

# Applying for a Job in Lapland

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT'S GUIDE

Edited by  
Tanja Javarus

*“...a Finnish word is a word on which I could count.”*  
*Student Florian Schlosser*  
*Germany*

The guide is a publication of the International Students Services Development Project. The partly ESF-funded project is coordinated by the Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences and the partners are the University of Lapland and the Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences. The project is carried out between 1 Dec. 2006 and 31 Dec. 2007.

Editor                      Tanja Javarus  
Front page design      Niina Huuskonen

Printing                    Pohjolan Painotuote Ltd 2007

## CONTENTS

1. Welcome to Lapland! – Future career in Lapland.....	5
2. How to get a job in Lapland? .....	5
3. Where to search for a job if one doesn't speak Finnish?.....	6
4. Possible job opportunities in Lapland – useful links .....	7
5. Finnish working culture .....	12
6. What qualities do employers appreciate? .....	14
7. Where to start?.....	15
8. CV and application .....	16
10. Job interview .....	20
11. Work permit, Tax deduction card, ID-number.....	20
12. Story of Florian .....	22
13. Summary .....	24
References.....	25



## **1. Welcome to Lapland! – Future career in Lapland**

You are warmly welcome to find a career in Lapland. The growing number of international students and graduates will be seeking work from the Finnish labour market in the future. This guide has been designed to give international students some guidelines on how to start job-hunting in Lapland. The guide will also give you a general idea of career planning and job seeking in Lapland, and we hope it supports your own personal career targets and clarifies your ideas about the kind of career that suits you. We also wish to give you useful information about Finnish working culture and a brief overview of the rules and regulations that govern Finnish working life. Finally, we also provide to you a job application model, a CV model, links to companies in Lapland, and tips about these companies.

This guide is primarily meant for **international students** at the Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences, the Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences, and the University of Lapland. All these three Universities carried out a joint project called the International Students Services Development Project. One of the project's main purposes was to support international students and local employers find new possibilities to co-operate. Please, see the story of Florian, page 22.

## **2. How to get a job in Lapland?**

### **Own activity takes you further**

The concept “hidden labour market” refers to open vacancies of which employers do not inform publicly. These jobs can only be found via personal networks or open applications. It is estimated that about 70 % of all vacancies exist in the hidden labour market. (Aarresaari 2007) From the foreign students' point of view the problem with information delivery is that job ads are mostly written in Finnish (Luiro 2006). Therefore, students' own activity plays an important role in finding a job in Lapland. In practice this means contacting employers directly, sending out open applications, and improving the Finnish language skills (Career Services 2007).

When you are applying for a job in a company of your interest, even if they have not informed about vacancies, you should write an open application (sometimes also called a speculative application). This is a good way to approach employers: It shows that you are active and motivated. Even if there are no vacancies at the moment, most companies keep the open applications for later use. (Luiro 2006.)

It's also a good idea to contact employers directly by phone or to visit a company. However, prepare for the visit or phone call carefully in advance. Make sure that you have a clear view of your core competencies so that you are able to show how you can contribute to that particular job. When making a call, keep your CV in front of you. The situation can evolve into a preliminary job interview, so the type of first impression you give is an issue of importance (mentioned before.)

### **Local Employment Offices and Career Services in Lapland**

**The Local Employment Offices in Lapland** are the state's public authorities that help in such matters as job seeking and employment. Some local employment offices

have officials specialized in serving foreigners. All local employment office services are free of charge (Työministeriö 2004). There are numerous online sources where you can find information on jobs, job seeking skills, and career orientation. Jobseekers may also place their own Internet advertisement on the jobseekers' website maintained by the National Labour Administration [www.mol.fi](http://www.mol.fi). The Local Employment Offices provides self-service terminals where jobseekers may review registered job vacancies (Työministeriö 2007, 2004).

In Finland most of the universities have career guidance services. The Career Services give information about available vacancies through bulletins and e-mails. It also offers career counseling and tips to make an effective CV and application.

### **The Career Services at the University of Lapland**

The Career Services at the University of Lapland helps students with all stages of the job seeking process. The main aim of the services is to facilitate graduates' employment by providing information on open vacancies, offering career counseling and courses on effective job seeking. The information on vacancies is delivered via an e-mail list, vacancy database on the web, and bulletin boards at the university campus. (Career Services 2007.) You can find more information at [www.ulapland.fi/rekry](http://www.ulapland.fi/rekry).

**Students of University of Lapland** can book an appointment with the careers adviser by e-mail: [rekry@ulapland.fi](mailto:rekry@ulapland.fi).

The University of Lapland is a member of the Aarresaari network [www.aarresaari.net](http://www.aarresaari.net), which is a network of Academic Career Services representing 19 Finnish Universities. Information about all the academic vacancies in Finland is delivered to students through the network. (Aarresaari 2007.)

### **Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences**

**Students of the Rovaniemi University Applied Sciences and Kemi-Tornio University Applied Sciences** have the possibility to use their own job-seeking network [www.jobstep.net](http://www.jobstep.net). This network offers services for students, trainees, graduates and employers. At the same time the network builds bridges between students and employers (Jobstep 2007). There is useful information on the web site, e.g. help for job-hunting, CV samples, and links to several Finnish employers' web sites. Also, check the document "About job seeking" on the Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences Career and Recruitment Services web site [www.ramk.fi](http://www.ramk.fi) (In English -> Services -> Career and Recruitment). The students at the Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences have their own website <http://edu.tokem.fi> (English version -> Training placements) which includes a list of training placements.

## **3. Where to search for a job if one doesn't speak Finnish?**

Foreign employees are highly appreciated in many fields. The proportion of people employed in the service sector in Lapland is as high as 71 %, the main source of livelihood being the tourism business (EURES 2007). The tourism business can offer some part-time or vacation job opportunities for students from different cultures.

Many students work as guides in tourism services or as hosts/hostesses in hotels during the Christmas season. There are also some job opportunities in education, e.g. as a language teacher. (Luiro 2006.)

Many companies are looking for new prospects in the international market. Internationalisation opens new possibilities for cosmopolitans who wish to live and work in many different countries during their working life. Multinational companies like Nokia usually require relatively young staff with high level of competence for international tasks. Internationally related jobs can also be found from smaller companies as well, especially if they are exporting. Good knowledge of languages and cultures are usually key requirements for these jobs. (mb).

### **Start learning Finnish**

Finland is officially a bilingual country (Finnish and Swedish), but in practice most Finns speak also a third language, which is usually English. So, in many cases you manage quite well if your English skills are good. It is still an essential idea to learn some basic vocabulary in Finnish and be bold enough to speak it too! This improves your employability considerably and brings you more useful contacts. After all, Finnish is a requirement in most vacancies (especially in Lapland), even though it's not always written in the job advertisement. (Luiro 2006.)

Start learning Finnish immediately. It helps your job seeking and shows to the employer that you are truly motivated! For some jobs, even a poor grasp of the language is enough. Taking part in Finnish language programmes or courses gives you the opportunity to study and use Finnish in real-life situations while becoming familiar with Finnish working culture. In cooperation with Finnish universities, e.g. CIMO organizes intensive courses on the Finnish language and culture. Information on the courses is also available at <http://finland.cimo.fi> -> Studying Finnish -> Summer Courses (CIMO 2007).

### **Shortcut to finding a job:**

- Your own activity matters the most
- Recognize your competence, what are you interested in?
- Search suitable employers & contact persons, use web pages
- Prepare an open application and a CV, try to match your skills with the job/company, send your application
- Study the Finnish language as much as possible
- Be active and keep your eyes open

## **4. Possible job opportunities in Lapland – useful links**

### **Lapland in general**

Lapland is Finland's northernmost region and covers almost a third of the area of the entire country. The region consists of 21 municipalities, and the distances within the region are very great. Lapland shares a common border with three different countries: Sweden, Norway and Russia. The population of Lapland is just under 185,000, so it is very sparsely populated. The largest population centres are the city of Rovaniemi and the Kemi-Tornio area. (Eures 2007.)

Rovaniemi is Lapland's administrative capital with 58,099 inhabitants (2006). The other cities in Lapland are Kemi (22,907 inhabitants), Tornio (22,204 inhabitants) and Kemijärvi (9,529 inhabitants). (www.laplandfinland.com 2007.)

As the capital of the province, Rovaniemi has always been a gateway to Lapland. It is a fast-developing center of business, administration, and education. (Rovaniemi 2005.)

Unique to the Kemi-Tornio region is the open border with Sweden and the closeness of the centres of Oulu in Northern Finland and Luleå in Sweden. There are big concentrations of forest, metal, and ICT industries in the area. Due to top industry the area produces some 8 % of Finland's export value. The biggest industrial investment in recent years was made in Tornio. (TOKEM 2007.)

Services are the main source of livelihood in the regions of Rovaniemi and Kemi-Tornio. In 2004, 80.1 % of the labour force in the town of Rovaniemi worked in the service sector (Kemi-Tornio 60.2 %). (Lapinliitto, Statistic Finland 2007.)

### **From forestry to hi-tech**

Joining the European Union increased Lapland's possibilities and has given it new sources of livelihood. 70 % of Lapland's export goes to the EU area. Particularly Northwest Russia interests the European Union because of its remarkable economic potential and the active growth of its international business. Along with membership in the EU the development programs, planned for Lapland, are aimed to increase export and to diversify the sources of livelihood and effective usage of resources. (laplandfinland.com 2007.)

Lapland's so called heavy industry is mainly based on forest, paper and metal industry. Finland's largest forest industry companies (Metsäbotnia and StoraEnso) operate in Lapland. Finland is the world's second largest exporter of paper products. The most significant part of the purchasing and exporting of raw materials occurs in Lapland. The well known and reputable Avesta Polarit represents Lapland's metal industry. (mb.)

Mechanical wood processing is a well-developed and a growing sector of forest industry. In Lapland, Ikihirsi Ltd. produces and markets log houses and wooden furniture and Lappset Group Ltd. is an internationally known playground equipment producer – both are good examples in this sector. Small- and medium-sized engineering shops play an important role in Lapland's industry. Sava-Group and Kalottikone Ltd. set an example of the high standard and know-how in the asphalt industry with their innovative machine and device designs and production. Strong development specializing in customer-focused design is leading Lapland's engineering industry towards export markets. Norrhydro Ltd. in Rovaniemi specializes in cylinder production and is on its own a good example of this sector. (www.laplandfinland.com 2007.)

The location of Rovaniemi near the Arctic Circle has made it a very lively tourism town. Many small companies make a living on tourism-related services. However, the largest private companies in Rovaniemi operate in the fields of electricity (Kemijoki



Oy), telecommunications (TeliaSonera Oy), and manufacture (BRP Finland Oy). (Luiro 2006.)

The development goals for the near future are defined in the Rovaniemi Regional Development Program. It presents three core fields of competence on which development resources will be targeted in the Rovaniemi district. They are: tourism, cold & winter technology and information & communications technology. These areas of expertise have been selected to create new business activities, new products and services. Design, digital media, entertainment and cultural industry are also new industries of growth. (Rovaniemi 2005.)

Here is a list about companies that *might have* short- or long-term jobs available for foreign students in Lapland. The list is based fully on the assumption that these employers might benefit from highly educated, international employees with various cultural backgrounds and a good knowledge of languages. Even if these companies have not informed about open vacancies lately, the list gives you something to start with when trying to find a job e.g. with an open application. (Luiro 2006.)

Most of the companies also have a web site in English.

## **TOURISM**

### **Travel activities and programme services:**

#### **Kemi-Tornio area:**

Lapponia Safaris,	<a href="http://www.lapponiasafaris.com">www.lapponiasafaris.com</a>
Safaris the Lapland Connection	<a href="http://www.safarisunlimited.fi">www.safarisunlimited.fi</a>
Kemi Snow Castle	<a href="http://www.snowcastle.net">www.snowcastle.net</a>
Arctic Iceroad Production	<a href="http://www.arctic-iceroad.com">www.arctic-iceroad.com</a>
Sampo Tours	<a href="http://www.sampotours.com">www.sampotours.com</a>

#### **Rovaniemi and other Lapland area:**

ProSanta, Rovaniemi	<a href="http://www.prosanta.com">www.prosanta.com</a>
Arctic Safaris	<a href="http://www.arcticsafaris.fi">www.arcticsafaris.fi</a>
Lapland Safaris	<a href="http://www.laplandsafaris.fi">www.laplandsafaris.fi</a>
Eräsetti Safaris	<a href="http://www.erasetti.fi">www.erasetti.fi</a>
Ylläs Safaris	<a href="http://www.yllassafarit.net">www.yllassafarit.net</a>
Safartica	<a href="http://www.safartica.com">www.safartica.com</a>
Wild North	<a href="http://www.villipohjola.fi">www.villipohjola.fi</a>

#### **Hotels, Lapland area:**

Merihovi	<a href="http://www.merihovi.fi">www.merihovi.fi</a>
Cumulus	<a href="http://www.cumulus.fi">www.cumulus.fi</a>
Quality Hotel Santa Claus	<a href="http://www.hotelsantaclaus.fi">www.hotelsantaclaus.fi</a>
Sokos Hotel Vaakuna	<a href="http://www.sokoshotels.fi">www.sokoshotels.fi</a>
Hotel Pohjanhovi	<a href="http://www.rantasipi.fi">www.rantasipi.fi</a>
Levi Center Hullu Poro	<a href="http://www.hulluporo.fi">www.hulluporo.fi</a>

Lapland Hotels [www.laplandhotels.com](http://www.laplandhotels.com)

**Sights, Rovaniemi area:**

Arktikum Service Co [www.arktikum.fi](http://www.arktikum.fi)  
Santa Claus Office [www.santaclauslive.com](http://www.santaclauslive.com)  
Santa Claus Village [www.santaclausvillage.info](http://www.santaclausvillage.info)  
SantaPark [www.santapark.com](http://www.santapark.com)  
Santa's Main Post Office [www.posti.fi/postimerkkikeskus/jpp/index.html](http://www.posti.fi/postimerkkikeskus/jpp/index.html)

**EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences [www.ramk.fi](http://www.ramk.fi)  
Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences [www.token.fi](http://www.token.fi)  
University of Lapland [www.ulapland.fi](http://www.ulapland.fi)  
Rovala Folk High School [www.rovala.fi](http://www.rovala.fi)

**ICT AND MEDIA**

Lapland Centre of Expertise for the Experience Industry [www.elamystuotanto.org](http://www.elamystuotanto.org)  
Aurora Borealis Technology Centre <http://www.auroraborealisrovanemi.com>  
Wipro Technologies [www.saraware.com](http://www.saraware.com), [www.wipro.com](http://www.wipro.com)  
Joulupukki TV Ltd. [www.joulupukkitv.com](http://www.joulupukkitv.com)

**EXPORTING COMPANIES & OTHER PRIVATE SECTOR CONTACTS**

**Kemi-Tornio area:**

AvestaPolarit Stainless [www.avestapolarit.fi](http://www.avestapolarit.fi)  
Botnia Mill Service [www.botnia.com](http://www.botnia.com)  
StoraEnso [www.storaenso.com](http://www.storaenso.com)  
Arctichrome [www.arctichrome.com](http://www.arctichrome.com)

Outokumpu [www.outokumpu.com](http://www.outokumpu.com)  
Corrotech [www.corrotech.fi](http://www.corrotech.fi)  
Havator [www.havator.fi](http://www.havator.fi)  
Kavamet Konepaja [www.kavamet.fi](http://www.kavamet.fi)

Lappli-Talot [www.lappli.fi](http://www.lappli.fi)  
Hartwall Lapin Kultta [www.hartwall.fi](http://www.hartwall.fi)  
Tornion Asennus [www.tornionasennus.fi](http://www.tornionasennus.fi)  
Tornion Metallisorvaamo [www.tormets.fi](http://www.tormets.fi)

**Rovaniemi area:**

Bombardier Finland [www.brp.com](http://www.brp.com)  
Norrhydro [www.norrhydro.com](http://www.norrhydro.com)  
Lappset Group [www.lappset.com](http://www.lappset.com)  
Marttiini [www.marttiini.fi](http://www.marttiini.fi)  
ISS Palvelut [www.iss.fi](http://www.iss.fi)  
Lapland Studio [www.laplandstudio.com](http://www.laplandstudio.com)

## **PUBLIC SECTOR & OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS**

State Provincial Office of Lapland	<a href="http://www.laaninhallitus.fi/lappi">www.laaninhallitus.fi/lappi</a>
Regional Council of Lapland	<a href="http://www.lapinliitto.fi">www.lapinliitto.fi</a>
City of Rovaniemi	<a href="http://www.rovaniemi.fi">www.rovaniemi.fi</a>
City of Tornio	<a href="http://www.tornio.fi">www.tornio.fi</a>
City of Kemi	<a href="http://www.kemi.fi">www.kemi.fi</a>
Digipolis – Kemi Technology Park	<a href="http://www.digipolis.fi/web/viewer.php?id=21">www.digipolis.fi/web/viewer.php?id=21</a>

## **SITES FOR JOB-HUNTING IN FINLAND AND IN EUROPE**

<a href="http://www.mol.fi">www.mol.fi</a>	Ministry of Labour Employment Services (in English) Local Employment Offices Open Vacancies (in Finnish)
<a href="http://www.aarresaari.net">www.aarresaari.net</a>	The network of Academic Career Services representing 19 Finnish universities
<a href="http://www.jobstep.net">www.jobstep.net</a>	Employment and information service of the Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences
<a href="http://www.uranus.fi">www.uranus.fi</a>	From the English site you can search jobs both in Finland and in Europe
<a href="http://www.monster.fi">www.monster.fi</a>	Link to “international Monster”, where you can find vacancies in different countries

## **STAFF LEASING**

<a href="http://www.varamiespalvelu.fi">www.varamiespalvelu.fi</a>	Temporary staffing and Permanent placement
<a href="http://www.adecco.fi">www.adecco.fi</a>	Temporary staffing and Permanent placement
<a href="http://www.opteam.fi">www.opteam.fi</a>	Personnel services franchise

## **FINNISH OFFICIALS**

Ministry of Labour	<a href="http://www.mol.fi">http://www.mol.fi</a>
Directorate of immigration	<a href="http://www.uvi.fi">www.uvi.fi</a>
EURES – The European Job Mobility Portal	<a href="http://europa.eu.int/eures">http://europa.eu.int/eures</a>
Centre for International Mobility	<a href="http://www.cimo.fi">www.cimo.fi</a>

## **TIPS FOR CV & OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION**

<a href="http://www.aarresaari.net">www.aarresaari.net</a>	Aarresaari network: From the English site you will find e.g. tips for job seekers
--	---

<a href="http://www.jobstep.net">www.jobstep.net</a>	Jobstep network: From the English site you will find e.g. information about job applications, interviews
<a href="http://www.careerstorm.com">www.careerstorm.com</a>	Career planning
<a href="http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/">http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/</a>	European CV model
<a href="http://www.akava.fi">www.akava.fi</a>	Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland
<a href="http://www.sak.fi">www.sak.fi</a>	Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions
<a href="http://www.sttk.fi">www.sttk.fi</a>	Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees
<a href="http://www.suomi.fi">www.suomi.fi</a>	Information (in English) and public services necessary in everyday life in Finland.
<a href="http://www.te-keskus.fi">www.te-keskus.fi</a>	The Employment and Economic Development Centre, Tips for starting an own business.

## 5. Finnish working culture

There are some special features that are characteristic to Finnish working life. Finnish work culture is based on the Lutheran ideology that emphasizes hard work and diligence. Even though the working hours are pretty much the same as in the rest of Europe on the average (Työvoimahallinto 2005), work productivity in Finland is high.

According to the CIMO's (Centre for International Mobility) research on foreign trainees in Finland, Finnish working culture is considered to be positive and relationships with other co-workers easy. The working atmosphere is described as open, relaxed and informal. On the other hand, trainees from countries of flexible working culture, such as Latin America, say that the Finnish working community is well-organized and work is disciplined. The few critical comments that came up in the research concerned the Finnish mentality, which can sometimes be withdrawn and not very smooth in terms of small talk. (CIMO 2002.)

In general, communication in Finland is straightforward and hierarchies are quite flat. Titles like "Sir" are not used and even the superiors are usually addressed by their first name. Things are usually done in an informal manner. (Aarresaari 2005, Cantell 2004.) Still, it is worthwhile to be polite and observe the organizational culture in the work place, and to adjust one's behaviour accordingly.

The Finns tend to keep their promises scrupulously and finish what they have started. Order is the most characteristic feature in Finnish working culture, which might sometimes discourage creativity. (Klaffi 2005.) Punctuality is expected and appreciated, and deadlines are usually met (Luiro 2006).

One essential characteristic about the Finnish job market is that employers expect graduates to have professional experience in their field of expertise already before

they are hired (Aarresaari 2007). In Finland it is certainly true that “relevant work experience is highly regarded, often required and sometimes worth more than formal qualifications” (Graduate Prospect 2005a). Finnish graduates usually try to acquire as much professional work experience as they can already during their studies by taking part-time or vacation jobs. On the other hand, all kinds of work experience – whether it is cleaning or working as a waiter/waitress – is much valued by the employers. During working periods, it is also possible to create personal networks that can promote your employment in the future. (Luiro 2006.)

In the beginning of one’s work career salaries may be modest. Short-term contracts are common these days also for people with a higher-education degree. In Finland, the majority of employees are members of some labour union. The union for professionals with a higher education is AKAVA with its many subdivisions. The members of AKAVA work in professions requiring higher education, and include teachers, engineers, doctors, lawyers, and professional social workers (Aarresaari 2007, SAK 2007). The members of the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK are mainly workers in industry, restaurant staff, and cleaners. The members of STTK, the Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees, work in e.g. clerical and technical occupations, and include nurses, managers, and supervisors. (SAK 2007.)

Finland is a country of high technology, so computers and software are commonly used almost in every job. Therefore, people with a higher education degree are expected to have good computer and Internet skills. (Luiro 2006.)

### **What should each employee know of his rights and obligations?**

The rights and duties of employees are governed by Finland’s labour legislation and collective agreements. These agreements are universally binding: they also apply to employers and employees that are not members of the negotiating organisations. Certain minimum benefits, for example annual holidays, are also guaranteed by legislation. (Työministeriö 2004.)

When working in Finland you will have the same rights and duties as your Finnish colleagues. The same terms, work conditions, and occupational safety and health requirements apply for foreign and Finnish workers. The employer shall give all employees sufficient training and guidance in their tasks. There are separate provisions concerning the minimum terms and conditions of work for workers posted in Finland. (Työministeriö 2007.)

Employment in Finland always involves an **employment contract**, whereby the employee agrees to perform some specified work for an employer in return for agreed wages or other compensation. Employment contracts should generally be open-ended arrangements or made for a temporary, specified period. A trial period may be agreed for the beginning of the employment. During this period the employer or the employee may cancel the employment contract without notice. (Työministeriö 2004.)

The regular **working time** is usually a maximum of eight hours a day, 40 hours a week (there are some exceptions in some fields). For overtime work, at least the stipulated overtime rate will be paid. Employers must keep a record of all hours worked by their employees; employees are also recommended to keep a record of their own hours (CIMO 2007, Työministeriö 2004.)

Although there is no universal statutory minimum **wage** in Finland, most employees are covered by collective agreements specifying the minimum pay rates for various industries. These statutory minimum pay rates must be applied equally to Finnish and foreign workers. (Työministeriö 2004.)

Employees earn two days of **annual vacation** for each month after having been employed for at least 14 working days. Foreign workers are entitled to the same annual vacation as local workers. The employee receives normal wages during holiday, but need not come to work. Finnish law and collective agreements entitle employees to wages during illness. **An employee who falls ill** must notify the employer immediately. While a medical certificate must normally be provided after three days of absence due to illness, some employers require a certificate after one day's absence. (Työministeriö 2004, CIMO 2007.)

The employer must treat employees **equitably**, and may not discriminate against an employee, for example on the grounds of age, sex, ethnic origin, language, religion, trade union activity, or political conviction. It follows that an employee may not be paid less than a colleague of different sex or ethnic origin performing the same work or work of equal value. (Työministeriö 2004.)

## **6. What qualities do employers appreciate?**

### **Transferable skills**

In addition to qualifications and experience, employers seek transferable skills in a successful candidate. These skills include e.g. skills in team work, leadership or problem solving, communication, etc. They are called transferable because they are gained in one context and can be applied in another area (Graduate Prospect 2005b.) Therefore, an employer can be interested in, for instance, the candidate's hobbies, which can develop qualities that are useful also in working life (Luiro 2006).

The Career Services at the University of Lapland collects continuously information about working life requirements and changes in the labour market. The following presents the most frequently mentioned characters that employers in Lapland value in a new employee. This information was gathered through a career liaison in regular meetings with local employers in Rovaniemi during 2004 – 2005.

Attitude            “The right attitude” is required, meaning that a new employee should be open-minded and ready to do all kinds of tasks. A certain amount of realism is needed: as a young graduate you cannot expect to get to a managerial position right away. The predominant practices in the working place should be respected even if they seem old-fashioned. The new employee should introduce new ideas step by step.

### Communication and co-operation skills

Nowadays, work is done increasingly in teams. Also project work has become more common. These changes in working life have increased

the importance of good communication and human relation skills. This can be seen e.g. in job adds that are looking for “a good guy”.

#### Willingness to learn new things

This is closely connected to “the right attitude”. Nowadays there is a demand of lifelong learning and Career Development in working life. Employees are expected to continuously update their know-how and to learn new things in order to advance one’s career.

#### Coordinating and leadership skills

This means being able to motivate and encourage others, as well as taking the lead. Nowadays also the so-called self-management is important, because a lot of work is done very independently.

#### Problem solving skills

This is one of the most important human relation skills and also a characteristic often connected with good leadership.

#### Ability to endure stress

Everybody has stress sometimes; the point is how you can manage it. A little stress can sometimes help some people to reach the best possible results.

The most significant factor for succeeding in working life is, of course, the expertise of your own field. But in addition this, transferable skills give you flexibility, which helps you to adjust to and manage many different kinds of jobs. Everyone can develop these qualities in themselves. (Luiro 2006.)

## **7. Where to start?**

Before writing any application documents you should think about your qualifications, work experience, and possible transferable skills in order to define your core competences. A good way to do this is to write down your history and what you have done – thus also sketching your CV.

Competence is a combination of your qualifications, experience, skills and personality. In addition to these, your attitudes, contacts, networks and life experiences affect your competence. (Työnhaun avaimet 2006) So, it is a lot more extensive concept than you might think, and certainly more than just a higher educational degree!

Mere studying develops many skills, such as analytical reasoning, the ability to concentrate on the essential, information retrieval and processing skills, working both independently and in a group (Työnhaun avaimet 2006). These are all transferable

skills, which are useful in many different fields and highly appreciated by employers as discussed in the previous chapter (Luiro 2006).

The most important thing for a graduate to recognize is his/her competence and what it includes. This is essential so that you can target your job-hunting accordingly and get better results. The following questions – Eight Steps to a Career by Turku Academic Career Services (Urapolun askeleet 2007) – will help you to analyse your competence:

1. What have you done?
  - In addition to your education and work history, you can think of your hobbies, representative posts, events in life that have influenced to your development, etc.
2. What do you know and what can you do? What are your strengths?
  - Professional competence, e.g. marketing or pedagogical skills
  - Transferable skills useful in working life in general irrespective of the field, e.g. communication or computer skills
  - Personality features, e.g. independency, innovativeness
  - Special skills, e.g. knowledge of Swahili
3. What are you interested in? What do you enjoy and don't enjoy doing?
  - Dreams and expectations
  - Field(s) of interest
  - Number of social contacts in a job etc.
4. What is important to you?
  - Values
  - Rewarding and interesting job
  - Career development and salary
5. What are your opportunities and options?
  - What is your ideal job?
  - What can you do with your degree? How about with your transferable skills?
6. Where to from here? Assessment of your opportunities and options:
  - Why a particular option interests you?
  - In what jobs could you best utilize your competence?
7. What are your plans? What will you do next?
8. How do you follow up the progress of your plans?

Give yourself time to research your options, reflecting carefully on what you want and what you have to offer. Then employ a systematic approach to career planning.

## **8. CV and application**

A written application is often the first formal contact you will have with potential employers. Therefore, it should be both professional and appropriate for the job.



Before writing or filling in any application document it is important to study both the career area and the companies you intend to apply to (Career Service Guide 2005.)

Don't waste your time by copying one application and sending it to many different organisations: this method seldom gets you anywhere. Instead, application documents should be carefully "tailored" to a particular type of work and employer. The term tailoring means here targeting of your skills and qualities to the job/employer that you are interested in. (Effective Applications 2004). This rule also pertains to open applications, which should be tailored according to the employer.

Keep in mind that employers use the application documents to see if you possess the skills and qualities they are seeking for a certain job. To present this information effectively you should analyse your competences as shown in the previous chapter. You should be able to relate what you know about yourself to what you understand about the requirements of the job. (Career Service Guide 2005.)

A curriculum vitae (or CV) and a covering letter make a single package. The purpose of the application documents is to persuade an employer to interview you. They should always reflect the qualifications, work experience and qualities that are relevant to the applied job (tailoring!). (Luiro 2006.)

The most typical application documents in Finland are the CV and the covering letter. Application forms are used if the employer requires them: One should always follow the employer's instructions in the job ad. (Luiro 2006.)

A covering letter should be written with care since it usually reveals your motivation and interest in the job. In addition, it is supposed to answer the questions asked in the job ad. The structure of the covering letter should be extensive, yet short and compact. (Työnhaun avaimet 2006.) A covering letter should be no longer than one page (A4). A CV can be several pages long, but usually a graduate's CV is not longer than two pages (Luiro 2006).

A CV tells quickly and clearly what your competence consists of and what you have done earlier in your life. Usually, a CV includes personal details, education, work experience, activities and interests, skills (languages, computer), hobbies and references. (Työnhaun avaimet 2006). Look at the example of a CV presented in the end of this chapter to get ideas of various formats and different approaches. Present your details systematically using reverse chronological order (Effective Applications 2004).

When telling about your occupational titles, it is a good idea to "open up" the work tasks. If you just write that you have been working as a project secretary, it doesn't tell much of what you have really done. Use the active verbs to highlight your efficiency: I was in charge...; focused...; planned...; implemented...etc. (Luiro 2006.)

When designing the layout, remember that the CV should be extensive, but still easy to read. The term "one-minute CV" is sometimes mentioned, when careers advisers want to highlight the time an employer has for one CV. It is recommended to use your creativity in the layout, keeping in mind that the result should still be matter-of-fact. Do not directly copy the models – bring out your personality. (mb.)

## Model of a open application / a covering letter (Aarresaari 2007, Työhaun avaimet 2006)

Your name	APPLICATION	
Street address		
Postal address		
Phone number / mobile	Date	(Photo)
Email@address		
Title and name of the receiver		
Name of company / institution		
Street address		
Postal address		
Reference		
HEADLINE		
<b>Examples of the contents:</b>		
<b>1<sup>st</sup> paragraph</b>		
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?		
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph</b>		
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 or something you have learned in your leisure time activities.		
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph</b>		
What are you like as a person?		
Do not only list adjectives but illustrate them with examples.		
What is your work style?		
If you have outstanding computer or language skills, remember to mention them here.		
Do you perform best when working independently or in a group?		
If your former colleagues have given you positive feedback, use it here.		
<b>4<sup>th</sup> paragraph</b>		
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,		
Signature		
Your name typewritten		
Enclosure(Attach your CV)		

## Example of a content of a CV (Aarresaari 2007, Työnhaun avaimet 2006 )

### Personal Details

Name, address, email, mobile /telephone number

Date and place of birth

Nationality

(Civil status)

### Curriculum Vitae

Date

(Photo)

### Education

Mention all degrees you have completed after secondary school. Place the highest / most important degree first. Give the year of graduation, name of degree, school name, and a brief description of your studies (majors, minors, honours etc).

You do not need give a full list of courses you have taken or mention grades. You should, however, give the topic of you thesis.

### Work experience

List your work experience in reverse chronological order, that is, the latest first. 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.

You do not need to give full details of all previous work experience but make sure there are no gaps in your work history. Emphasise the experience that is relevant for the job you are now applying for and any work you have done in Finland.

### Computer skills

You can e.g. list the programs that you can use.

### Language skills

Remember to mention the level of command: native language / elementary / intermediate / fluent

### Activities / Interests

What are your hobbies?

Have you been active in any organisations?

Have you done volunteer work?

### References

This section is not compulsory in a Finnish CV. However, if you know that your former supervisor and/or professor is willing to speak on your behalf, it might be a good idea to put their details down as referees (name, title, contact information).

Always ask the person before naming them your referee.

### You might also want to mention:

- awards and special skills
- military service
- publications
- living or working abroad

## **10. Job interview**

An invitation to a job interview is a sign that an employer thinks that you are capable of doing the job. The goal of the interview is to test your suitability for the job and to the work community, and to get a more precise view of your skills as well as your personality. (Career Service Guide 2005.)

A job interview can be a nerve-wrecking experience, but with careful preparation and practise you are able to give a good impression. It's worthwhile to gather enough information about the job and the employer: You are expected to know something about what the company does and how. Check at least the company web site beforehand. It can give you a surprisingly great deal of information, even about the organizational culture or values in the company. You can also try to find some articles about the company/field or you may interview some people working there. Sufficient background information makes you more confident in the interview situation and helps you perform better. (Career Service Guide 2005.)

Job interviews can vary a great deal. There may be only one interview or a selection process with several different stages. The number of interviewers may vary from two to several people. The assessment process can last several days. There may be aptitude tests, etc. Despite the versatility of job interviews it is possible to practice them. (Luiro 2006.)

### **Prepare well:**

- Refresh your memory, read your application
- Visit the employer's web site, read the employer's brochures or annual report
- Arrive in good time and give yourself time to relax
- Let your eagerness and willingness show
- Create a good first impression, listen questions carefully
- Talk positively about your experiences
- Ask for a clarification if a question is not clear
- Thank the interviewer for seeing you (Career Service Guide 2005.)

## **11. Work permit, Tax deduction card, ID-number**

What employers expect from foreign employees is that the employees know exactly what rights and duties they have concerning working in Finland. Employers will not go through the effort of finding out these things on your behalf. It helps your employment considerably if you know about the terms under which you can work in Finland and if you know whether you need a work permit or not. Every employee needs to have a tax deduction card for salary payment. (Luiro 2006.)

The general rule is that if a person intends to work in Finland, he/she needs a "residence permit of an employed person." Exceptions are citizens of the Nordic countries and EU Member States, who do not need a work permit. However, if the work lasts more than three months, EU citizens need to register. (Directorate of Immigration 2007.)

What comes to students, there is the following rule:

*“A foreign person has a limited right to work in Finland if he/she has been granted a residence permit for study purposes”.* (Directorate of Immigration 2007)

A student may work if the work is practical training included in the degree or if the amount of part-time work does not exceed 25 hours a week. Full-time employment may be undertaken during holidays when the educational institution does not arrange teaching as such; in practice this is usually during summer and Christmas vacations. (Directorate of Immigration 2007.)

Salary earned from part-time work during the academic year may reduce the amount of money that the student is required to possess to be able to support him- or herself. When applying for the first residence permit, a promised employment or a signed contract of employment cannot reduce the required amount of available funds. (mb.)

For taxation you need to have a **tax deduction card**, which you will get from the local tax office. On the basis of the tax card, your employer is able to withhold the right amount of tax from your salary. Finnish employers collect a final 35-% tax of the salary if you stay in Finland for less than six month. If you stay longer, your income is taxed at a progressive rate. The employer will also withhold social security payments. In some cases foreign students are entitled to a special deduction based on studies or traineeship: ask for details from your tax office. (Finnish Tax Administration 2007.)

Visit the local Tax Office (Verotoimisto in Finnish):

Rovaniemi Tax Office  
Hallituskatu 3A  
ROVANIEMI  
Tel: (016) 367 6000

Meri-Lappi Tax Office  
Puutarhakatu 3  
TORNIO  
Tel: (016) 367 5800

Meri-Lappi Tax Office  
Meripuistokatu 16  
KEMI  
Tel: (016) 367 5700

The regulations here are presented in a very general manner. For detailed information about permit issues we recommend you to check the web site of the Directorate of Immigration: [www.uvi.fi](http://www.uvi.fi) or the police: [www.police.fi](http://www.police.fi). Information about taxation can be found from the web site of the Finnish Tax Administration: [www.vero.fi](http://www.vero.fi). In social security matters you can check the web site of the Social Insurance Institution of Finland: [www.kela.fi](http://www.kela.fi). All the web sites are available in English.

## 12. Story of Florian

*“Why are you going to Finnish Lapland in winter?” My friend Stefan was surprised when I told him about my plans doing an internship at the Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences. “It is cold, dark and the people are reticent and closed” he continued. Other people asked similar questions. “Finland? Isn’t it much nicer in Australia or Spain?”*

*Unwavering those prejudices I arrived in Rovaniemi where my tutor Janne was waiting for me. First days he helped me in administrative things and later he took care of me in each kind of respect which has been very pleasant.*

*The official reason for my stay in Rovaniemi was my internship which I did in the Laboratory of the Technical School. Beside the laboratory work -test of an air to air heat pump concerning its efficiency and development of test standards therefore- I joined some exotic courses like “Reindeer Husbandry” and “Snow and Ice Construction”.*

*The working atmosphere was relaxed and my workmates and fellow students were very collegial. Therefore, I could do my work efficiently and in pleasant ambience.*

*Deep and authentic impressions of a foreign country are impossible without getting in touch with natives. That’s why I was looking for contact to local people from beginning on, and it didn’t take long to find it. I could share local activities and experiences with open-minded people. We went Ice fishing, Ice bathing, Ice-Skating, Cross Country Skiing, Snowmobiling, grilling makkara (means sausage), watching Nordic Lights, revolver shooting and at my first and my last week we went to cottages deep in the forest. I even got some invitations to Finnish family homes- playing ping pong and of course doing traditional Finnish sauna.*

*But there were not only the joint activities which broadened my mind- the conversations and exchanges of ideas deepened my comprehension of the Finnish way of life. The contacts went even that deep that I got infected with the Finnish nations Ice Hockey fibre during the Olympic Games. A friend informed me by mobile live ticker about the actual result in the finals because I was in a cottage far away from civilisation at that time. And in Germany, Ice Hockey is as popular as football in Finland- the interest in it is modest.*

*Back home in the international dormitory the skills learned on the Snow and Ice Construction course of the Finnish craft and trade had to be examined. The idea grew to build a snow cave in front of the dormitory. Väylätie 56 should get its own igloo!*

*Said and done- after a while more and more international students helped to build on the arctic house. A night in a snow cave belongs to the spirit of Lapland. At least for some foreign students.*

*Four months passed quickly and was full of experiences. In the beginning of March it was time flying back to Germany. In my luggage there was a Kuksa (means traditional wooden cup) which I got from friends at my farewell. This traditional*

*wooden cup carries a lot of good memories in it- memories which will revive during its use.*

*Coming back to Germany I will tell Stefan, that he was right: it was cold, it was dark (in winter) and many people were closed. But the cold was no problem; the darkness not really dark because of the snow and the legend about the Finnish habit of few words is matter of opinion: Finnish people are using their language very efficient or rather just when required. In addition I learned that a Finnish word is a word on which I could count.*

*And to the others I will tell that Australia and Spain are by far not as attractive for me as Finish Lapland- after my stay in Finland even less than before.*

*Text by: Florian Schlosser, Student  
Biberach University of Applied Sciences  
Germany*



*Photo: Florian Schlosser, Home album*

### **13. Summary**

We hope your ideas about your career plans and job hunting is clearer after reading this guide. Perhaps you even have a completely new idea about influencing your personal career by yourself. After reading all this information you are surely more ready to start applying for a job in Lapland.

There are three important issues to remember when applying for a job in Lapland. First, think what kind of duties interest you? What are you good at? It is important that you know your own core competences in order to “market” them to a possible employer. Find out what it is that you are good at and what your skills are; concentrate on the strengths instead of weaknesses. Remember that good motivation and willingness to learn new things can sometimes compensate for failing some of the task requirements (Luiro 2006.)

Second, good planning and preparation is the key to successful job hunting. Be active in both searching information and contacting employers. Gather as much information as you can about companies in Lapland. Think carefully about different options to find a job. Don't waste you precious time by waiting for suitable job ads. Visit employers' web pages, read company brochures, prepare open applications and send them, visit companies, and phone people who decide on recruitment. Remember that about 70 % of all vacancies are in the hidden labour market.

Third, start learning the Finnish language. For example, you may take part in Finnish language courses. Try to find information about Finnish society, Lappish culture, and Lappish people. In Lapland it may take a long time for people to warm up, but once they get to know you, you will find them most warm-hearted and loyal friends. And most of all, please enjoy yourself while staying in Lapland. We are very happy to have you here and wish you the best of luck when applying for a job!



## References

**Aarresaari 2007**, Services for Job Seekers. Akateemiset rekryointipalvelut, <http://www.aarresaari.net/>

**Cantell, Heikki 2004**, Ranskanuutiset.com – Makupaloja mannermaalta, artikkeli: Heikki Cantell suomalais-ranskalaisten juristien uranuurtajana. 28.12.2004. [http://www.ranskanuutiset.com/article.php3?id\\_article=242](http://www.ranskanuutiset.com/article.php3?id_article=242)

**Career Service Guide 2005**, Applying for jobs: Getting it right the first time. The University of Sheffield, Careers Service.

**Career Service 2007**, The University of Lapland, [www.ulapland.fi/rekry](http://www.ulapland.fi/rekry)

**City of Kemi 2007**, [www.kemi.fi](http://www.kemi.fi)

**City of Tornio 2007**, [www.tornio.fi](http://www.tornio.fi)

**CIMO 2007**, Practical Training [http://finland.cimo.fi/practical\\_training/practicalities.html](http://finland.cimo.fi/practical_training/practicalities.html)

**CIMO 2007**, Living in Finland, A brief guide for international students and trainees. <http://www.cimo.fi/dman/Document.phx/~public/Julkaisut+ja+tilastot/English/Living-in-Finland-2005-nopics.pdf>

**CIMO 2002**, Centre for International Mobility, Suomi kiinnostaa ulkomaalaisia harjoittelijoita, lehdistötiedote 14.3.2002. <http://home.cimo.fi/tiedotteet/t140302.html>

**Directorate of Immigration 2007**, Students, <http://www.uvi.fi/netcomm/>

**Effective Applications 2004**, The University of Edinburgh, Careers Service

**EURES 2007**, The European Job Mobility Portal. Labour market information: Finland, Lappi. <http://europa.eu.int/eures>

**Finnish Tax Administration 2007**, Working and Studying in Finland: Working in Finland – Publication for foreign students and trainees, 1.5.2004. [www.vero.fi](http://www.vero.fi)

**Graduate Prospect 2005a**, Country specific information...Finland. The UK's official graduate careers website, [www.prospects.ac.uk/](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/)

**Graduate Prospect 2005b**, Making yourself more employable. The UK's official graduate careers website, [www.prospects.ac.uk/](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/)

**Jobstep 2007**, Employment and information service of the Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences, [www.jobstep.net](http://www.jobstep.net)

**Kemi-Tornion ammattikorkeakoulu 2007**, [www.tokem.fi](http://www.tokem.fi) , <http://edu.tokem.fi/>

**Klaffi 2005**, Katkelmia opetusohjelmien video- ja audiotarjonnasta.  
[www.yle.fi/klaffi/search.php?q=+ty%F6kulttuuri](http://www.yle.fi/klaffi/search.php?q=+ty%F6kulttuuri)

**Lapland in figures 2006**, Regional Council of Lapland.

**Lappi 2007**, laplandfinland.com-portaali, [www.laplandfinland.com](http://www.laplandfinland.com)

**Luiro 2006**, Applying for jobs in Finland, Career Services, The University of Lapland

**Rovaniemi 2007**, Rovaniemi-info. [www.rovaniemi.fi](http://www.rovaniemi.fi)

**Rovaniemen ammattikorkeakoulu 2007**, [www.ramk.fi](http://www.ramk.fi)

**T&E-keskus 2007**, <http://www.te-keskus.fi/Public/?nodeid=11580&area=7543>

**The Finnish Trade Union Movement**—what every employee should know- SAK, STTK and AKAVA Publications 2005,  
<http://www.sak.fi/english/ServiceServlet?type=attachment&source=SAKAttachments&id=81>

**Työministeriö 2004**, Facts for foreigners working in Finland, Advisory board for ethnic relations,  
[http://www.mol.fi/mol/fi/99\\_pdf/fi/04\\_maahanmuutto/07\\_aineistot\\_kirjasto/01\\_esitteet/tyoelama/tyoelama\\_eng.pdf](http://www.mol.fi/mol/fi/99_pdf/fi/04_maahanmuutto/07_aineistot_kirjasto/01_esitteet/tyoelama/tyoelama_eng.pdf)

**Työministeriö 2007**, Information on employment relationships in Finland.  
[http://www.mol.fi/mol/en/02\\_working/05\\_foreigners/02\\_employment\\_relationships/index.jsp](http://www.mol.fi/mol/en/02_working/05_foreigners/02_employment_relationships/index.jsp)

**Työhaun avaimet 2006**, Pirjo Matinmikko & Satu Peteri, Työelämä- ja rekrytointipalvelut. Lapin yliopistopaino 2006.

**Työvoimahallinto 2005**, [www.mol.fi/mol/fi/06\\_tyoministerio/05\\_tiedotteet/2005-01-20-01/index.jsp](http://www.mol.fi/mol/fi/06_tyoministerio/05_tiedotteet/2005-01-20-01/index.jsp) - 18k - 2 heinäkuu 2005

**Urapolun askeleet 2007**, Turun akateemiset rekrytointipalvelut, Turun yliopisto.  
<http://rekrytointi.utu.fi/?cmd=opiskelijat.laskel>