotiate the pay and the non-statutory and other benefits of the job. Remuneration is expressed in monthly rates. Holiday pay and annual bonuses are negotiated separately. The most common non-statutory benefits are meal vouchers and holiday pay.

Usually the human resources department is responsible for the negotiation. They know the maximum salary the company can offer for that particular position. The final decision rests with the company management.

According to the Labour Code, every category of workers must have a probationary period of from five days for low-skilled persons employed for a limited period to 90 days for a management position.

At the interview the recruiter informs the candidate whether or not he/she has been accepted and will be contacted again. If you do not receive any feedback shortly after the interview, you can assume that you have not been selected for the vacant position. There are cases where you are informed in both cases, i.e. both when you are accepted and rejected, but these are unusual.



4. Do you need references?

Employers normally ask for references or letters of recommendation. However, remember that having good references does not guarantee that everything will go well at interview.

Some employers ask for a copy of your diploma at the beginning of the procedure and some take the decision to recruit applicants without it.

Depending on company policy, letters of recommendation might be needed as well. Proof of good conduct (i.e. whether you have a criminal record) is required by all employers. Normally you need to be able to prove good conduct in every job.



5. Making a good impression

When you make an appointment for an interview you have to know the location and the time of the interview. The recruiter informs you how to reach the place where the interview is

being held. Punctuality is quite important, but if you are a few minutes late the employer may understand if you have a good reason for this.

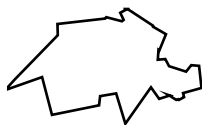
Usually you need to confirm your attendance at interview. If you have a good reason, you can be absent, but you must inform the employer about this before the interview. You may ask for a new appointment, and it is the employer's decision whether another meeting will be arranged.

It is necessary to present yourself at the employer's premises for the interview. Only in large companies like multinationals are video conferences used. In general, however, the employer wants to meet you face to face.

You need to be decently and respectably dressed when you present yourself for interview. During an application procedure you must not lie about your qualifications, experience, skills, knowledge, etc. You must be realistic and honest. Candidates need to be very reasonable and sincere if they are to be successful.



→ SWITZERLAND



Official language

German, French, Italian,
Romansch

Government

Federal parliamentary republic

Surface

41 284 km²

Capital

Berne

Currency

Swiss Franc (CHF)

Member EU or EEA

EFTA

Phone code

+ 41

Internet code

.ch



1. Popular application procedures in Switzerland

The most usual steps in the search for a new job are: study the advertisement of the job offer (either in newspapers or on the web), look up documentation about the company, re-write your curriculum vitae and covering letter and prepare for the first and subsequent interviews.

The most common procedure in recruiting a new staff member — for specialised profiles and management functions — is the use of a written application form. For less skilled profiles, different application procedures are possible. Initial contacts are usually made by phone or via the Internet. When you apply through the Internet, pay attention to the quality of the documents you scan. Do not send documents that give the impression of being developed for general use.

The time between the last interview and when you start the job depends a lot on the kind of job you are applying for, the qualifications the company is looking for and the need for a new employee. Time varies between one week for a job in hotels and restaurants and several weeks for management jobs in public administration or a multinational.



2. How to prepare for the interview

During the interview an employer pays a great deal of attention to the motivation that candidates show and the questions they ask, candidates' non-verbal communication skills, their knowledge of the company and the job and the expectations candidates have of the pay. Female applicants may be asked about their family situation. Depending on the job qualifications and in cases where there is a HR department in the company, two or three people attend the interview. In small companies the employer himself/herself may be in charge of the interview. At least two interviews are usual for application procedures. Each of these interviews takes 90 minutes on average (under an hour for less-qualified jobs).

In the field of verbal and non-verbal communication, the interviewers take into account your knowledge of the language used for the job, your clothing, your politeness, your tone of voice during the interview and the respect you show to the interviewers. Do not drink, chew gum or smoke during the interview and do not accept them either. It is not permissible to offer presents to the interviewers. During the first interview you can ask if taking notes is possible. When it comes to asking questions yourself, wait until the interviewer invites you to do so.

In Switzerland it is very common to ask people in your personal network if they know somebody in the company who can inform you about job offers and staff needs. Based on this information you can write a simple letter of application.

An interview has a very specific structure: the interviewer introduces himself/herself, sets the time frame for the interview and its goals, and gives a brief presentation of the company and the job offered. Then the interviewer asks candidates to present themselves and explain their motivation for the job. After that, questions are asked to find out more details on various subjects. At the end of the interview the applicants are asked to say what their pay expectations are and, if they are still interested in the job, a new meeting can be scheduled.

The atmosphere during the interview varies quite a lot from one company to another. In general, when the interviewer is a HR professional, they will succeed in making the candidate feel at ease and finding out the information required. After all, the interviewer wants to recruit a new staff member who corresponds as closely as possible to the company's needs. Interviewers do not want to make any mistakes. They expect the candidate to be honest. Of course they know that this is only an ideal situation and that some applicants will try to cheat or mask their true self.

During the interview the candidate must show a real interest in the job, be frank and honest, and listen actively. There are still some companies where the employer's attitude towards you is that you are the one who is looking for a job and that you should be grateful to the interviewer for being invited. In fact, if you have the right skills and qualifications for the job, it is the interviewee who has the advantage. Bear this in mind when negotiating pay and working conditions.

The ratio of professional to non-professional items addressed at the interview depends on the interviewer's position in the company. If they are a HR professional, about half of the questions will be linked to your social and personal competence. Use the opportunity to show your motivation for the job and try to highlight all your skills and strengths.

Switzerland has legislation on the equal treatment of men and women. Make sure you are well prepared for the interview and can give positive answers to questions about delicate or tricky subjects. The following subjects are considered strictly private:

sexuality, intention to marry, political allegiance, pay in previous jobs, state of health, forced resignation from previous jobs. Nevertheless some employers may ask a female candidate about her family plans. The interviewer will expect you to answer all the questions.

Find out about the company whose vacancy you want to fill and make sure you know something more about the composition of the managing board, the approximate number of employees, the economic sector where the company operates, its competitors, its customers. Also inform yourself about the company's environmental policy, its attitude to fair trade and the existence of a social or ethical charter. Try to discover more about the company's overall image and its image as an employer. The most topical questions you can expect about your personal competence are questions about your strengths and weaknesses, your flexibility and geographical mobility, your availability and pay expectations.

Of course the interviewer will ask you some questions meant to check whether your answers are sincere. Therefore it is important that you always give specific examples of situations that refer to the answers required and prove that you really do have experience of these situations. For job offers that require knowledge of different languages, the interviewers might switch to one of these languages during the interview. So be honest when you indicate the level of proficiency in a language on your curriculum vitae.



3. Negotiate your benefits

To be able to negotiate a good contract and pleasant working conditions, you have to be very familiar with normal practice in the relevant branch and should not be too greedy or fussy in your requirements as to pay and working conditions. In the sectors where pay is agreed officially, such as the public and semi-public sector, there is not much room to negotiate on pay.

Contract negotiations work like this: for minimum and low wages, the company makes a proposal. If this pay does not satisfy you, there is room to negotiate an increase of about 5 to 10 %. For management jobs, it is often the candidate who makes the first proposal on pay. To make an acceptable proposition it is important to know the sector and company habits very well. Remember also that there are big regional differences in pay within Switzerland. In many enterprises women are paid at least 15 % less than men.

A 13th month's wage only rarely needs discussing, being considered a normal part of your remuneration. Some companies even offer you a 14th month's wage. Bonuses are only given if you achieve your targets.

The most common non-statutory benefits that you can negotiate are: part of your travel to work time may be considered as time at work, payment of your medical insurance, a higher employer's contribution to a retirement fund, and a company car. These benefits are negotiable except for those that have already been negotiated in general agreements between employers' associations and trade unions. In general you need to know that pay in Switzerland is quite high but does not include many non-statutory benefits. The only exceptions to this general rule are top management jobs.

In small companies you have to negotiate directly with the boss him/herself. In small and medium-sized enterprises the head of staff administration is responsible for negotiating pay. In large companies the HR manager is in charge of these negotiations, but you should be aware that there are always budgetary limits on the money available for pay, which narrows down the company's degree of flexibility.

For low-skilled jobs work trials are frequently used. Especially for hotel and cleaning jobs these one-day work trials are very common. If you refuse to do a work trial, you can be sure that you will not be hired for the job. Work trials must be paid. Only if the employer asks you to do a work trial without pay can you refuse. Assessments, although they are tests, may take one or two days, but you will not be paid for them.

At the start of any contract there is a probationary period, which is often used as a test period. There is no minimum time for a test period but it may take three months at the most. You can resign or be fired immediately during this probationary period as long as contractual times of leave are respected.

Except for some public employment services, there is no compensation for costs incurred during the application procedure.

The results of the interview are communicated by phone, letter or e-mail. Only when you have written confirmation from your future employer can you consider the procedure to be concluded.



4. Do you need references?

Never mention any references or letters of recommendation in your covering letter or curriculum vitae. However, if the interviewer asks you for names of persons who can act as referees you must be able to give their names. Letters of recommendation are very rarely used. An employee might ask you for these letters when you apply for a job as a domestic employee, but that is by no means certain. The employer will use the information you gave about referees to contact them and verify if they really know you. If, at the end of the recruitment process, you are not hired for the job, the employer will return this information to you.

Former employers, former superiors or colleagues can all be referees for your new job. The reference is expected to give accurate information about you and not only praise you for all you have done, because that might look suspicious to your new employer. The results will be most favourable if your references can support their testimonial by facts and good practice. Only name references you are professionally linked to. Never ask friends to act as a referee.

Before you can start the job, you will need a copy of your highest qualification, i.e. diploma. You often have to include a copy of this in your covering letter, especially when this is specified in the description of the vacancy. When you apply spontaneously for a job, never include a copy of your diploma in your covering letter. Hand it over at your first meeting at the company.

For certain professions you need proof of good conduct. For jobs as a policeman or security guard it is common to ask for this proof and it is often already mentioned in the job announcement.

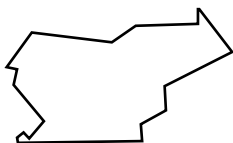


5. Making a good impression

To make a good impression you have to remember the following:

- Be punctual. If possible make sure you arrive a little in advance of the interview. You can expect the employer to be on time as well.
- Always confirm your attendance for interview by phone. Only in exceptional cases can you arrange for a different time. If you have to delay the meeting for good reason, try to reschedule the meeting within two or three days.
- The dress code for an interview depends on the sector and the job. Find out in advance so that you can adopt the dress code expected for the interview. Make sure you are not overdressed when you go to the interview. Flashy clothes and jewellery are only allowed for very particular jobs such as saleswoman for jewellery or luxury products.
- The employer does not expect you to follow up the interview or the results of the tests, but you can always say that you would like to have follow-up and see how the employer reacts.

→ SLOVENIA



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Slovene

Parliamentary republic

20 273 km²

Ljubljana

EUR

EU

+ 386

.si



1. Popular application procedures in Slovenia

Employers are obliged by law to notify all job vacancies to the Employment Service of Slovenia. Most employers use e-services — they notify the job vacancy online to the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS). Employers can also notify their vacancies in writing, which they then send to the ESS. In the notification procedures employers are asked (this is one of the questions on the vacancy form) if they wish to recruit international workers from EU/EEA countries or from third countries. Notified job vacancies are published on the Employment Service of Slovenia's notice boards. Vacancies for which the employer requests publication in the mass media are published nationally on the ESS website, the EURES portal and other media.

Jobseekers can register in an Employment Service CV database, which enables employers to get in touch with suitable candidates.

Many Slovenian employers also advertise their job vacancies in daily or regional newspapers and on the radio, Internet, etc. Most job vacancies are published in regular weekly columns and supplements to the major Slovenian newspapers. Many companies also look for new employees via their own websites and on the portals of agencies which, on the basis of a concessional contract, find work and provide manpower, including occasional and temporary work for secondary school and university students.

Candidates can send their applications directly to the employer by e-mail, fax or regular mail. Copies of educational certificates and qualifications usually need to be enclosed, and employers require references to be offered.

The employer chooses the most suitable candidates from among the applications, and these are then invited for interview. If the applicant's residence is a long way from the employer's, the employer can conduct an interview by phone. The employer also talks about the content of an employment contract with suitable candidates. The employment contract could also be sent to the potential worker for review by e-mail or fax. After that they can arrange for the candidate to come to Slovenia.

Before starting the job, the person selected must pass a medical examination. Then the employer and the worker both confirm the employment contract and the employer must register the worker in the social security scheme within eight days from the new employee starting the job.

A covering letter and CV are normally used to apply for a job in Slovenia. In general a letter of application should stimulate enough interest to make the potential employer want to look at your application in more detail and hopefully invite you for an interview. The covering letter, however, should not provide too much information about experience and qualifications; this will be provided in the CV.

Employers usually prefer applications to be sent directly to them. They then check them and try to contact the persons shortlisted, who are invited for interview by e-mail, by phone or by regular mail. In some cases a meeting between employer and workers may be organised at the Employment Service, especially if the employers are Slovenian or cross-border applicants (Italian or Austrian).

Interviews are a standard element of the selection procedure for jobs at all skill levels in Slovenia. During the interview the recruiter will focus most on experience, motivation and interpersonal social skills. A recruiter wants to have a complete picture of the person they are going to select, therefore psychological, intelligence, aptitude and psychometric tests are widely used, especially for jobs requiring a high level of education.

The time between publishing the vacancy and when you actually start the job depends on the employer and the application deadline. It could be from two weeks (at national level), as there are at least five days between the published date of the vacancy and the application deadline, to six weeks or more at international level, when the application deadline is 30 days or more. Ideally, the contents of the application mirror the requirements of the job position. The first contact is usually made by phone, by e-mail, regular mail or fax.

What the CV should include depends very much on what the job entails, but the following lists some of the essentials:

- A CV or curriculum vitae is an essential marketing tool. With your CV you will be able to promote yourself. When writing a CV, look at it from your employer's point of view. Would you stand out from the competition (the other candidates) and would the manager want to talk to you for a possible job? You have to ask yourself these questions when writing your CV.
- Networking and interviewing are essential for your job search, and your CV is only the first step in this. However, a CV will be your first contact with potential employers and will open the door. If you are invited for an interview, you will be in a position to explain and expand on the contents of your CV.

- Your curriculum vitae should be brief, concise and clearly laid out, presenting the essential facts. It should preferably consist of no more than two (or even better, one) A4 sheet(s). Previous periods of employment should be arranged chronologically. This also applies to the section which covers your education and training.

If you wish to apply for a job vacancy, you normally write a covering letter. It should be concise, easy to read, clear and structured (introduction, body, conclusion). It should contain the following information:

- At the top of the letter: your contact details (full name, date of birth, telephone number and e-mail address), name and address of employer, date;
- In the introduction: salutation and introduction, the job you are applying for, where you saw the advertisement, why you are suitable for the job, what you can offer the employer;
- In the body of the letter: education, knowledge of languages, employment experience, particular areas of competence, career information. Copies of educational certificates and qualifications need to be enclosed and the names of referees;
- In the conclusion: valediction, signature and list of attachments.

At the end of the letter, it is common to say that the candidate would like to be invited for an interview.

An application is usually written in Slovene, but for workers from other countries, it may also be written in another language, most frequently English, German or Italian, especially for cross-border positions.

The Europass curriculum vitae has been increasingly used, and especially if you apply to the Slovenian job vacancies from abroad, the Europass curriculum vitae is the most common way of applying.

Employers in Slovenia very rarely request a handwritten application. If the employer asks for a handwritten application,

it should be written clearly and concisely and should contain all the above mentioned components. The application should be brief, direct and professional.

Points to note in telephone contacts:

- Clarify the reason for the call to the contact person on the employer's side.
- Prepare questions which you would like to ask the employer.
- Be prepared to answer the employer's questions about yourself — about your professional experience, abilities, knowledge and skills.
- Be friendly and relaxed during the telephone conversation.
- It is necessary to add your own message. Listen carefully to comments the contact person makes. Write down a short summary of the conversation and end the conversation with optimistic and stimulating words.

Applying spontaneously:

If you know exactly what you would like to do, if you have specific knowledge and competence which can be used in a particular company or if there is a surplus of people in your profession, with the result that not many vacancies for your profile are published, it is advisable not to wait for the publication of a job vacancy, but to send a so-called spontaneous application. Send this application to companies that you are interested in and where you would like to work.

As writing a spontaneous application is hard, here are a few suggestions:

- 'I have been a customer of yours for a long time and I think I know your field of work very well. That is why I would like to be employed in your company'.
- 'Perhaps in the near future you will need a new colleague with the experience and abilities that I have. Please allow me to introduce myself'.

Then you continue by introducing yourself, listing your professional training, employment experience, skills, achievements, knowledge of foreign languages. You must explain to the company why you believe you could be useful to them.

Spontaneous applications are concluded in the same way as regular applications: 'I would be grateful for an opportunity to discuss this at an interview'.

According to Slovenian Employment law employers are not obliged to respond to spontaneous applications.

For general preparation the applicant should:

- Prepare a list of their achievements — university, work, social or home.
- Have an understanding of what an employer does, as they will be expected to know this in significant detail.
- Speak about competence and practical experience gained through work elsewhere to convince the employer that the applicant has developed the relevant skills.
- Identify a realistic working ambition.
- Have the ability to communicate the abovementioned ideas clearly and effectively.
- Identify key developments, as this information will form a large part of the final interview, so that applicants should have detailed and well-structured opinions.
- In some cases, they must prove the right to live and work without restriction in Slovenia.

Candidates should prepare for questions about their medium- and long-term career aims. Having a clear plan about your own self-development is the key. Some Slovenian recruiters expect you to say what your pay expectations are. Expect two interviews in a Slovenian application procedure.

Copies of certificates proving completion of education, certificates obtained, courses and seminars must be attached to the application, if this is included as an obligatory condition in the advertisement. For some professions and some kinds of activities original confirmations, certified by a notary, are required. If the advertisement does not specify this, they can be enclosed voluntarily. It is also possible to write that documents will be forwarded later if necessary. If the candidates are invited to the interview, it is advisable to bring the original documents to the interview. Proof of linguistic competence, computer

skills, documents about job experience and achievements in any competitions you took part in are important. References are expected.

Online applications are becoming more common, but do not expect all Slovenian employers to use them. Job agencies and some employers who publish their vacancies online provide the opportunity to complete the job application form online. The Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS) website also gives jobseekers the opportunity to put their CV online and let employers know about their availability for work. If there are several suitable candidates, the employer chooses the most qualified one. The CVs of other candidates may be saved in the employer's database for subsequent vacancies. They may, therefore, be contacted again by the employer.

Before starting the job, an employment contract in written form is concluded with the employer. Employment contracts can be signed for a permanent or temporary period of time. Employers are obliged to have their workers enrolled in an obligatory pension, invalidity, health and unemployment insurance scheme within eight days of the starting date of the job. They are also required to deliver a photocopy of registration to the employee within 15 days of commencing work.

The minimum deadline for the application on national level is five days from the advertised date of the vacancy. If employers need workers from other EU/EEU Member States, the time period for applications is usually 30 days.

Employers will use application forms as a first-stage filter, in order to draw up a shortlist of interviewees. Write a new application form for every company; do not use a photocopy, because each company has different specific demands for particular jobs. The application procedure may consist of several tests, followed by an interview. Employment legislation states that the employer should send an answer to all applicants within eight days following the selection of the most suitable candidate, but in practice this is not always done.



2. How to prepare for the interview

Punctuality is important, come to the interview on time or approximately five to 10 minutes earlier. Dress appropriately, the jobseeker's outfit should be selected according to the post that they are applying for. Communication during the interview should be positive and friendly. You are expected to bring along the original documents of the copies sent in the application. It is always appreciated if the candidate shows some knowledge about the company during the interview.

In larger companies, the human resources department manager usually conducts the interviews, together with the head of the department where the employee will work. In smaller companies, the owner usually interviews the candidates. When the employer recruits candidates through an employment agency, a specialist from this agency conducts the interview in the earlier stages of the recruitment process. Tests are usually taken in groups and are handled by a psychologist and possibly some other specialist from the human resources department. Interviews are usually individual. When there is a group of candidates, a group meeting may be held initially to present the company and the posts. Afterwards, individual meetings are conducted with each candidate. Usually only one interview is enough for the employer to decide about the candidate, but one or two additional interviews may be required to select the right candidate in some cases. The interview usually takes about 15 minutes. It can vary from 15 to 30 minutes.

Verbal communication:

- greet the interviewers when entering the room;
- introduce yourself;
- try to remember the interviewers' names;
- listen very carefully to the questions and think about the answers;
- it is not good to talk about personal problems (family problems, financial situation, etc);

- avoid words expressing insecurity, such as: maybe, I am not sure, I will think about it, etc.;
- talk about good experience at the workplace;
- show interest in the post and the company;
- never talk negatively about former employers.

Non-verbal communication:

- it is important to be calm and stable;
- firm handshake (not too firm) with the interviewers when they initiate it;
- make eye contact without staring;
- have a friendly and positive facial expression;
- sit when and where you are asked to;
- observe the interviewer's body language;
- do not drink or smoke even if this is offered (you can accept a non-alcoholic drink);
- chewing gum is not acceptable during the interview.
- sunglasses should not be worn during the interview.

During the individual interview the introduction is the first step. It is followed by a short presentation of the company and the post (if no group presentation was held before). After that the employer can interview the candidate for any further information or clarification of the information stated in the application documents. This is the stage where the candidate can show the original versions of the documents, which were sent as copies when applying for the job. At the end of this part the jobseeker can ask questions, if they have any. To end the interview, the interviewer usually informs the candidate about how the recruitment process will continue.

Interviews are usually held in a businesslike atmosphere. The employer can ask all of these questions and usually does. The whole interview is supposed to be held in a professional atmosphere and with a professional attitude from both parties. The candidate only has to answer those questions that are relevant for the job qualification. The applicant has to know all the basic information about the company, especially its main business activity. It is highly advisable for applicants to visit the Internet site of the company before going to the job interview.

Most commonly asked questions:

- Have you had any similar job experience?
- Describe your educational qualifications.
- What was your previous job?
- What do you know about our company?

Tricky questions:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why should we choose you among all the candidates?
- Why are you the right person for us?
- Describe your weak point(s).
- Describe your strong point(s).
- Did you choose the right job for yourself?
- Why do you want to change your job?
- Do you have any questions for us?



3. Negotiate your benefits

An employer offers you a job (a contract) and you can negotiate your working conditions. Your position as a negotiator is better if there is a shortage of people with your occupation in the labour market or if you have some specific skills. Although companies have their own systematisation of functions, you can also negotiate the pay for certain positions. There is an unwritten rule that during the job interview it is the employer who should bring up the subject of pay first, not the jobseeker. Then you can tell them the pay range (minimum and maximum) that would be suitable for you.

Remuneration for work carried out on the basis of the employment contract is composed of the actual pay, and possibly other types of remuneration, if they are laid down in the collective agreement. Pay consists of the basic wage or salary, part of the wage or salary for job performance and extra pay. Pay is expressed as a monthly rate. Holiday pay and annual bonuses are included in the remuneration listed.

The candidate should check the address and the location of the employer before the interview. It is very important to come on time. If you are late, the employer will get a very bad impression of you. Most employers are not willing to employ a candidate who is late for the appointment. So you have to take into account some unexpected delays. On the other hand, do not arrive more than 5–10 minutes early. This is enough time to collect your thoughts and get a basic impression of the company.

You do not have to confirm attendance for interview unless this is stated on the invitation. If you cannot come on the date or at the time indicated in the invitation, you can call and apologise. They will give you a new appointment. It is not good to change the appointment more than once.

Most interviews in Slovenia are face to face. Some employers can also select potential employees by using new communication technologies.



4. Do you need references?

References can be written by your former employer, a university professor or lecturer, or tutor from your vocational training course. Your relatives cannot be referees. Referees are expected to write a letter of recommendation or give their contacts, so that potential employers can call them and ask them what their impression of you is.

When applying for a job in Slovenia, you need to submit a CV. Copies of educational certificates and qualifications need to be enclosed, and references are required. Letters of recommendation are not obligatory, but they are welcome and can be very helpful.

When proof of good conduct is needed for a job, it is mentioned in the description of the vacancy. Usually jobs in the government, public administration, police force and army or security services require proof of good conduct.



5. Making a good impression:

When you dress for interview, make sure your clothes are businesslike (the proper dress code for the type of job you are looking for), because the first impression is very important. Moreover, it is very important that your clothes are neat and clean. Your shoes must be in good condition and your hair should be neatly styled. Make-up and jewellery should be unobtrusive. Remember that dressing nicely and appropriately is a compliment to the person(s) you meet.

Employers usually say that they will contact candidates and inform them about their decision. After the interview you should make notes right away, so that you do not forget the critical details. They will help you to evaluate the interview and to improve your communication skills.

You can send a thank you letter to the interviewer. The letter should be short but it has to reiterate your interest in the position and your confidence in your qualifications. If the employer said in the interview that he/she would decide within a week, you can call them after one week, not sooner. It is not common for the candidate to meet the employer for an evaluation.

Be original and honest. You should not interrupt the interviewer when he/she is speaking. Do not be late for the interview. You should switch off your mobile phone before the interview. You should never say things about yourself that are not true (skills, qualifications, experience) and you should never say bad things about your former employers.



→ SLOVAKIA



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Slovak

Parliamentary republic

49 035 km²

Bratislava

EUR

EU

+ 421

.sk



1. Popular application procedures in Slovakia

A jobseeker submits the application for a job, then he/she is invited to the interview by the employer and after the interview the employer tells the candidate whether they have been given the job or not. The duration of the procedure differs according to the employer's needs. The minimum duration is two weeks, but it may also take a month and sometimes more.

The first contact is made according to the instructions given by the employer in the vacancy advertisement. Follow the rules of the employer.

Do not send the same application to several employers. Address each employer individually. The content of an

application sent by e-mail is the same as that of a handwritten application. An application written on the PC is common, explaining why the jobseeker would like to work in that company, with an attached CV, possibly a photo and a copy of your diploma. During your contacts with the employer you should be pleasant and friendly.

If the job is a specialist position, knowledge of that specialisation is expected. In that case you may be asked to take a skills test. If a specialist position is not involved, you are expected to demonstrate a willingness to work.

The end of the application procedure is when you start work or receive notification of rejection. In some cases the employer can tell you directly at the interview, but in most cases he/she will send you a letter with the results of the application procedure.



2. How to prepare for the interview

The first impression of a jobseeker is important, including the jobseeker's appearance. The employer has to find out if the jobseeker is really interested in getting a job and if he/she has professional skills and knowledge.

In most cases, employers start by introducing their company and what they expect from the new employee. They will then ask applicants to set out their reasons for wanting the job and to describe their knowledge and skills. The employer can also ask applicants to take a test or fill out some forms. At the end of the interview the employer can then give candidates the opportunity to ask questions. The atmosphere is very formal, it is not very relaxed. You should remember that the style is formal and take care with your choice of words. The majority of the interview time is given over to job-related aspects. The employer is not very interested in personal aspects. The maximum proportion is 80:20 % (professional:non-professional).

It is good to have as much information as possible, because that is how the employer can see that the candidate is interested in that position. It is advisable to know at least the company's activities.



3. Negotiate your benefits

The jobseeker does not have much leeway in negotiating the contract as it is provided in advance by the employer and in most cases a jobseeker can only agree or disagree. Sometimes you can negotiate on pay. The most common non-statutory benefits are for example accommodation, company car and mobile phone.

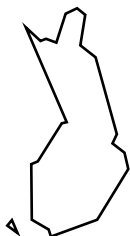
Sometimes you can be asked for a one-day work trial. As it is not legal, it is possible to refuse it, but this may be a reason for the employer not to accept the jobseeker. It can be taken as a demonstration of unwillingness to cooperate.



4. Do you need references?

Sometimes you do. Employers may take this into account when they are making their decision. References are mainly obtained from previous employers. References should confirm the period of work, evaluate the work of a jobseeker and also recommend him/her to another employer. Copies of any diplomas are needed. Sometimes these must be enclosed in the application, sometimes it is enough to bring them to the interview. Note that teachers and people who work with weapons or with dangerous substances, for example, need proof of good conduct.

→ FINLAND



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Finnish, Swedish

Presidential republic

338 145 km²

Helsinki

EUR

EU

+ 358

.fi / .ax



1. Popular application procedures in Finland

The most common steps are usually

- (i) posting a job application on the labour administration's web page, on a private jobsite or in a newspaper (employer);
- (ii) applying for the vacant position (employee);
- (iii) shortlisting three to 10 best candidates for the interview (employer);
- (iv) choosing the best candidate for the vacancy and sending a letter/e-mail to all applicants informing them of the results of the process (employer).

During the application procedure both the jobseeker and the employer have to keep to the deadlines.

After receiving the applications, the employer invites the most appropriate candidates for the interview, normally within one or two weeks after the deadline. The employer suggests a date for the interview which you need to agree on. After interviewing the three to 10 best applicants, the employer may be ready to make their decision. If not, more interviews or aptitude tests will be carried out. When the employer has made his/her decision, they usually send a letter to all the applicants informing them of the result.

The time taken between publishing a vacancy and starting the job depends a great deal on the employer and the job. In international recruitments you have to be prepared for a longer time between the date when the vacancy is published and the day you can start work.

Make sure that you fill in the application carefully; if it is not complete, it might not be taken into consideration. The employer is likely to receive hundreds of applications. Try to stand out positively from the rest. A covering letter should not take more than one page. Describe briefly in the letter why you would be the best candidate for the vacant position. Name one or two referees and give their contact information; the employer may be interested in calling them to ask what kind of employee you are. Remember to sign the letter.

Enclose your curriculum vitae (CV) in your application. Remember to update your CV. In the CV you should list your experience etc. in reverse chronological order, i.e. first mention your most recent job and education/training, and put the oldest information at the end. The length of the CV should not exceed two A4 sheets. Attach your photograph, especially if you are looking for work in the service sector.

If you intend to apply by phone, prepare your call beforehand. Think carefully why you are applying for the position in question, why you should be chosen for the job and visit the company's homepage to find out more about its activities. Speak clearly and try to be relaxed.

Before contacting the company directly to apply spontaneously, you should look at its homepage to find out what kind of career opportunities you might have there and how the employer in question usually hires new employees. If the employer has an electronic application form for spontaneous applications, you should use it. If not, you can contact the employer by e-mail or phone. If you make the first contact by e-mail, you should call the company after approximately one week and ask whether the people in charge of recruitment have received your application and had time to consider it.



2. How to prepare for the interview

The employer expects you to send all the documents mentioned in the job application. Incomplete applications will usually not be considered. Some employers expect applicants to contact them by phone or e-mail before sending the application to ask for further details. They see the contact as an expression of interest. However, other employers do not have time to answer calls or e-mails and do not expect the jobseekers to make contact.

Enclose copies of your relevant school and work certificates in the application if requested. Bring your original certificates to the job interview.

Study the job application carefully; it may tell you how the application process is being conducted. If not, you are usually informed about the follow-up in the interview. If you are not asked for an interview, you can contact the employer approximately two weeks after the job application has expired.

In general, there may be dozens, even hundreds of applicants, for each vacant position. Thus, employers do not have time to contact the applicants frequently and they do not like it if candidates keep calling them. In these cases you should wait for the employer to contact you. However, some vacancies are filled very quickly and are often offered to the first suitable candidate.

In smaller companies, especially, there may not be enough staff to advertise the vacancies, handle the applications, organise the interviews, etc. Therefore, it is worth contacting the employer directly and applying for a post spontaneously.

Before the interview, make sure that you know something about the employer by visiting the company's website, for instance. If possible, prepare some questions about the vacancy and the company beforehand — it shows that you are really interested in getting the job. Remind yourself why you are applying for this job and what your strengths are. Bring the most recent and relevant work and school certificates and a CV with you.

The employer normally pays attention to your general appearance and manners, so you should wear clean, conservative clothes and have good manners. The employer is in charge of the meeting and he/she will ask the questions. In order to have a more objective assessment of the candidates, it is normal that at least two persons from the company are present at interview. Normally you should set aside half an hour to one hour for the meeting. During the interview, stay calm and speak clearly. Set out what you have achieved, but try not to be over-confident. It is important that you show interest in the position by being active, listening carefully and asking for clarification if you do not understand what the employer means. Remember also to make eye contact. However, do not interrupt the interviewer. You can accept drinks (coffee) during the meeting, but you are not supposed to offer anything to the employer. Above all, be honest and do not criticise any former employers.

Punctuality is really very important; you are expected to arrive on time for the meeting. Usually, the interview starts by shaking hands with everyone present. This is followed by an introduction about the job and the company by the employer. First impressions are important, so introduce yourself clearly and look everyone in the eye. Before the questions you are normally expected to say something about yourself — why you applied for this job and why you think you should be chosen. At the end of the meeting you have the opportunity to ask any questions which were not answered.

In Finland the interview generally goes smoothly, in a relaxed atmosphere. However, do not be surprised about possible silences, as the interviewers may be taking notes.

If you are asked to take a psychological or aptitude test, you can take it as a good sign, as it means that you are among the best candidates. You cannot really prepare for the tests; the best thing is to get a good night's sleep and to be honest to yourself. Do not try to pretend to be someone you are not.

It is important for the employer to find out your professional background and capabilities, as well as your previous professional experience. However, the employer also wants to know about your personality; what your strengths and weaknesses are; how your previous employer would describe you as an employee. You will most likely also need to answer how you react to stress and deadlines or how you cope with difficult situations.

One of the first questions the employer asks is your motivation; why you are applying for this job and why you should be chosen. Be prepared to clearly explain your motivation for the job and make a list of your best professional and personal strengths.

Non-discrimination provisions to be complied with in working life are contained in the Non-Discrimination Act and in employment and public sector employment legislation. In addition, provisions on gender equality are laid down in the Act on Equality between Men and Women (the 'Equality Act'). Discrimination in job advertisements when selecting an employee or in the employment contract will be punished as discrimination at work. The Non-Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination on the grounds of age, ethnic or national origin, nationality, language, religious affiliation, political allegiance, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics.

The applicant does not typically need to answer questions dealing with his/her religious or political persuasion, illnesses, pregnancy, family planning or trade union activities. Employers can make precise enquires about health if good physical condition is vital in order to carry out the required duties of the job.

To make a good impression at the job interview, you should visit the company's webpage before the interview to make sure you know the basic facts about the company.

The most common questions at interview are:

- Describe yourself in a few sentences.
- Why are you applying for this position?
- Why do you consider yourself to be the best candidate for the position?
- Name three of your strengths and weaknesses.
- What expectations do you have of the job?
- What do you know about the company and its products?
- What is your current job?
- What is your family situation?
- How do you deal with pressure?
- Do you like working in a team; can you work independently?
- What are your plans for the future and how do you aim to achieve them?

Normally at the end of the interview the employer informs you about the procedure and tells you when you can expect to get the results/follow-up. If the employer does not contact you after one or two weeks, you can enquire about the results by phone or e-mail. If you are not selected, you can contact the employer and ask for feedback about your interview and application.



3. Negotiate your benefits

In Finland contracts are based on collective labour agreements. Almost every field has its own labour agreement. However, in many fields you can negotiate your salary. If there is no fixed salary for the position, the jobseeker is usually asked to indicate their expectations in the job application.

As mentioned above, if the pay is negotiable, it is mentioned in the job application. Pay is usually expressed in hourly or

monthly terms. Holiday pay is based on the statutory requirement. In some fields or enterprises (especially in executive positions) you may negotiate annual bonuses. These bonuses are likely to be linked to your achievements at work.

Extra benefits which are very common in Finland are luncheon vouchers, sports vouchers (entitling you to use many sports facilities at a reduced price) and occupational healthcare. In some companies it is also quite common to be supplied with a leased car. Some of the advantages are negotiable. Consult your new superior, who can tell you the right person to negotiate these extra benefits with.

At the start of the employment contract a probationary period may be agreed on. This period should not last more than four months. During this trial period, either party can terminate the employment contract without notice. If the employer arranges special work-related training for the employee, the trial period cannot last longer than six months.

After the application procedure has been ended, all applicants are usually informed about the results by letter or e-mail.



4. Do you need references?

Usually references are from your former employers, but if you are a student or graduate the referee can also be a teacher, e.g. the person who supervised your diploma thesis. Before adding the referees' names and contact information to your application/CV, make sure that they are willing to recommend you. References are usually asked for. You should mention either in your application or in your CV the names of a couple of referees the employer can contact. Some employers ask the applicants to enclose copies of any letters of recommendation in the application. Bring the letters of recommendation to the interview, as many employers are interested in studying them closely.

Enclose the copies of your diplomas in the job application only if stated in the job advertisement. Take your original diplomas to the interview, as the employer may want to scrutinise them.

For some vacancies proof that you have no criminal record is required. If this is the case, it is usually mentioned in the job advertisement. The extract is needed, for example, from employees who will be working with under-aged persons (if the contract lasts at least three months) and from prison warders. Only those jobseekers that are accepted for the vacant position need to provide this proof of good conduct.



5. Making a good impression

Punctuality is the norm in Finland, both for the candidate and the employer. It is good to confirm that you will be attending the interview; at the same time you can confirm the time and the place. If you want to have the job, you cannot be absent from the interview, unless you have fallen ill. Even in this case you must inform the employer as soon as possible. Most employers prefer face-to-face interviews, but in some cases interviews can also be conducted by videoconferencing.

Dress neatly and appropriately. Normally smart casual is enough. However, in the business world men tend to wear a suit. Use simple jewellery in order to give a good, clean-cut appearance.



→ SWEDEN



Official language

Government

Surface

Capital

Currency

Member EU or EEA

Phone code

Internet code

Swedish

Constitutional monarchy

449 964 km²

Stockholm

Swedish krona (SEK)

EU

+ 46

.se



1. Popular application procedures in Sweden

Looking for interesting employers and vacancies published on their websites is a common way of finding jobs. This is especially the procedure in the IT and financial sector and other qualified areas. The more unskilled the jobs are, the more the PES is involved when looking for a job. The PES cooperates closely with the recruitment agencies in Sweden, which leads to a huge number of vacancies on the PES website: www.arbetsformedlingen.se. This website is the largest one for advertising vacancies in Sweden.

Gather more information about the employer, usually by looking on the company's website. It is common to get in touch with the contact person for more information about the job.

For information about salaries it is usual in Sweden to contact the representative of the trade union.

Send the application to the company by e-mail or regular mail. Read the instructions in the advertisement. In some cases you must use a special e-form to be filled in directly on the screen.

It can take from one week to several weeks between the publication of the vacancy and starting the job. In some sectors, such as the service and the hotel/restaurant sector, the procedure is much shorter.

It is important to read the advertisement carefully and follow the directions. It is very common in Sweden to send electronic applications. Computers are available in all public employment services and libraries, and there are a lot of Internet cafés.

For all written applications it is important to relate the information to the job you are applying for. Write short, dynamic applications, well adapted to the requirements in the advertisement. Handwritten applications are not used in Sweden. Try to make them short and relevant, as a rule: covering letter, one page and CV, one to two pages — in total, two to three pages.

Of course you need to be polite during telephone contacts, but attitudes generally are fairly informal. Sweden is not a country where you use titles in conversation. It has also become more and more common to apply for jobs spontaneously.

The application should be brief, neat and informative. It is not common to attach documents with the application. They are given upon request. The applicant must be prepared to call the employer to check if the employer has received the application.



2. How to prepare for the interview

It is always the employer who is in charge of the interview. One or two persons and often a representative from the trade union take part in the interview. A meeting normally takes about one and a half hours. You may be asked to come back for a second interview. Your body language is important so that employers can see how you handle a situation. It is also important to see how well the applicant corresponds to the qualifications required, not only formally. Usually you are free to accept a cup of coffee.

During the first interview you can ask what an ordinary working day is like, when you will be informed as to whether you have been offered the job, when the job starts, if there is any introductory programme, etc.

Usually you are asked to start the interview by introducing yourself (be brief), tell the employer why you have applied for the job and what you know about the company. Be relaxed but attentive.

The ratio of non-professional to professional items during the interview depends on the type of job you are applying for and on how qualified the job is. Often the interview is divided into two different parts with a different focus in each part.

There are anti-discrimination laws (on gender, religion, ethnicity, disability). You decide yourself if you want to answer these types of questions during an interview. Questions that are not relevant for the job (your age, whether you have any children, your origin) are private.

Questions commonly asked are:

- Do you find it easy to learn new things?
- How do you react when someone is criticising you?
- Are you a problem-solver?
- How do you tackle a problem that arises?
- What are you proud of?

- Can you tell me something really good that you have done?
- What do you expect to be doing in five years' time?
- What do you think that a good colleague should be like?
- Can you tell me about any mistake you made and what you learnt from this situation?
- How would your friends describe you?
- How would your manager describe you?
- How do you function in a group?
- What are your strong and weak points?
- How do you handle stressful situations?
- Why should we employ you?

Tricky questions are those about salary.



3. Negotiate your benefits

The more qualified the job is, the more leeway there is in negotiating the salary. In Sweden, most employment conditions are regulated in collective agreements, meaning that there is not so much room for individual negotiations, at least for less qualified jobs. You can negotiate your pay, but there is little scope for negotiations on what the employer suggests. Pay on a monthly basis is the most common. Holiday pay is normally included in the pay advertised. For management positions there may be scope for negotiating non-statutory benefits. Those are mainly discussed with the staff from the HR department.

You may be asked to do a one-day work trial, but you have the right to be paid for this.

The application procedure is finished when the contract is signed.



4. Do you need references?

A former employer is most often used as a reference. The reference supports your application and describes you and your ability to work.

If the employer requests a copy of your diploma, bring it along to the interview.

Letters of recommendation are needed and can help you. For government jobs, jobs with children, proof of good conduct is required. If this is the case it will be stated in the ad or you will be informed by the employer.



5. Making a good impression

In Sweden you need to be on time when you come for interview. If you are prevented from coming to the interview you must inform the employer as soon as you can and ask if it is possible to make a new appointment. Distance interviews (videoconferencing, SKYPE, etc) are not very often used, but it is always possible to ask.

Do not dress too formally for most jobs, although it does depend of course on the type of job you are applying for.

It is always possible to contact the employer after the interview and ask about the next step in the application process. If you did not get the job, you can always ask for the reason.

Do not talk about pay at the beginning of the application procedure. You should wait until the employer brings up the subject.

→ UNITED KINGDOM



Official language

English

Government

Constitutional monarchy

Surface

244 820 km²

Capital

London

Currency

Pound sterling

Member EU or EEA

EU

Phone code

+ 44

Internet code

.uk



1. Popular application procedures in the UK

E-mail or telephone the named contact in the job advert; request an application form; complete and submit the application form by the deadline; receive an invitation to interview if your application form is successful; 30-40 minutes job interview; job offer or rejection letter sent after interviews completed.

Most people now receive an electronic version of the application form, which they complete and return by e-mail. First contacts are in response to the job advertisement: either an e-mail or telephone call to request an application form. The rule is to follow the application instructions closely and not to use first contact as an opportunity to present oneself if this has not been requested. Make sure the completed version

is saved and sent in a compatible file format. Include the reference number(s) provided by the recruiter/employer. Follow the instructions carefully and keep to word count limits if applicable. Proof-read the form carefully and print a copy to check formatting and presentation. If possible, spell-check the form using a UK rather than a US dictionary. Pay close attention to grammar and sentence structure, which may have been overlooked by the spell-checker. Ask a friend or family member with good English to check the form for you. Written applications are best avoided if an electronic version is available. The main point is to complete your answers on separate sheets of paper and to only complete the form when you are satisfied with your final draft. The analysis of written applications by graphologists is very rare in the UK, therefore handwriting style is not important provided the form is legible and free from crossings out and mistakes.

Only make telephone contact if requested to do so by the recruiter/employer. Speak slowly and clearly. Keep the contact brief and to the point. If you are making the call, avoid background noise and ensure you are calling at an appropriate time (check time differences) and have a good signal (if calling on a mobile phone). Only do this after researching the company you are applying to and identifying that you have the skills and experience that the employer is looking for.

Keep the covering letter brief (one side of A4 paper) and factual. Say why you are writing in the first paragraph; give details of your suitable skills and experience in the second paragraph; give your availability for interview in the third paragraph and any other important details about existing commitments; finish with a short sentence to say that you are looking forward to their reply. The selection process takes one to two weeks. Interviews are arranged within two weeks of the date of the notification letter informing the applicants that they have been selected for interview. The selection and recruitment process takes about one month. The successful candidate can expect four to six weeks' delay between publication of the vacancy and the starting date for the job.



2. How to prepare for the interview

Recruiters expect applicants to follow application instructions carefully and to be available for interview at short notice. They will expect the applicant to be motivated and to have good enough English language skills to enable effective communication (with the exception of some low-skilled jobs, for example fruit picking, where the interview may be conducted in the applicants' native language, particularly if it takes place in their own country). Applicants should be polite, punctual, smartly presented and capable of expressing themselves clearly.

Employers and recruiters have a legal requirement to check the identity of every applicant before they are offered a job. The applicant must bring their original passport or national identity card to the interview to prove that they are a European Economic Area (or Swiss) national or family member.

It is standard practice for employers and recruiters to confirm whether or not an application has been successful. This may be communicated by e-mail or telephone, but is most often confirmed in writing within one to three weeks of the application closure date.

The regulatory rules that apply to application procedures are covered by the laws against discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation or age. Applicants should be judged on merit not background and employers should be seen to offer equal opportunities to all. The main (unwritten) rules for applicants are to be businesslike, polite, factual, well presented, motivated and on time.

The employer will be looking for examples that demonstrate the applicant's competencies to do the job. Punctuality, presentation and motivation are also important factors. The interview is usually chaired by the line manager for the vacant post or a representative from human resources. Interviews are usually led by two

to three panel members. Usually only one round of interviews is carried out, sometimes with an accompanying test to gauge the applicant's technical abilities and problem solving skills. The interview is usually 30–40 minutes maximum. Tests are 20–30 minutes maximum. The applicant's presentation, posture and attentiveness will not be scored but they will create an impression on the panel members and are therefore important. It is okay to smile but contact should remain businesslike. Each question should be answered as fully and clearly as possible. If a question is misunderstood, the applicant should ask for it to be repeated or clarified. Ultimately the applicant must be able to demonstrate his/her suitability for the job, so good communication skills are important. You can accept or ask for a drink of water, for instance, but do not offer anything, especially cigarettes as it is illegal to smoke indoors in public environments and workplaces.

Applicants' questions come at the end of an interview — you will be asked by the interviewee if you have any questions. You can ask any question related to the job if it is an important consideration but it is best to limit the number of questions and to avoid discussing pay. Do not try to think of a question if you have nothing to ask — you do not have to ask questions. The applicant will be seated directly opposite the panel members, who will be seated behind a desk, or the panel and applicant will sit around a table. The atmosphere is formal but friendly. The candidate should be attentive, responsive and positive about their application. They should try to relax and answer the questions confidently and as fully as possible. Because the emphasis is on competence and matching the job profile there is very little, if any, discussion of non-professional subjects. However, examples of voluntary work or charitable work can be mentioned. The motivation should be clear from the application form or from answers given to the interviewees' questions. Unless asked, you do not have to specifically say what motivated you to apply. You do not have to give details of your interests outside work unless you are using these as examples of your ability to do a task in reply to one of the questions.

Employers cannot discriminate on grounds of gender, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation or age. You should try to answer all the questions. You will only be asked questions

related to your ability to do the job. Employers and recruiters are responsible for ensuring that their questions are non-discriminatory and will not ask you to disclose information about private matters unrelated to work. You may, however, have to disclose information about any previous conviction for a criminal offence.

Applicants should research the company's website and look in particular at the direction the company is taking and its future goals and objectives.

Common questions include asking the candidate to give examples of when he/she has been in a particular situation and how he/she has dealt with it. For instance:

- the tools or techniques you have used to plan a particular piece of work;
- when you have had to manage a piece of work and the factors you took into account;
- how you have had to prioritise your work to meet a particular deadline;
- how you have had to overcome a difficult working relationship to achieve your objective;
- when you have encouraged other team members to come forward with ideas;
- how you have influenced people to take a course of action they did not wish to follow.

You may be asked to give examples of a time when something has gone wrong and what you did to put it right or to describe your weaknesses. In this case, show that you are aware of how to deal with your weakness, for example: 'I have a tendency to take on too much work but realise the importance of prioritising my tasks and getting my team members to support me to make sure that deadlines are respected'.

If you are unsuccessful, you may receive feedback on your performance at interview when you are notified in writing. Otherwise you can call or write to the employer to request feedback on your interview.



3. Negotiate your benefits

It is unlikely that there is any flexibility with the employer's terms and conditions unless stated in the vacancy advert. The best attitude is to place trust in the employer's offer and to only apply to jobs that offer satisfactory pay and working conditions. Contract negotiations mostly apply to highly skilled and highly paid jobs, where the salary has not been defined in the job vacancy. The applicant will need to justify his/her salary demands by demonstrating that they are in accordance with market rates and their skills and experience. You can ask for a pay rise after working for a company for a while, if your pay appears to be out of line with employees doing similar work. You will normally have an annual pay review in any case. Holiday pay is included and remuneration is usually expressed as an annual gross salary. Trade jobs, e.g. carpenters and bricklayers, often show wages as hourly. The most common non-statutory benefits are: flexible working arrangements; private healthcare or healthcare insurance; subsidised travel; London weighting (extra pay if working in the capital compared to the national average); use of a company car; subsidised meals at an office canteen; subsidised membership of a gymnasium or club; pay bonuses.

The higher the pay, the more likely it is that you can negotiate your terms and conditions. The human resources manager negotiates remunerations and extra legal advantages.

Work trials are not common, it is more likely that you will work for a trial period, after which your pay rises to the full rate. If you refuse you will probably not be offered the job. It is up to the individual to decide on the basis of how much they want the job. Travel to interview costs and costs for starting work are usually paid for by the applicant. The application procedure usually ends after the job interview. The employer will check your references then notify you in writing as to whether or not you have been successful.



4. Do you need references?

References are supplied on the application form or should be listed on your CV. You can include letters of recommendation with your application if you are asked to provide them or any other relevant information. The employer will check the information you have provided with your referee. It is best to use your most recent employer, but make sure he/she can respond in English. References provide the means for checking your identity and the information you have supplied with your application. If it is stated in the job vacancy or person specification then you should bring it to interview.

Letters of recommendation are usually not needed but if provided in English they can be sent along with the application. If they add to your evidence of suitability for the job then they will help. Jobs in the security industry or when working with vulnerable people (children/elderly people) will require proof that you do not have previous criminal convictions.



5. Making a good impression

The appointment date and time will be set by the employer. You should notify them of any dates for which you are unavailable. You should arrive 15–20 minutes before the interview. You should expect the employer to be punctual. Details should be in the invitation to interview letter. Normally you report to reception. You should inform the employer straight away if you are unavailable, either by e-mail or telephone. Some employers may arrange pre-interviews by video conference but it is still very rare. The majority of interviews are face-to-face. Business dress (a suit) is recommended. Men should wear a tie. Women should wear only modest amounts of make-up and jewellery.

A word of thanks

The idea of writing a manual on culture and etiquette in job application procedures in all the countries of the European Economic Area originated as spin-off from the many initiatives that were taken all over Europe in 2006 — the European Year of Mobility of Workers. We attended or participated in several fairs and events that year. At these fairs and events, we were confronted with the fact that mobility is not only about finding appropriate job offers and proving that you have the right technical skills to qualify for a job. In order to be the right person in the right place there is more to it than just the core skills. Both employer and employee must also be able to work together, to achieve the same objectives and to work together. This 'cohabitation' can only succeed if both parties are familiar with each other's way of thinking, behaviour and cultural background.

It was not possible to complete a manual like this on our own, either as individuals or in a work team like ours. We were only able to succeed thanks to the assistance of many people all over Europe. It would take many pages to name everybody, and even if we did, we would no doubt forget someone. Nevertheless we want to thank all of you who helped us one way or another. We are very much aware that we would not have achieved this without the help of each one of you.

Besides thanking all the individuals for their support we would also like to express our special thanks to the management of all the Belgian public employment services which enabled us to carry out this initiative in cooperation between different labour market services. We also thank the Belgian regional EURES managers, who gave their advisers the time and space to participate in this initiative and spend much more time on it than was initially expected or planned.

We would not have been able to be as organised as we were without the help of several job club leaders from public employment services all over the country. They were kind enough to give us excellent advice on the subjects and the points to note in the questionnaire which we used as a basis for our survey.

The network of EURES representatives all over Europe turned out to be a real added value when it came to labour market topics. Thanks to the willing cooperation of EURES managers and advisers we received the answers to all our questions within a short period of time. These answers enabled us to write an overview of important cultural aspects that employers and jobseekers need to take into account when they start negotiating.

One of the most exceptional experiences for all of us was provided by Euresco when the organisation suggested publishing this manual to celebrate the 15th anniversary of EURES. It is almost impossible to describe the feeling that their proposal gave to us. We are very grateful that we can take part in the initiatives to celebrate this anniversary all over Europe. Euresco made a big investment in the hard logistic work that had to be undertaken to prepare this manual for the reader. Thank you very much for that.

As one of the only personal acknowledgements, we would like to thank Katie Vermeir, translator at the VDAB, for all the hard work she did in editing the final English version of the manual. We do not know how we could have managed that in such little time without her fantastic help.

Finally we wish to say how much we appreciate the support of our colleagues, friends and family. Their ongoing interest in the project when we were absorbed by it was often just what we needed to keep us going.

We are proud of the final result. However, it is not our pride that matters. If we can succeed in getting both employers and jobseekers to use this manual to learn more about each others' background and culture, we feel that we have not only contributed to a labour market where the free movement of workers helps to solve recruitment problems and fill vacancies in areas of shortage, but that we have also encouraged more diversity in the HR strategy of many companies.

Editors

Gert De Buck — VDAB

Kyra Veldkamp — VDAB

Nicolas Dardenne — Le FOREM

Victoria Petrova — Actiris

Project manager:

Hans Maenhout — VDAB

European Commission

'You will hear from us' —

What you should know when applying for a job in another EEA country

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2009 — 218 pp. — 11 × 18 cm

ISBN 978-92-79-11643-8

doi 10.2767/2838

Free movement of people is one of the key tenants of the EU. This guide provides citizens with the most important information they need to know when applying and interviewing for a job in a different EEA country so they can take full advantage of their right to live and work abroad. In addition, this guide tells people about the European employment service EURES and the assistance it can provide during an international job search.

This publication is available in printed format in all EU official languages as well as in Icelandic and Norwegian.

How to obtain EU publications

Publications for sale:

- via EU Bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>);
- from your bookseller by quoting the title, publisher and/or ISBN number;
- by contacting one of our sales agents directly. You can obtain their contact details on the Internet (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>) or by sending a fax to +352 2929-42758.

Free publications:

- via EU Bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>);
- at the European Commission's representations or delegations. You can obtain their contact details on the Internet (<http://ec.europa.eu>) or by sending a fax to +352 2929-42758.

Are you interested in the **publications** of the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities?

If so, you can download them at
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/publications>

or take out a free online subscription at
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/publications/register/index_en.htm

ESmail is the electronic newsletter from the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

You can subscribe to it online at
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/news/esmail_en.cfm

<http://ec.europa.eu/social>

eures.europa.eu



KE-78-09-628-EN-C



Publications Office

ISBN 978-92-79-11643-8

