



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI



CAREER SERVICES



**International Student's Guide
to Working in Finland**



INTRODUCTION

1	WORKING LIFE IN FINLAND	3
2	WHERE TO LOOK FOR A JOB?	5
3	APPLYING FOR JOBS	10
4	INTERNSHIP	18
5	THESIS CO-OPERATION	20
6	PRACTICAL MATTERS	21
7	CURRICULUM FOR CAREER	27
8	A SMALL VOCABULARY	29

INTRODUCTION

International Student's Guide to Working in Finland is written for the international students of the University of Helsinki to ease students' transition into working life in Finland. We hope it will be of help whether you are looking for a part-time job, a summer job or more permanent employment.

Each chapter contains sources where you can find further information about working in Finland. Please note that the web addresses listed in this guide might change over time. Use the University of Helsinki Career Services website to find the latest information.

The University of Helsinki Career Services serves the students, recent graduates and alumni of University of Helsinki. We offer advice and information on job-hunting and working in Finland, career planning, graduate employment, internships in Finland and abroad and master's thesis partnerships.

Career Services, University of Helsinki

Customer service: Fabianinkatu 33,
ground floor , University main building
> see opening hours from our website

P.O. Box 3
FIN - 00014 University of Helsinki
Tel. +358 9 191 22125
Fax +358 9 191 22143

E-mail: urapalvelut@helsinki.fi
Internet www.helsinki.fi/urapalvelut

1 WORKING LIFE IN FINLAND

Persistence, determination, and motivation are the key words when it comes to job searching. The Finnish labour market is highly competitive and looking for a job as a foreigner is challenging. It is not unusual for a new graduate to send dozens of CVs and get only one or two invitations to an interview. Moreover, there are no scouts searching for talented new employees. Employers expect applicants to take initiative and contact them directly. On the other hand, both Finnish and foreign graduates of the University of Helsinki have been successful in finding jobs that enable them to use the skills and the knowledge acquired during their studies.

Skills needed

Perhaps the biggest change in the labour market in the last few decades everywhere in the Western world is the emergence of temporariness. Nowadays less and less graduates land a steady job or hold the same post for long periods of time. Instead, young graduates are likely to find themselves in a fixed term contract, working in a project or in freelance work. This means adjusting to ever-changing circumstances and task-descriptions and requires the will and ability for continuous learning.

Recently employers have started to give more value to social skills when choosing a new employee. Depending on the position, attention is given either to teamwork skills, decision-making ability or the ability to work independently. Job advertisements often call for interpersonal skills and leadership qualities.

University graduates' work tasks generally require good oral and written communication skills. Doing research and writing reports are part of the daily work and often done in a tight schedule. Therefore good writing skills will be a big help. Experience of giving presentations and chairing meetings is also beneficial considering future duties and responsibilities.

Another major area of required skills has to do with intercultural communication. This is where international students and graduates are strong. Many employers have now realised the need not only for language skills but also for experience of working in multicultural environments.

Computer skills are a necessity in the modern working life. Knowing your way around word processing, internet, and the pc environment is no longer an asset but a basic requirement.

Learning Finnish

The single most important skill needed in the Finnish labour market is the ability to speak and write Finnish. Whatever line of work you do, it is essential to show that you are willing to learn Finnish. Of course, there are sectors and companies where English is used as a working language but these are exceptions. In fact, the lack of Finnish language may prove to be an obstacle already at the application stage. Most job announcements are only in Finnish. Knowing at least elementary Finnish opens many doors. It is highly recommended that you actively study and practice Finnish.

Department of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian and Scandinavian Studies, University of Helsinki: > A new web page coming 2010.

The University of Helsinki Language Centre:

<http://www.helsinki.fi/kksc/english/index.html>

More information about studying

Finnish:http://www.studyinfinland.fi/studying_finnish.html

Part time jobs or a career?

Looking for the dream job takes time. You may sometimes be forced to look for less ideal work. Living in the capital area has the advantage of a large variety of part-time jobs. Common lines of work among students are: substitute teaching, assisting in research, working in a grocery store or in a shop, cleaning, catering, maintenance, personal assistant, library assistant, telemarketing, working in a call centre and so forth.

Although work experience that is related to your studies is the most important, all work experience gained in Finland will help you later on when you are applying for the job you really want.

2 WHERE TO LOOK FOR A JOB?

Self Assessment

Before you start sending out applications it is a good idea to sit down and take a few moments to think about your work history, personality and career goals.

- What am I good at?
- What kind of work am I interested in?
- What kind of work experience do I have? What kind of work did I enjoy the most?
- What skills have I gained in my hobbies or in volunteer work?
- Do I prefer to work in the private or the public sector?
- What are my career goals? What skills and experience do I need to achieve them?

Remember that getting the job you want depends not only on your qualifications and skills but also on your personal qualities and determination.

The Curriculum for Career -course is designed to help students to develop their career management and job application skills (for more information, see chapter 7).

Internet

Most private companies and institutions in the public sector maintain a web page. Many employers accept online or email applications. There are several job databases online.

mol.fi – the most comprehensive job database in Finland by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy: <http://www.mol.fi/mol/en/index.jsp>

RekryForum – a job database maintained by the Career Services. It is used only by the students and graduates of the University of Helsinki. Online registration required:
<http://erins.it.helsinki.fi/rekry/rekryforum/>

Aarresaari JobBoard – a job database maintained by the co-operation network of all the Finnish University Career Services:
<http://www.aarresaari.net/jobboard.htm>

Unfortunately, these databases operate mainly in Finnish (and Swedish). Most job advertisements are also only in Finnish and/or Swedish. Finding job advertisements in your field is not very difficult if you use a dictionary to navigate the job listings. If a job advertisement is only in Finnish, it is very likely that you have to know the language well in order to be recruited.

When wondering where to find contact information for employers in your line of work, search the internet. The yellow pages are available online if you want to search for companies in a specific branch. There are also several business directories available online:

Finnfacts – information on the Finnish economy and companies listed by sector: www.finnfacts.com

Helecon information center – Finnish companies in alphabetical order: <http://helecon.hkkk.fi/yrittyspalvelin/?lang=eng>

Newspapers

Helsingin Sanomat is the biggest daily newspaper in Finland and especially the Sunday edition has a large selection of vacancies. Many of the big, international companies advertise their open vacancies in Helsingin Sanomat and it might be worthwhile to have a look at the paper regularly to see which companies are actively recruiting.

Free local papers are distributed in buses, trams, the metro and other places around the capital area. These papers publish job listings regularly.

If you want to get news from Finland in English, you can read the Yle News, the Helsinki Times, the SixDegrees Magazine and the international edition of Helsingin Sanomat.

Direct Contacts

Many employees prefer not to advertise for job openings. Instead they expect possible candidates to contact them directly either by phone, post or email.

The most common way to contact employers is cold calling or sending a marketing letter in which you introduce yourself and enquire whether the company would have use for a talented person such as you. This letter is then followed by a phone call.

It is wise to do some research before contacting a potential employer. Who are in charge of recruiting? What kind of positions does the organization have? What kind of people do they usually recruit?

Recruitment Agencies

Private recruitment agencies offer students part-time jobs or summer jobs typically in clerical and maintenance work or in catering services.

Networking, Friends, Contacts

Networking is something you should remember already at the beginning of your studies. You are likely to need these contacts later on when you transfer into the working life. Remember, that it is easier to get to know the Finnish society and the Finnish labour market, if you have Finnish contacts and friends.

The University of Helsinki has a vibrant student life. Subject Societies and Faculty Societies, Nations, The Student Union of the University of Helsinki (HYY) and different interest groups offer a chance to meet new people, make friends and build networks:

The Student Union of the University of Helsinki (HYY):

<http://www.hyy.helsinki.fi/english/3/>

Tsemppi – an organization for International Degree Students at the University of Helsinki: <http://www.tsemppi.com>

Employment and Economic Development Office

Employment and Economic Development Offices offer help in matters such as job-seeking and employment, career planning, self-employment, unemployment benefits and work permits. All Employment and Economic Development Office services are free of charge. You can visit the office to review material available or book a time for an interview. A variety of information is available online, together with a job database.

The Employment and Economic Development Office is also the place to turn to if you ever run into a conflict with your employer, for example, if your salary is delayed.

There are several offices in the capital area. The Kluuvi Employment and Economic Development Office has specialized in providing services for university graduates and students that graduate soon (Address: Mikonkatu

7 A). The Employment and Economic Development Office in Hakaniemi (Address: Haapaniemenkatu 4 A) has specialized in providing services for immigrants. Employment Economic Development Offices are open Monday to Friday 9 am – 3.45 pm.

For more information see: <http://www.mol.fi/mol/en/index.jsp>

Eures

Eures, European Employment Services, is a network that works for the free movement of workers within the European Economic Area (EEA). There are EURES-advisers in all EEA countries that assist all EEA citizens in looking for a job in the EEA area. They can help you before you enter Finland and again when you have arrived.

In Helsinki, the EURES advisor is situated in the Kluuvi Employment and Economic Development Office (Address: Mikonkatu 7 A). Eures offices maintain a European wide job database.

For more information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/eures/>

Teaching

Teaching your native language to Finns might seem as a good way to find employment. Foreign language day care centres, private language schools, and many polytechnics actually do prefer a native speaker for teacher. Elementary and secondary schools on the other hand require the ability to speak Finnish. Finns are big on qualifications; having a degree or any kind of a teaching certificate is often required when applying for a job as a teacher.

Self-employment

Employment and Economic Development Offices offer advice and information about freelance work and setting up your own business. Other places to turn to with questions concerning self-employment are the Employment and Economic Development Centre (T & E Keskus), the Women's Enterprise Agency (Naisyrittäjyyskeskus), the New Enterprise Agency (Helsingin Uusyrittäjäpalvelu) and EnterpriseFinland (Yrityssuomi).

Summer jobs

Most students get their first work experience in summer jobs. Finnish people take long summer holidays, typically a month, and these vacancies are usually filled with students or young professionals. Applications for summer jobs should be sent as early as possible; late December and early January are a good time to start looking.

3 APPLYING FOR JOBS

Analysing job ads

Take time to analyse the job announcement thoroughly. You will be surprised at how much information you gain from this. What are the formal requirements? Which of these requirements do you fulfill? What is considered an asset when applying for this job? Try to picture an image of the person the employer is looking for and then list which of those qualities you possess. Writing down key words while analysing the ad will help you answer the job ad.

Pay attention to the style of language used in the ad. You should use the same level of formality when writing your covering letter.

Calling the Employer

There is usually a contact person mentioned in the job ad. It is a good idea to call the employer for extra information. However, sometimes it is clearly stated that the employer prefers not to receive any phone calls. In that case, you should respect the wish.

Remember that the employer will get their first impression of you during the phone call. Remember to introduce yourself at the beginning of the phone conversation. Prepare your questions in advance. The questions you ask should be appropriate and vital to know. Do not ask what the salary is or whether they think you are a suitable candidate for this job opening.

Take notes during the phone call. These notes will help you in writing your covering letter. Write down the name of the person you spoke with. You might want to refer to this phone call in your application.

Advice on writing a covering letter

The key focus of your covering letter should be to persuade the prospective employer to invite you to an interview. Therefore, you must demonstrate that you have the skills and abilities needed in performing the job successfully. A covering letter is always written for a particular job. Do not send copies of the same covering letter to many employers. Take time to write a new letter for each job opportunity. The employer will respect the time and effort you have put into it.

Keep in Mind

- Find information about the company or the organisation you wish to work for. Do they have a mission statement? Who should you address your covering letter to?
- Keep it short and simple. Covering letter should be no longer than one page (4–6 paragraphs).
- Provide examples of your past achievements
- Visual appearance is important. Do not use a small font size. Leave space for margins.
- Remember the employer's point of view: What do you have to offer?
- Do not copy a sample covering letter. Samples are only to give you ideas on what sort of things to include, you do not need to copy them from word to word. Make the covering letter look like your own; reveal your personality.

Sample covering letter

Your name
Street address
Postal address
Phone number
E-mail address

Date

JOB APPLICATION

Title and name of the receiver
Name of company / organisation
Street address
Postal address

JOB TITLE

1st paragraph

How did you find out about the job?
Why are you interested in working for this particular employer?
Why are you interested in this particular job opening?
What is your motivation for applying for this job?

2nd-4th paragraph

What are your qualifications for this job?
Have you done something similar in the past?
Describe your expertise related to this line of work whether it is work experience, theoretical knowledge, volunteer work experience, language or computer skills or something you have learned in your leisure time activities.

Next paragraph

What are you like as a person?
Do not only list adjectives but illustrate them with examples.
What is your work style?
Do you perform best when working independently or in a group?
If your former colleagues have given you positive feedback, use it here.

Last paragraph

What happens next?
Will you contact them or will you wait for an invitation to an interview?
State your salaries wish if asked to do so.
What is the best way to reach you?
When would you be able to start?

Sincerely yours / Kind regards,

Signature
Your name typewritte

Enclosure: CV

Cold Calling

Cold calling means sending an application to an employer that has not advertised a job opening. In fact, most jobs are not openly marketed. A good way to look for a job is to contact interesting employers directly and ask about job possibilities. An uninvited covering letter is for the most part identical to any regular covering letter. The goal is to convince the employer that you are worth meeting. You should identify what sort of employment you are looking for but leave the door open for employer's suggestions.

Advice on writing a CV

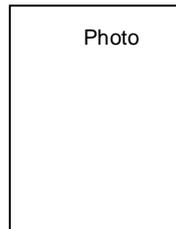
Curriculum Vitae or CV is more than summary of your life. It is your marketing tool. CV has to be easy to read and visually effective. Student or graduate CV's should not be longer than two pages. Write in plain language and use action words (I participated, initiated, obtained, investigated, evaluated etc). The curriculum vitae should be written in a reverse chronological order (i.e. the most recent experience first).

There are different formats to writing a CV, such as the chronological CV and the skills-based CV. The following sample is a combination of these two. It is good for most situations.

Sample CV in English

CURRICULUM VITAE

Date



Name
Address
Telephone number
E-mai
Date and place of birth:
Nationality:

Education

yyyy-

List your current studies and all degrees you have completed after secondary school in reverse chronological order.

Give the year of graduation, name of degree, name of university/ educational institution, and a brief description of your studies (majors, minors, student exchange, honours, topic of you thesis etc.).

yyyy

You do not need give a list of courses you have taken or mention grades. Instead, you can list your additional education / special courses (not included in your degrees) under one title, "Courses", for instance.

Work experience

mm/yyyy-mm/yyyy

List your work experience in reverse chronological order.

State the job title, name of the employer and dates of employment. There is usually no need to mention exact dates, month and year will do. Give a brief description of your tasks and responsibilities. Use action verbs (I participated, initiated, obtained, investigated, evaluated etc.).

mm/yyyy-mm/yyyy

You do not need to give full details of all previous work experience.

Emphasise the experience that is relevant for the job you are now applying for and any work you have done in Finland.

mm/yyyy-mm/yyyy
mm/yyyy-mm/yyyy

Sometimes it is best to combine several work experiences under one title if you have lots of similar work experiences.

Language skills

List languages and estimate the level of command (native language/elementary/intermediate/fluent).

Computer skills

Describe your skills. You can list the most important programs you have used.

Activities / Interests / Volunteer work

What are your hobbies?

Have you been active in any organizations?

Have you done volunteer work?

References

Ask if some (1–4) of your former supervisors/colleagues/professors are willing to speak on your behalf. Put their details down as referees (name, title, phone number, e-mail). Always ask the person before naming them your referee. "References" is the last title of CV.

You might also want to mention:

- Special skills, specialization
- Career goals / career objectives
- Publications and awards
- living or working abroad
- Military or civil service

How to prepare for an Interview

- Make sure you have enough information about the employer. Visit the employer's net site once again and search for all the information you can get. You might even find some information on the exact job you are applying for.
- Remind yourself why you are applying for this job. Go over your strengths and qualifications one more time.
- Come up with questions you can ask.
- Be on time for your interview. Find out well in advance where the interview is held, with whom and at what time.
- Bring work and educational/ degree certificates and a CV with you.
- Dress neatly and appropriately. Usually smart casual is enough. In the business world men tend to choose a dark suit.
- Turn off your cell phone.

At the Interview

- Stay calm and speak clearly. Be aware of your body language.
- Look interested. Ask questions and listen to the answers carefully.
- Explain your achievements. Be confident.
- Remember that overconfidence might easily be seen as arrogance in Finland. Stay focused and stick to the facts.
- Ask for clarification if you did not understand the question you were asked.
- Do not interrupt the interviewer.
- Do not criticise any former employers.
- Remember eye contact.
- Be honest, but remember that you don't voluntarily need to tell anything particularly negative about yourself.

A typical Interview

- Usually interviews begin with introductions and handshakes with everyone present.
- Interviewers use different tactics. Most interviews are held in a relaxed atmosphere but do not be surprised by long silences, someone taking notes or having an aggressive tone of voice.

- Motivation questions: Why do you want to work for this company? What do you know about this company? Do you know any of our products?
- Previous experience and performance: Have you done something similar in the past?
- Questions regarding your personality: What are your strengths and weaknesses? How would your former employer describe you as an employee? How do you react to stress? How do you cope with difficult situations? Give examples.
- Your problem-solving ability might be tested by asking you to solve different case-scenarios (What would you do if...?)
- At the end of the interview you will usually have an opportunity to ask questions that were not answered during the interview.
- If the interview has gone well, you might be asked when you could start. The salary might also be discussed if the employer brings it up.
- Sometimes there are two rounds of interviews. The second interview is usually longer and might include an aptitude test.

Aptitude Tests

Sometimes employers want to give the candidates an aptitude test or a psychological test. If you get an invitation to a test, take it as a good sign: you were one of the best candidates. These tests are constantly developing and there is not much you can do to prepare for the test. Best advice is to get a good night's sleep before the test and answer all questions honestly. Tests are usually administered after the first round of interviews, and may include the following:

- IQ tests
- Personality evaluations
- Simulations
- Learning ability
- Post-test discussion sessions

Further information about career planning and job hunting:

Aarresaari – Academic Career Services:
www.aarresaari.net/english/info.htm

4 INTERNSHIP

Learning by doing and networking

An internship is a solution for a common paradox: you can't get a job without experience and you can't get experience without a job. Doing an internship motivates you to finish your studies and helps you to clarify your career goals; it gives you useful contacts and a taste for what is coming after graduation.

Negotiate with your study program coordinator or study advisor about the study points before the internship.

University sponsored internships

Each department has limited financial resources to support internships. This financial support is primarily meant for degree students who are at the finishing stage of their studies, and wish to gain study-related work experience. Most of the internship opportunities are in the public sector, typically in administrative tasks, either in local and regional authorities or in ministries.

The application period for the internships is typically in late fall or in the beginning of the spring semester in January. Application dates vary according to the department. Each department/faculty has a contact person for internships. If you are interested in internship possibilities, you should consult your department's contact person in the beginning of fall semester.

For more information, see the Career Services website:

www.helsinki.fi/urapalvelut

Find your own internship place

Since there is not enough financial support for all students to have a University sponsored internship, students are encouraged to look for an internship independently. This is done in a similar way as looking for any job.

An internship is also an opportunity to earn some income to support your education in a meaningful way. Interns do not usually get paid as much as regular employees but receive extra guidance and mentoring. Remember to negotiate with your department if you wish to gain study points from an internship you have found independently.

Keep in mind that many companies offer young graduates a chance to participate in a trainee program. For more information about this, take a look at web pages of big international companies.

Useful links for finding an internship placement:

<http://www.aarresaari.net/english/jobboard.htm>

<http://erinys.it.helsinki.fi/rekry/rekryforum/>,

www.mol.fi

<http://www.jobsafari.fi>

<http://www.monster.com>

Internships abroad

For internships abroad, The Centre for International Mobility (Cimo) is the best source of information. The application time for Cimo's own internship programs is in February and October. Cimo also grants scholarships for internships in international organizations; applications for these scholarships are on-going.

The Erasmus practical trainee program will be open also for all nationalities starting July 2010.

More information on Cimo:

<http://www.cimo.fi/Resource.phx/cimo/itselle/opiskelija.htx#ty>

Student organizations like Aiesec, IAESTE or Elsa arrange internships abroad for University of Helsinki students and graduates. Most international organizations such as United Nations, European Union or the Red Cross have their own internship programs.

5 THESIS CO-OPERATION

Master's thesis can be written in a partnership with a private company, organisation or an institution in the public sector. In this case, the company acts as a sponsor giving money in exchange for research in the agreed topic.

You should always consult your professor if you are interested in a thesis partnership. Above all, a master's thesis is academic research. All three parties (you, the university and the employer) must agree on the terms of the co-operation. Thesis partnership is a good way to make new contacts and build networks.

Searching a thesis partnership

- Think through your goals. What are you really interested in? It is important to be motivated to carry out your assignment as agreed.
- Prepare your research plan well. Prepared ideas are easier to promote.
- Examine possible organisations for thesis co-operation. Have you obtained interesting contacts at previous jobs or internships? Ask tips from friends and relatives as well.
- Prepare yourself as if you were going to a job interview. You need to be ready to tell convincingly about your interests and promote the subject of your thesis.

6 PRACTICAL MATTERS

Residence Permit

A foreign student must acquire a residence permit if his or her studies in Finland last for more than three months. The residence permit must be applied in advance through a Finnish diplomatic mission in the home country of the applicant. If the studies last for less than three months, no residence permit is needed. In exceptional cases, a residence permit for studies can be granted in Finland. In these cases, the application is submitted to the police.

EU citizens and citizens of Liechtenstein and Switzerland must register their right to reside in Finland at a police department, if their stay lasts for longer than three months.

Citizens of the Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland) are registered at a Register Office if they stay in Finland longer than six months.

Further information:

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland: www.formin.finland.fi

Finnish Immigration Service: www.migri.fi

The Finnish Police: www.poliisi.fi

The Local Register Offices: www.maistraatti.fi/en

Work permit

As a general rule, you do not need a work permit if you are a citizen of an EU/EEA country, Switzerland or any of the Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland) or if you have a permanent residence permit.

Persons who have a residence permit granted on the basis of studying may engage in gainful employment without restrictions when the work consists of practical training or diploma work as part of a degree. During study terms you are allowed to do an average of 25 hours of part-time work weekly. The number of working hours is not restricted weekly but the restriction concerns each term during which work can be periodized according to the situation.

During holidays, i.e. during summer and Christmas holidays, you can work full-time without hourly restrictions (normally holiday periods are December 15 – January 15 and May 1 – September 30).

For further information contact the local police department or the Employment and Economic Development Office to find out whether you need a work permit or not.

The Finnish Police: www.poliisi.fi

Employment and Economic Development Office:
www.mol.fi/mol/en/index.jsp

Taxation

Everyone who works in Finland pays taxes to the State and to the local authority where they live. The tax percentage depends on the length of your stay – whether it lasts six months or longer. For the purpose of taxation you need a tax card which you must give to your employer.

If you stay in Finland for six months or less, Finnish employers collect a final 35-per cent tax at source. The tax rate is the same for all amounts of income. In this case, you do not have to file an income tax return in Finland. Also, if the tax source was collected correctly, there will be no possibility for a tax refund.

If you stay over six months in Finland, your earned income is taxed at a progressive rate. The tax rate varies according to your income. The more you earn the higher the tax rate is. You must also file an income tax return to give the local tax office enough information to compute your final tax. In this case, tax refunds and additional taxes afterwards are also possible. The deadline for tax returns in Finland is the following April after the calendar year concerned.

A special exemption based on studies or a traineeship might be possible if your home country has a tax treaty with Finland.

Finnish employers also withhold social security payments from your gross pay in addition to the tax. The maximum social security payment is eight per cent of your pay.

For the taxation and social security payments, you also need a Finnish personal identity code. The local tax office in Finland will give you advice with this procedure.

In any case, you should visit the local tax office to get an appropriate tax card and information about possible exemptions and to get guidance about working in Finland.

Further information about taxation and social security:

The Finnish Tax Administration: www.vero.fi

The Finnish Population Register Center: www.vaestorekisterikeskus.fi

The Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela):
www.kela.fi/in/internet/english.nsf

The Service Point of Kela and The Finnish Tax Administration:
www.infopankki.fi/into

Employment contract

Employment contract is made before the employment begins. It is always possible to employ persons for an indefinite period. These contracts remain valid for the time being. If the employer aims to employ a person for a fixed term, the fixed term shall be agreed on and there have to be justified grounds for it. The grounds must be indicated in the employment contract. The employee is entitled to a written contract.

The contract should contain at least the following: the name of the employer /enterprise, the name of the employee, the nature of the work, the starting date of the employment, the duration of the employment, the notice period, the trial period, salary, and working hours. It is recommended that an oral agreement be made in the presence of two witnesses.

At the beginning of the employment the employer and employee can also agree on a trial period. Agreeing on a trial period is very common. During a trial period, either party may cancel the employment contract, in which case there will be no period of notice.

Any agreement, which diminishes the rights and interests secured for employees in the labour legislation and/or the collective agreement, is void. Keep in mind that the employment contract is legally binding not only for the employer but also the employee.

Further information:

The Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions: www.sak.fi/english

Occupational Safety and Health Admin:

www.tyosuojelu.fi/fi/workingfinland/

Employment and Economic Development Office: www.mol.fi/finnwork

Termination of employment

Employment contract made for an indefinite time is usually terminated by one of the parties giving notice. The employer cannot terminate an indefinitely valid employment contract without proper and valid reason. The length of the notice period is agreed upon by the parties, or defined by the collective agreement or by law. Usually it varies from 2 weeks to 6 months and depends on how long your employment relationship has lasted.

Fixed-term employment contracts expire, without giving notice and without any period of notice, at the end of the fixed term, or when the agreed work is completed.

Make sure that before you finish your work, you receive a certificate of employment from your employer. This certificate should state your major tasks and responsibilities and the period of employment. You may also ask to receive an evaluation of your work.

Further information:

Occupational Safety and Health Administration:

www.tyosuojelu.fi/fi/contract

A model form for an employment contract:

www.tyosuojelu.fi/upload/tslomen.pdf

Salaries

There is no universal statutory minimum wage in Finland. Instead, minimum wages and salaries are agreed upon in universally binding collective labour agreements. These legally binding minimum pay rates must be applied equally to Finnish and foreign workers. In practice, all of the employers must follow a collective agreement applicable in the sector.

This includes also employers that are not members of the labour negotiation organizations.

In problem situations the closest people to contact are the shop stewards and the chief shop steward at your workplace. They are trade union representatives at your workplace who make sure that the rules of the working life in general and the rules of collective agreements are adhered to. Employment and Economic Development Offices will also help you in conflict situations with your employer.

Further information:

Employment and Economic Development Office:

www.mol.fi/mol/en/index.jsp

Occupational Safety and Health Administration:

www.tyosuojelu.fi/fi/guidance

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health: www.stm.fi/en/

The Ministry of Employment and Economy: www.tem.fi/en

The Finnish labour market system and the role of the trade unions

Employees' trade unions and employers' federations have a major role in the Finnish labour market system. The tradition of bargaining and co-operation is strong.

Over 80% of employees in Finland belong to a trade union. The unions are organized into three central confederations: the Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland (AKAVA), the Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) and the Finnish Confederation of Professionals (STTK).

The employers are also organized in the following organizations: Confederation of Finnish Industries EK, the Commission for Local Authority Employers (KT), the State Employer's Office (VTML), the Employer Organization for Rural Areas (MTL), and the Church of Finland Negotiating Commission (KiSV).

The main function of trade unions and employers' federations is to negotiate collective agreements for their members – that along with Finland's labour laws – govern the rights and duties of employees. The agreements are universally binding. They also apply to employers and employees that are not members of the negotiating organizations.

It is very easy to join the trade union. You complete an application form of the trade union responsible for negotiating the collective agreement in your branch. You can contact the trade union directly or the shop steward at your workplace to get an application. The central organizations will also help you to select a suitable trade union.

Further information:

The Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff:

<http://www.akava.fi/en/>

The Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions: www.sak.fi/english
and www.tradeunion.fi

The Finnish Confederation of Professionals: www.sttk.fi/en-GB/

The Ministry of Employment and Economy: www.tem.fi/en

Employment and Economic Development Office:

www.mol.fi/mol/en/index.jsp

The Info Bank Service: <http://www.infopankki.fi/en-GB/home/>

The Confederation of Finnish Industries EK:

<http://www.ek.fi/www/en/index.php>

7 CURRICULUM FOR CAREER

Helsinki University Career Services offer a specialized Curriculum for Career course for international degree students. The training is in English.

The objectives for the course are:

- Students learn to assess their knowledge and skills
- Students know how to match their personal skills with job requirements
- Students learn to understand how to plan their studies, and how motivation, self-confidence and understanding the requirements of the labour market affect their career opportunities
- Students have a better understanding of the job application process

The Curriculum for Career course consists of five training sessions, and project work (together 27h). You can attend an individual training session (3h lecture + 3 hours home work) or the whole Curriculum for Career course. You can negotiate with your faculty/department about the study points.

Training sessions are open for all the University of Helsinki degree students and staff. Each training session consist of project work, and homework. Curriculum Vitae and journal on personal career path are required for students who wish to complete the whole Curriculum for Career course.

The Curriculum for Career course consists of five sessions:

Part 1: Self assessment skills

- Career orientation
- Self- assessment (skills, values, areas of interest)
- Academic knowledge and expertise
- Marketing your own skills

Part 2: Career opportunities

- Career opportunities: matching own skills with the labour market requirements
- Trends and myths of career planning
- Building networks

Part 3: From decision making to action planning

- Motivational aspect of career planning
- Self-directed learning
- Study plan
- Decision making in action
-

Part 4A: Job hunting skills/Application Documents

- Self-assessment and the CV
- Analysing job adds
- CV and application documents feedback
- Communication with the employees
- Quality job hunting strategies

Part 4B: Job hunting skills/ Job Interview

- Preparing for an interview
- Interview process
- Matching personal skills with job requirements

Please visit the Career Services website for additional information and up-to-date course schedules:

<http://www.helsinki.fi/urapalvelut/english/>

8 A SMALL VOCABULARY

Aptitude test

Annual holiday

Closing date for applications

Computer skills

Contact person

Covering letter

Curriculum Vitae

Education

Employee

Employer

Employment contract

Employment and Economic

Development Office

Human Resources

Department

Hobbies

Internship

Job

Job advertisement

Jobseeker

Language skills

Referee

Salary

Salary wish

Tax Office

Trainee position

Trainee program

Trial period

Vacancies

Volunteer work

Work

Work experience

Working hours

Work permit

Soveltuvuuestesti

Vuosiloma

Viimeinen hakupäivä

Tietotekniikkataidot

Yhteyshenkilö

Työhakemus

Ansioluettelo

Koulutus

Työntekijä

Työnantaja

Työsopimus

Työ- ja elinkeinotoimisto

(TE-toimisto)

Henkilöstöosasto

Harrastukset

Työharjoittelu

Työpaikka

Työpaikkailmoitus

Työnhakija

Kielitaito

Suosittelija

Palkka

Palkkatoivomus

Verotoimisto

Harjoittelupaikka

Trainee program

Koeaika

Avoimet työpaikat

Vapaaehtoistyö

Työ

Työkokemus

Työaika

Työlupa



www.helsinki.fi/urapalvelut