

# TIPS FOR JOB SEEKING



This guidebook is produced by VALOA-project and Counseling and Career Services, University of Oulu. VALOA-project is partly funded by the EU's European Social Fund, and coordinated by University of Helsinki. University of Oulu is a partner in VALOA-project.

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*Your own skills and networking are the cornerstones of a successful job search!*

## **PHASES IN JOB SEEKING**

Applying for a job is a process for which you should prepare with care. Employers respect applicants who understand what they are applying for and who are able to discuss their goals and skills in a clear and concise manner.

1. reflect on your strengths and analyse your skills
2. set yourself a goal and prepare a development plan
3. collect information on employers and jobs
4. write a job application and CV
5. prepare for an interview
6. assess the situation

*Exercise: Job search plan (attachment 1)*

## **ANALYSING YOUR SKILLS**

When you know your own strengths and know what you feel most “at home” with, it is easier for you to decide what kind of work would be best for you. You will also be able to describe your own competencies, as well as explain your motives in applying for a job to the employer. Remember that knowledge acquired through education is only one part of your competence. A prospective employer is also interested in your working skills (e.g. interaction skills, knowledge management, intercultural skills, project management), your experience and personality.

*Exercise: Accomplishment worksheet (attachment 2)*

## **GOAL OF JOB SEEKING**

Before starting to look for work, you should make your goals clear to yourself: how do you see your life in one, five or ten years? When applying for a job, consider whether the position will take you closer to your goals. Employers appreciate applicants who have a clear aim, long-term goals and who show interest in the position.

*Exercise: Map of Work Life (attachment 3)*

## APPLYING FOR JOBS

**Search for information on employers that interest you before approaching them as a job applicant.** Read up on the newspapers, professional journals and webpages of organizations. Social media is also a common way for organizations to provide information about their operations. The most up-to-date source of information is the current employees. Try to communicate with employees who are employed at jobs that interest you, or who are in charge of projects that interest you. The better you know the operations of an organization, the easier it is for you to prepare a concrete presentation of your own potential work input.

Only a small number of jobs become publically open for application and are announced in newspapers or the internet. **The majority of open positions are filled through direct contacts.** This is why expanding your own networks through hobbies, volunteering, participating in different events etc. is important. In addition to following job announcements, you should directly approach the organizations that you find interesting and try to make contacts with experts in your own field. It is also worth telling people you know that you are looking for work, because information about jobs and job seekers travels quickly within networks, and you can receive crucial information about a job this way.

When networking, you should remember to make use of social media. This way you can inform people about your job search, receive tips about jobs and valuable working life information. You should create positive visibility online and make yourself interesting. The online personality you create is your business card for employers. Common social media networks are **Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.** Many employers post jobs on Facebook, and you can be visible there through your own network. LinkedIn is an expanding professional network that recruiters increasingly make use of. Through LinkedIn you can receive up-to-date information on companies, e.g. their personnel structure and recruitment. Your LinkedIn profile, where you tell about your work experience and your special skills, is quite similar to a CV. You can also network by joining different groups according to professional field / expertise / interests.

When looking for work, it is good to remember recruitment company websites. You can find an up-to-date list at [www.oulu.fi/careerservices](http://www.oulu.fi/careerservices).

Combine social media networks with a traditional job search and make sure that all information about you is consistent. For example, you can include a link to your blog, LinkedIn profile or YouTube CV to your traditional CV.

**“One in five hiring managers conducts background checks using social networks (primarily Facebook)...” (Dan Schwabel, 5.1.2009.)**

## CONTACTING EMPLOYERS

**Your own proactiveness is the most important prerequisite for a job search. Finnish employers are comfortable with job seekers contacting them directly.** When looking for job openings, a phone call is generally a convenient way to make first contact with an employer. A telephone call may in any case be a good way to show initiative, except if the employer specifically states in the job announcement that they do not respond to phone calls.

Prepare carefully before contacting the employer. First impressions are important, and you should make sure that you project the best possible image of yourself. You should not contact an employer if you have nothing to say. Think of some questions that you might present.

## **JOB APPLICATION DOCUMENTS**

**An application letter (cover letter) and CV (resumé) are the basic documents used when applying for work. A good application and CV catch the reader's interest. Their purpose is to create a clear and reliable image for the employer of competencies you possess in relation to the job you are applying for – and to land you a job interview.**

The application letter and CV should be clear, flawless and professional in appearance. The traditional style is often the best. If you wish to make use a non-traditional style, you should carefully consider how the employer might react to any deviations from convention. An application letter and a CV are meant to complement each other, so you do not have to repeat the same things in both.

Nowadays, many employers ask you to fill out an application online. In this case, you usually fill out a ready-made application form. Even though filling out a ready-made form may sound quick and simple, it still takes time as you usually need to separately fill in each field. It is particularly important to answer the open questions. Consider your word choice well in order to distinguish yourself in a positive manner from other applicants. If you send your application as an e-mail attachment, use the most common fonts and a simple layout and an easily openable and readable format (pdf, doc, rtf). E.g. not that many employers will be able to read e.g. OpenOffice files. Send it to yourself first as a test so that you know in what kind of form your documents will be delivered.

Gather enough information about the job that you are applying for as well as information about the employer. In the job announcement, only the basic details of the open position are mentioned. Contact the person mentioned in the ad for more information, study the company's internet pages and/or acquire their annual reports and brochures. You should also talk to people in your circle of acquaintances and networks who work in similar tasks and organizations. When sending your application, make sure that you address your application to the right person and/or specified email address (if applicable), and which attachments the recipient expects to receive with the application.

### **Application / Cover letter**

The best applications are those that have been tailored according to the requirements of the position. Your application should respond to the needs that the employer has expressed in the job advertisement. Provide reasons why you are particularly suitable for the job. Be brave about applying for different kinds of positions, even if you do not meet all the requirements in terms of skills and specific degrees. Consider what the tasks may include, and what kinds of competencies you have to offer based on your studies, work experience as well as relevant interests and hobbies. Remember, your cover letter and CV should not be a complete record of your life, but rather documents which shed light on issues relevant to your prospective employer and which highlight your potential for success in the job in question.

You can make use of various different models and templates when writing the cover letter. There is never just one effective model which to base your personalized cover letter. However, it is good to note that copied or "copy-pasted" cover letter does not project a convincing image. Those who read applications as their job can quickly identify applications sent at random as well as copied documents and unsuccessfully personalized copy-pasted templates. Also, avoid clichés and over-decorative expressions such as "I respectfully wish to be considered" or "I hereby respectfully present myself". Keep it simple and polite! The recommended length of a cover letter is one page.

Structure your text into clear paragraphs. Be straight to the point and start by telling why you are applying for the position. Also, give examples of concrete achievements and successes in

studies or at work. In addition to your history, the employer is often also interested in your future. Tell them about your future plans, for example your career goals.

Bring out your personal strengths as a person and an employee. When you describe yourself, give concrete examples, for example positive feedback from a previous employer. A general list of job-seeker's adjectives standing alone in your application text, e.g. "I am hard-working, responsible, effective and people-friendly" will not help you stand out in terms of your skills and achievements as it could describe just about anyone.

In your cover letter, do not forget to mention:

- your motivation: why are you applying for the position
- your competencies and skills that make you suitable for the position
- you as a person and employee

Finish by telling about your interest in continuing discussions with the employer, and give your salary expectation if requested. If you want to know more about expected or normative salaries in your line of work, it is probably best to ask your teachers, career advisors or fellow students. Students in your subject organisation or guild may also have good information on this issue.

When you are not responding to a job announcement but wish to contact an interesting employer, you should prepare an open application. The same advice applies to an open application as to other job applications. Gather as much information as possible to support your application—in other words, know what you are applying for. Describe your competence in an open application as comprehensively as possible because the company may have interesting "hidden" career paths that might well be suitable for you based on your skills.

## **CV / Resumé**

A good CV (resumé) is a clear, up-to-date and truthful summary of your education and work career. The length of the CV depends on your background, but rarely exceeds two pages. If, for example, your list of scientific publications is long, you can include it as an attachment.

In your CV, you should list your personal information, education and work experience (include months) as well as the following sections according to your choice/relevancy: language skills, IT skills, special skills, hobbies, positions of trust, volunteer work, referees, professional goals, international experience, publications and conferences or other academic merit.

Describe your work tasks and areas of responsibility concisely and clearly – a mere title does not always provide enough information on the task. Highlighting your achievements cannot hurt.

Decide on the design of your CV (font, paper, possible template etc.). Remember to use common and easily readable fonts. Always carefully consider the sector, the type of employer and how deviations from possible norms and generic fonts may be viewed. In addition, you should consider the order in which you will present the information. Is your education more important than your work experience for this particular job? You can also add your picture on the CV. However, although details are important, it is vital to keep it simple!

Create a draft CV where you set down all your skills and competencies and other relevant sections. You can then use the basic CV to tailor application-specific CVs for the jobs you are applying for and which emphasize the special skills and competence important for that particular position.

The CV usually serves as an attachment to the cover letter, but you may also publish it as a separate document, online, for example. The recruitment companies and the Finnish labour administration have online CV banks where you can make your CV available to employers.

## Skills portfolio

If your CV feels too official and compact and you would like to tell more about yourself, there is another alternative – a portfolio. A portfolio is a profile of your own skills in which you document and self-evaluate your skills. The purpose of a portfolio is to show the personal skills and expertise of the applicant – it is a versatile presentation of the portfolio owner's skills and interests. In addition to strengths and skills, a portfolio should also include development challenges and goals (the skills I would like to develop, what I would like to learn...)

In practice, a portfolio is a significant collection of your work, including samples, products, experiences and reflections. The examples should be chosen with the purpose of reaching a specific goal, and demonstrate your efforts, progress and achievements. The main idea is collecting, selecting and reflecting on your own work.

The portfolio is always unique and it tells something about its creator. In addition to written documents, it may also be in digital form, i.e. an online portfolio. A digital portfolio differs from the so-called traditional portfolio only by its methods of creation – in other words, it is a collection of its owner's work and documents presented in electronic form. An internet portfolio may also be interactive – for example a blog – and it may contain sound, picture, videos, animations and other elements in addition to text.

Remember that your portfolio is never finished, because your best work is yet to come.

*Kyvyt.fi* is an ePortfolio service developed for Finnish educational institutions. The service offers students and teachers versatile tools for creating and developing their own portfolio on the web. The service is integrated with the web-based learning environment Optima. Students can register for the service via the University of Oulu internal network at <https://kyvyt.fi/>

More links related to portfolios;

[www.curriculum.org/tcf/teachers/projects/repository/portfolios.pdf](http://www.curriculum.org/tcf/teachers/projects/repository/portfolios.pdf)  
[sites.google.com/site/naomisbaepceportfoliobackup/](http://sites.google.com/site/naomisbaepceportfoliobackup/)  
[eportfolio.citytech.cuny.edu/rkarat/](http://eportfolio.citytech.cuny.edu/rkarat/)  
[students.ed.uiuc.edu/ekim7/eport/home.htm](http://students.ed.uiuc.edu/ekim7/eport/home.htm)

## Application template

**APPLICATION**

DATE

[Name]  
[Address]  
[Telephone number]  
[E-mail]

[Recipient]  
[Organization]  
[Address]

Reference: (reference to a job announcement, telephone conversation etc.)

HEADING (A heading that catches the reader's interest. You can also use the title of the position.)

### Beginning: stirring interest

Why are you interested in the position and the employer? Why do you want this job? Why this company? Remember the employer's point of view! Show that you have thoroughly examined the position. What information have you gathered on the possible work tasks and the employer?

### Education and work experience

What kind of skills do you have to offer? Which ones do you want to emphasize in terms of the position? Why would you be the best choice for this position? What kind of goals related to studies or work do you have? It is good to list your development and career goals. Many employers appreciate that the applicant has some kind of a plan and goal for the future.

### Your personal strengths

What are you like as a person, employee, and/or colleague? Why do you believe you are a suitable person for this job? What kind of achievements do you have?

### Finish

A smart finish. You can mention referees here, especially in cases where they can provide particularly valuable information to the employer about your skills and experience which are relevant the job you are applying for. Mention your salary expectation if requested. Offer to come for an interview. (Open application: Inform them when you will contact them or how you can be reached.) Tell the employer that they can contact you if they have any questions.

### Signature

[ *signature* ]  
[Your name in block letters].

Signing the application is important. Surprisingly many applicants forget that. By signing the application, you declare that everything you have written is truthful. You do not have to sign the CV because it is an attachment to the application.

Attachments

CV  
certificates if requested

## Chronological CV

**CV**  
date

**Name** (Photo)  
**Address**  
**Telephone number**  
**E-mail**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION:** Date of birth, nationality (and marital status)

**DEVELOPMENT GOAL:** Explain your development goals in a few lines. Employers appreciate applicants who have set goals.

**EDUCATION:** University, degree or title, date. Major and minor subjects. The topic and name of final thesis (and grade). Write about your education as clearly as possible, a degree title alone is not sufficient. Think about whether your studies include courses or course work that may be relevant to the job. You can present your final thesis in a few lines, for example title and keywords.

High school diploma/IB-Diploma/A-Levels/matriculation examination, upper secondary school, date.

**WORK EXPERIENCE:** Employer, title/work period. Most recent first. Short description of work tasks, areas of responsibility and achievements.  
If you have a job certificate in which your work has been evaluated, you may write about the feedback you received.

**OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE:** Older or less relevant work experiences (in the form of a list, for example).

**LANGUAGE SKILLS:** Evaluate your spoken and written language skills separately. Explain what your active language skills are and how you maintain them.

**IT SKILLS:** The programmes/software that you can use.

**SPECIAL SKILLS:** Describe your strengths and skills, for example the research methods you use, equipment, etc.

**POSITIONS OF TRUST:** The name of the organization, your task and date.

**HOBBIES:** List the most significant hobbies, especially if they can be useful for the task you are applying for.

**REFEREES:** Name, company, title, contact information. Think about who knows you and can explain what you are like as an employee. When you ask for permission from a referee, explain what kind of work you are applying for.

## Functional CV

CV

date

**Your contact information**  
**Your personal information**

### GOAL

What kind of work would you like to be doing five years from now? How are you developing your professional skills to reach this goal?

### PERSONAL PROPERTIES

For example: manner of working, stress tolerance, social skills, communication skills. Write down examples relevant to the job you are applying for.

### IT SKILLS / SPECIAL SKILLS

List similarly as in the chronological CV layout.

### (PROFESSIONAL) ACHIEVEMENTS

Here you can list things that you have done or achieved. Give examples.

E.g. I have been responsible for this and that, I have coordinated such-and-such project, the budget was EUR xxx, I have initiated this and that, planned, organized x and y.

Focus on whole entities.

### WORK EXPERIENCE

When you describe your work tasks in your achievements section, you can then present a short list which states the duration of each job (year and number of months), your employers and work titles. Remember to state them chronologically - most recent first.

### EDUCATION

Your most significant education first. Year, institute, degree title, study levels of your major/minor studies (basic, intermediate, advanced).

### LANGUAGE SKILLS

Same as in chronological CV.

Consider writing a functional CV when you already have some work experience. In terms of getting a job at this point, your achievements at work and in your free time may matter more than your education.

## **Academic CV**

An academic CV includes most of the same things as other CVs. In addition, it presents academic merits such as the ones listed below. Note that fund-granting bodies, for example the Academy of Finland, may have their own, very detailed guidelines regarding the CV and the list of publications. These guidelines must be observed.

### **Academic activities**

- acting as an opponent
- acting as preliminary examiner for doctoral theses
- supervision of doctoral theses and other student theses
- acting as academic expert
- significant academic positions of trust

### **Other activities**

- significant administrative positions
- other expert positions

### **Teaching merits**

- pedagogic training
- preparing teaching material
- awards for teaching merits

### **Significant research funding and grants**

### **Academic honours and awards**

- name and year of award

### **Conference presentations**

- presentations by invitation (number)
- other presentations (number)
- posters (number)

### **A list of publications is attached to academic applications**

In a list of publications, the applicant must categorize their publications and manuscripts approved for publications.

For example:

1. Monographs
2. Doctoral dissertation and other theses
3. Study books
4. Refereed articles in academic journals and anthologies
5. Other academic articles
6. Other publications

## **JOB INTERVIEW**

An invitation to a job interview tells you that you have caught the employer's interest from among dozens of applicants. You can be proud of this achievement. The interview usually lasts 1–2 hours. The interview may be either a group interview or a one-on-one interview. Sometimes, during the same day, different applicability tests and written or oral tasks are used in addition to the interview in order to get more information about the applicant.

The interviewer is usually the employer and/or their representative, who wishes to form a reliable image of the applicant, their possibilities to perform well on the job and how the applicant would adapt to the work community. The image that you have created of yourself through the application and CV will strengthen during the interview. Remember that an interview is, above all, an interactive discussion. The jobseeker is not merely a passive, nodding recipient of information who occasionally answers with a "yes" or "no", but an engaged participant in the discussion who actively speaks, listens, asks relevant questions and is interested.

### **Before the interview**

The most important thing before the interview is to make sure you know your motivations and have well-grounded reasons: why you have applied for this job, why you would be successful at it, and how the employer can profit from hiring you. Knowing yourself gives you the best tools to be successful at a job interview. Be yourself and do not try to act like you are different from what you are.

- Collect more information on the employer. It is good to know something about the most important clients, products, organization, working environment, etc. This knowledge will strengthen the idea of your expertise and emphasize the fact that you are serious about applying for the job.
- Read the job announcement again and review all the matters that come up.
- Read your application and CV. What were the most important reasons for applying for this job? Review your motivation and strengths and be ready to back up the things you say.
- Think about your salary expectation.
- Consider what you would like to ask the interviewer.
- Once more, check the date, location and time of the interview.
- Dress professionally and in a manner that makes you feel comfortable.
- If you would like to make notes, take a small notebook and pen. If you have the habit of doodling in the margins, leave these items at home.
- Bring original copies of your certificates with you in a neat folder, as well as one set of copies in case the interviewer would like to keep them.
- Make sure you know WHERE the interview will take place. Find out exactly where you need to go, especially if the place is new to you or if the organization is housed in a large complex, office building or business area. It is useful to take a map if the area is new to you and to plan your transport in advance (it is also good to have a Plan B, e.g. in case a bus/train is cancelled). You might need to register at a front desk/reception first. If so, make sure you have ample time to do so.
- **BE ON TIME !!!**

## **The interview**

In a job interview, everyone is nervous – including the interviewer. Do not be rattled by feeling nervous – you have plenty of time to bring out your best qualities. Be natural with everyone (secretaries, janitors, other personnel). Other staff member's opinion and their first impressions of you may become a factor when the decision is being made.

Be honest and excited (but not excitable) when you answer. Bring up your motivation to develop. Listen to the questions and form well-grounded answers for your response. Focus on your strengths, but do not hide your learning needs.

Employers often ask about your weaknesses or development areas. These should be carefully thought out in advance – good attributes disguised as weaknesses are usually not convincing unless you truly find them to be development areas and to affect your work efficiency negatively, e.g. "I work too hard", "I pay too much attention on detail". Also, badmouthing your former employers, superiors or colleagues does not present a good image of you – getting into conflicts usually takes two parties. They may also wonder what you might say about them to other future employers if were to they hire you.

Let the interviewer bring up issues related to salary and benefits. Based on your background information, you can present a realistic salary expectation.

### **Good to remember:**

- Arrive 10–15 minutes earlier at the location. Do not be late under any circumstances. If you encounter an unexpected obstacle or delay, your first duty is to inform the interviewer. Do this by telephone.
- Remember good manners and polite conduct towards representatives of the employer. A strong handshake, brisk introduction and eye contact create a good first impression.
- Find out about the next steps in the selection process: how things will proceed and what the schedule is. Waiting periods and the apprehension and uncertainty that come after job interviews are the worst part of whole process and it is good to know when decisions are made and how to prepare for possible next steps.
- Make sure that the interviewer/employer can reach you when necessary.
- Thank the interviewer for their interest and their confidence in you.

## **Interview process**

### **Interview opening**

The interviewer often starts by explaining the basics about the position and the organization. The interviewee in turn is expected to tell something about his/her life and background. Please note that this does mean you need to tell them your whole life story. The purpose of all this is to release the tension and turn the interview into a natural means of interaction.

### **Evaluating the interviewee**

During the interview, the motivation, skills and personality of the applicant are evaluated. The purpose is to learn more about the educational background, experiences, skills and strengths of the applicant, and what they can bring to the working community.

## **Problem-solving**

You may be given a real-life problem-solving situation related to the job that you are applying for as a task. Your manner of operating will be evaluated. Sometimes these are notified in advance. Be prepared to handle these kinds of situations mentally. You can find out about possible real-life tasks from the contact person in the job advertisement and also people who work in similar jobs.

## **How would you answer these questions?**

- Introduce yourself briefly.
- What do you know about this company?
- Why did you apply for this specific job?
- How and why did you end up choosing the field that you studied?
- Why did you choose the University of Oulu?
- Your career and development goals?
- Where do you hope to be in 5 years?
- Do you consider yourself to be goal-oriented?
- Do you justify the decisions you make to yourself?

## **Questions related to your studies:**

- What is your area of expertise / specialization / major subject?
- What else have you studied and why?
- Do you think you have received a suitable education? Are you in the right field?
- How did your studies go and how did you succeed in your studies? What was difficult, what was easy?
- Your hobbies and positions of trust during your studies
- What was the topic of your final thesis? How would you describe it? Any interesting results? Anything particularly relevant to the job at hand?
- The most important factors related to your studies that will help you succeed at the job?

## **Questions related to your previous work experience:**

- Based on your previous work experience, what are the factors that will help you succeed at this job?
- What would you have to study more or how is your knowledge insufficient?
- List your most important accomplishments
- What have you received positive feedback for? What about negative feedback?
- Describe situations where you feel like you have succeeded or failed? Why did that happen?
- Why are you changing your job?
- What kind of people do you find it difficult to work with? Why?
- What kind of matters have you been responsible for?
- Do you usually experience stress, and how does it manifest itself? How do you recover from stress?
- How do you use your free time?
- What do you think makes a good supervisor (good management/good employer)?

## **Questions interviewers are NOT supposed to ask**

According to Finnish legislation, employers should not ask about and nor are you required to answer, questions related to more personal issues. Only job related aspects should be asked. Should they ask about matters that are not linked to the specified work, this has to be arguable/justified.

These are the following:

- Religious beliefs and political conviction
- Health, illnesses, disability
- Family relations
- Family planning
- Sexuality
- Whether you have completed your national service as military or civil service
- Your ethnic background

However, it is important to note that the interviewer may still ask about these or touch upon some of these inadvertently or casually in discussion - sometimes also indeliberately. Should they ask something related to these, you may answer if you feel comfortable and if you feel it is pertinent to the job in question. If not, be prepared to respond politely to such enquiries in a roundabout way without really answering the question – saying that “it is not legal to ask such questions” is not the best way about it.

Especially women should note that family planning and family issues may be brought up because e.g. maternity leave can be something that is not all that desirable to employers. This happens even though employers should not make decisions based on this and this is not in line with Finnish policies on equality. Roundabout ways to get around that is to say that “I am not planning to begin a family in the near future” or “I am planning on focusing on my career”. If things change after you get the job, this should not affect your job.

Also, note that sometimes these personal issues may work to your advantage depending on the job in question. Your nationality or cultural background may work for you, e.g. If the job deals with your home country or region, etc. The same might go for other areas depending on the job in question and also the interviewer in question (however, do not count on it alone, your eligibility and knowhow will be most important).

## **Important final questions**

The interviewer may wish to measure your motivation and to test whether your answers are logical and consistent one last time.

- Why should we hire you instead of someone else?
- Are you ready /willing to change your place of residence, if required by the job?
- What are your salary expectations? What are they based on?

## **Questions to the interviewer**

In advance, consider what extra information you need or would like to know which can support your own decision-making. Remember that you, too, are making a choice here and that you are evaluating whether the organization and employer is suitable for you. If your questions have not been answered during the interview, this is the time to pose them. Usually some matters also arise during the interview that you might wish to have more specific information about.

- What kind of a person would be ideal for this position?
- What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of this job?

- What would be my areas of responsibility and my main task? What am I responsible for and to whom?
- What kind of career advancement and development possibilities does this company/organization offer?
- Who would I be working in cooperation with?
- What would be my most important tools or equipment? What support does the employer offer in terms of these?
- Work orientation and support?
- Why is this position open at the moment?
- What requirements are emphasized in the selection process?
- Is there anything else you would like to know before you make your decision?

### **The progress and completion of the recruitment process**

Find out how the recruitment process proceeds, who will contact you next and when. Also check whether the decisions are made based on this interview, or if there are possible tests or a second round of interviews ahead.

- Decisions?
- Further interviews?
- Contracts?

### **After the interview**

Review the course of the interview. Where did you succeed? Where did you fail? Did the interview strengthen or change your idea of how suitable the position is for you? Do you still want this job?

Mark the matters and dates agreed on. If you have not been contacted by the agreed date, find out about the situation.

You should also be prepared for not being chosen for the position in question. Do not lose your positive attitude towards the employer in question. It is possible that another position will open up in the future. You can ask for direct feedback on why you were not chosen. What could you learn or work on for the future?

### **I was selected**

#### **Congratulations!**

If you are still interested in the job that you applied for and the employer, the next phase is the employment contract. An employment contract may be written or oral. Drawing up a contract in writing greatly benefits both parties. The written contract serves as proof of what has been agreed on. The Employment Contracts Act includes examples of the conditions that must be considered central in all employment contracts. These include, for example, identity of all the parties to the employment contract, location of the workplace, length of a temporary employment contract, main tasks of the employer, working hours, salary paid for the work, period of notice and basis for determining annual leave, as well as a possible collective agreement.

You can find more information by visiting the following websites:

[www.infopankki.fi/en-gb/home/](http://www.infopankki.fi/en-gb/home/)

[expat-finland.com/](http://expat-finland.com/)  
[www.tyosuojelu.fi/fi/workingfinland/](http://www.tyosuojelu.fi/fi/workingfinland/)

Also, it is good to note that studying does not end when you get a job. Even while employed, you should expand your competence according to the possibilities offered directly or indirectly by the employer, such as personnel training, development projects, project training, language training, etc.

## **I was not selected**

The person chosen for the job is the person who is most suitable for the position, work community and the goals of the organization from the employer's point of view. It is important to understand that the selected person is not objectively or absolutely the best (= *better than me*), but at the moment of selection the best person in terms of the personnel policy of the company.

If you applied for the position in earnest and were not selected, you will most certainly feel disappointed. After the initial disappointment, it is good to evaluate the different phases of the application process that you underwent: where do you think you succeeded, what could you have done differently? You should also contact the employer and try to find out the differences between you and the person they hired, for example with the following questions:

- What was the requirement profile?
- What was the final decisive factor in the selection process?
- What was missing in your application and your skills?
- What were your strengths as an applicant for the position in question and how does the employer suggest you could increase your competitiveness in the future?

If you participated in a recruitment event during the recruitment process (adaptability tests, simulations, etc.) you have the right to receive feedback on the tests from the person responsible for the event. You can learn a lot from such feedback. This way the employer also knows that you were serious about the job. It is possible that there will be similar open positions in the future, in which case the suitability of the candidates who applied for the previous position may be re-evaluated. It is therefore useful to be in contact with the employer even if you were not chosen, and thereby leave a positive impression of yourself.

## **LEGISLATION RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT**

### **Work permit**

International students can work alongside their studies and seek employment in Finland for after they graduate. However, there are certain conditions involved. These depend where you are from.

If you are a **Nordic or EU/EEA national**, you do not need any special permits for working in Finland during your studies. A residence permit for employment is not required, but you will need to register your residence with the local police (EU/EEA) or local register office (Nordic) if you have not already done so.

**Non-EU/EEA students (Residence Permit B)** can work alongside their studies within certain limits (part-time work max 25 hours per week during the semester; full-time work during academic holiday periods i.e. winter and summer holidays). After graduation, Non-EU/EEA students are able to stay and seek work in Finland for up to 6 months.

A personal identity number (*henkilötunnus*) is required if you work. You can get this at the Maistraatti (Local Register Office) if you do not already have one. You will also need a Finnish bank account with all likelihood.

**Residence permits for an employed person/self-employed person from a non-EU/EEA country** can be applied for only after getting employment in Finland. Residence permits are usually applied for abroad (before arrival). However, if you are currently in Finland on your valid residence permit for studying and find a full-time job (e.g. after graduating), you can apply for the residence permit for working at the local police.

Note that this information is subject to change. The Immigration Office and local police will also be able to provide the most up-to-date information. You can find more information from the Immigration Office or with the local police (immigration).

Maistraatti (Local register office) - [www.maistraatti.fi/en/](http://www.maistraatti.fi/en/)

Address: Isokatu 4, 90101 OULU

Opening hours: Mon - Fri 09.00 - 16.00

Phone: 071 876 0241

Police - [www.poliisi.fi/poliisi/home.nsf/pages/index\\_eng](http://www.poliisi.fi/poliisi/home.nsf/pages/index_eng)

Address: Rata-aukio 2, 90101 OULU (1st floor)

Opening hours: Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri 8.00 - 16.15 (N.B. closed on Tuesdays!)

Phone: 071 876 5781, - 5789 and - 5777

Immigration Office (MIGRI) - [www.migri.fi](http://www.migri.fi)

Phone: 071 873 3400 (Mon - Fri 9:00-15:00)

## Taxation

A person coming to Finland for over 6 months will be taxed according to the progressive taxation system in the same way as permanent residents. In general, taxpayers are liable to pay progressive state taxes and municipal taxes. In addition, if you are a member of the church, you will be liable to pay church tax.

**Tax cards are required for everyone working in Finland.** The tax card determines the amount of tax you are required to pay. The employee must supply the employer with their tax card when they begin work. The employer will then pay the actual income tax straight from your salary according to the tax percentage specified in your tax card. If you do not, your withheld income tax will be 60% (this is usually given back in tax returns in the following year). Tax percentages are based on your income, and can be altered throughout the year. For this purpose, you will get a new tax card which you will need to submit to your employer(s).

Exemptions must be checked with the tax office ([www.vero.fi/en-US](http://www.vero.fi/en-US)). For example, if you live elsewhere in the world whilst doing work for an employer in Finland, you will need to have a tax-at-source card. Freelance and self-employed people should also enquire with the tax office.

N.B Tax cards are only valid for one year (and one transitory month in January of the following year). New tax cards are usually sent every year, which the employee must then give to the employer.

Tax Office of Northern Oestrobothnia (Oulu Region, *Pohjois-Pohjanmaan verotoimisto*)  
Address: Torikatu 34 B, 90100 Oulu  
Opening hours: Mon – Fri 9:00–16:15  
Tel. 020 697 050 (taxation issues) / 020 697 052 (tax card service)

## **FINNISH WORK LIFE**

### **Working hours**

Regular **working hours** are usually at most 8 daily hours and 40 weekly hours. Each workplace must have a work schedule from which the workers regular working hours, beginning and ending times and the placement of the rest periods can be read. To avoid possible misunderstandings employees should keep their own record of their worked hours and received wages.

More information: <http://www.tyosuojelu.fi/fi/workingtime>

### **Wages**

There is no universal minimum wage in Finland. The collective agreement in most employment branches determines the pay and other minimum employment terms. It is also possible to agree on benefits such as food and residence in addition to the wage.

Wages in collective agreements are generally determined according to the employees' professional skills, experience and the geographical situation of the workplace.

After working for the same employer for at least a month, employees have the right to receive sick-leave pay if they are unable to work during to illness or injury. To be entitled to sick-leave pay the working inability must be determined in a way satisfactory to the employer (for example a doctor's certificate).

Working hours exceeding the regular working hours are overtime hours. Overtime is normally compensated with additional, higher pay. Sunday work is paid with doubled wages and evening and night work compensations are paid according to the collective agreements.

More information: <http://www.tyosuojelu.fi/fi/wages>

### **Accident Insurance**

Every employee working for a Finnish employer in Finland is to be insured by the employer with a mandatory accident insurance. The insurance covers both accidents at work and on the journey to work.

## Holidays

An employee has a right to receive pay also for the time he/she is on annual holiday. Normally holiday leave accumulates 2 days (when employment has lasted less than 1 year) or 2½ days for each holiday credit month. Normal wages are paid for the time an employee is on holiday. According to many collective agreements the employee also has a right to additional holiday money, which is usually a half of the holiday wages.

More information: <http://www.tyosuojelu.fi/fi/holidays>

## Trade Unions in Finland

Approximately 80% of Finns are members of a trade union. The main purpose of a union is to **safeguard and improve the benefits and rights of its members**. This includes, for example, income development, employment security, and quality of work life.

In Finland an important function of trade unions is to run unemployment funds and to provide earnings-related unemployment benefits. These are typically much higher than the basic unemployment allowance provided by KELA (The Social Insurance Institution of Finland). Many would argue that this is the primary reason for joining a union. However, it is possible to join an unemployment fund even if you are not a member of trade union. You should certainly **consider joining a trade union or at least an unemployment fund as soon as you start a new job**. There are certain requirements as to how long you must work until you receive full unemployment benefits.

Finnish unions are occupation-based. There are three main levels: Local trade unions, national federations of member local unions, and confederations which are the peak organizations made up of affiliated federations. Collective agreements covering the whole of Finland are concluded between the federations.

When you start your new job, ask colleagues (or friends) who are in the same field which union they are members of, and if they are happy with the service they are receiving. You can also find your union via [http://jarjestaydy.fi/www/fi/loyda\\_liittosi/index.php](http://jarjestaydy.fi/www/fi/loyda_liittosi/index.php) (in Finnish only). Students are often able to become student members of trade unions or affiliated organisations before graduating. Ask your subject organization or guild at the University of Oulu for more information.

You can also find more information at [www.expats-finland.com/employment/unions.html](http://www.expats-finland.com/employment/unions.html)

## FINNISH WORK CULTURE

Diligence and independence are appreciated in working life. When you finish one job, do not stand around waiting, but start the next task yourself. **If you do not know what you can do, ask!**

Punctuality and reliability are very important. The matters and schedules agreed on should be observed. High-quality work is considered default. In Finland, when something is agreed on, everyone trusts that everyone involved will act accordingly. For example, if you were to decide in a team meeting that you will perform a task, no one will tell you again. **If you are not sure what was agreed on, ask!**

Schedules are also observed strictly. **You always have to be on time at meetings!** If you will be late, let the others know. You also have to come to work exactly at the agreed time. 8:00 am means exactly 8:00 am, and not 8:10. Many workplaces nowadays have flexible working hours. This means that you can come to work during a flexible period, for example begin the workday between 7 and 9 am and leave between 3 and 5 pm. Even in this case you have to be at work for a certain number of hours per day. Some workplaces also have the option to have a certain number of home office days per month, etc. These systems tend to differ according to the employer and sector. Make sure you go through all this kind of information when you begin the job!

In Finland, we are straightforward and concise when we talk. If you do not understand the instructions, you can say: "I didn't understand, could you repeat that, please?" In case you are not given enough time for a certain work task or are not certain how much time input you should invest in it, you should mention this directly. In Finland, we ask for things directly and give criticism up front. You should not be offended by this.

**The Finnish work culture is based on equality.** Organizations have low hierarchy and directors and supervisors are equal to other employees. Do not be surprised if the CEO brews the morning coffee every now and then. It is important to note that in the work place gender equality is also inherent.

## WORK LIFE DICTIONARY (EN-FI)

Work or job	Työ
Summer job	Kesätyö
Internship	Harjoittelupaikka
Company / enterprise	Yritys
Organisation	Organisaatio
Job advertisement	Työpaikkailmoitus
Open jobs / open positions	Avoimet työpaikat
Last day for applications	Viimeinen hakupäivä
Work certificate	Työtodistus
Contact person	Yhteyshenkilö
Salary expectation	Palkkatoive
Job application	Työhakemus
CV or resumé	Ansioluettelo
Work experience	Työkokemus
Education or training	Koulutus
Language skills	Kielitaito
IT skills	ATK-taidot
Hobbies and interests	Harrastukset
Referee	Suosittelija
Job interview	Työhaastattelu
Aptitude test	Soveltuvuustesti
Employee	Työntekijä
Employer	Työnantaja
Supervisor	Esimies
Human resources or staff services	Henkilöstöosasto
Financial department	Talousosasto
Office	Toimisto
Working contract	Työsopimus
Duration of working contract	Työsopimuksen kesto
Terminable (fixed-period)	Määräaikainen
Indefinite period (permanent)	Toistaiseksi voimassaoleva
Probation or trial period	Koeaika
Salary	Palkka
Monthly salary	Kuukausipalkka
Hourly rate	Tuntipalkka
Commission	Provisiopalkkaus
Benefit	Luontoisetu
Annual leave	Vuosiloma
Working time or hours	Työaika
Absence	Poissaolot
Work permit or residence permit for working	Työlupa
Tax card	Verokortti
Municipal tax	Kunnallisvero
Tax return	Veroilmoitus
Trade union	Ammattiliitto
Unemployment fund	Työttömyyskassa

## **USEFUL LINKS**

### **Employment and Economic Development Office**

<http://www.mol.fi/mol/en/index.jsp>

### **Finnish Work Life**

<http://www.infopankki.fi/en-gb/home/>

<http://expat-finland.com/>

<http://www.tyosuojelu.fi/fi/workingfinland/>

### **Career planning**

<http://www.windmillsonline.co.uk/interactive/>

### **Recruiting / staffing companies**

<http://www.eilakaisla.fi/home>

<http://www.uranus.fi/?lang=en>

<http://www.academicwork.com/>

<http://www.studentwork.se/en/>

<http://www.adecco.fi/en-GB/Pages/default.aspx>

<https://www.manpower.fi/MPNet3/Content.asp?Ref=FINLAND&NodeRef=54396&>

<http://www.mercuriurval.com/en/Countries/Finland/>

<http://www.vmp.fi/Suomi/en/Frontpage/?&suomi/en>

### **Companies in Oulu area**

[http://www.investinoulu.com/company\\_database](http://www.investinoulu.com/company_database)

[http://www.technopolis.fi/technopolis/customer\\_companies](http://www.technopolis.fi/technopolis/customer_companies)

### **Social media**

<http://www.linkedin.com>

**JOB SEARCH PLAN**

**date** \_\_\_\_\_

**My career goals:**

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

**My personal skills and strengths related to these goals:**

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**My most significant development areas and procedures for improvement:**

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**Jobs that I am currently applying for:**

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**Focusing job search:**

Organization	Whom to contact	Form of contact	Time of contact

**Other procedures that I am performing to ensure my employment**

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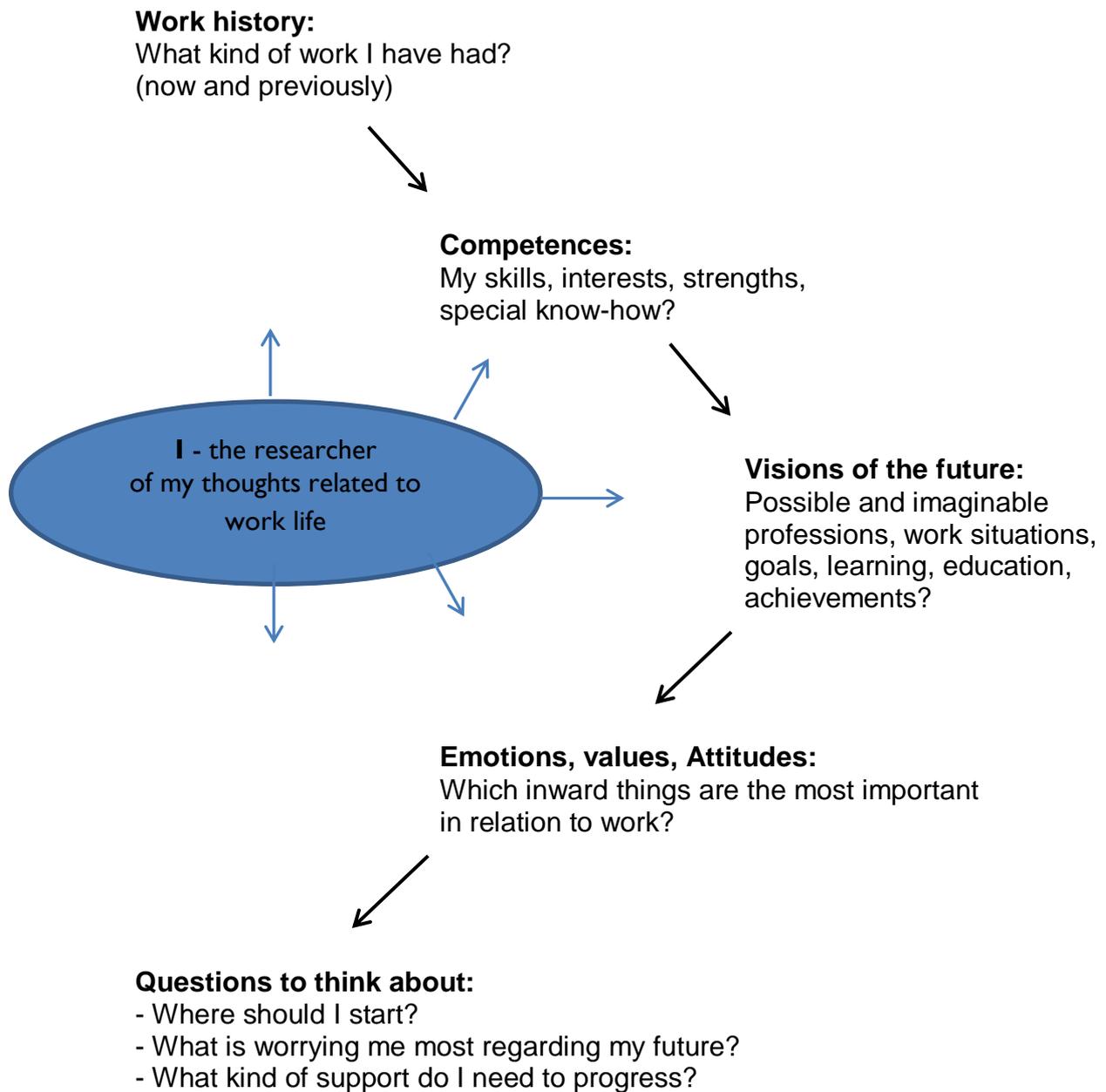
## Accomplishment Worksheet

Think about your work experience, studies, project works, hobbies and community activities, organizational activities, volunteer experience, and **write 5 accomplishments** of which you are really proud or that you enjoyed doing.

Try to identify the **skills, strengths and personal qualities** you developed/utilized to achieve each **accomplishment**.

Accomplishments	Skills, Strengths & Personal Qualities
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

## THE MAP OF WORK LIFE



Assignment adapted from R. Vance Peavy's "kartta työn maailmasta" assignment.  
Source: Peavy, R.V. 2001. Elämäni työkirja.



You can find more information about job seeking on our homepage.

If you wish, we can help you get started with your job search, give feedback on your applications and help you prepare for your interview.

**University of Oulu**

**Counseling and Career Services**

**Student Center, 2nd floor**

[career@oulu.fi](mailto:career@oulu.fi)

[www.oulu.fi/careerservices](http://www.oulu.fi/careerservices)