

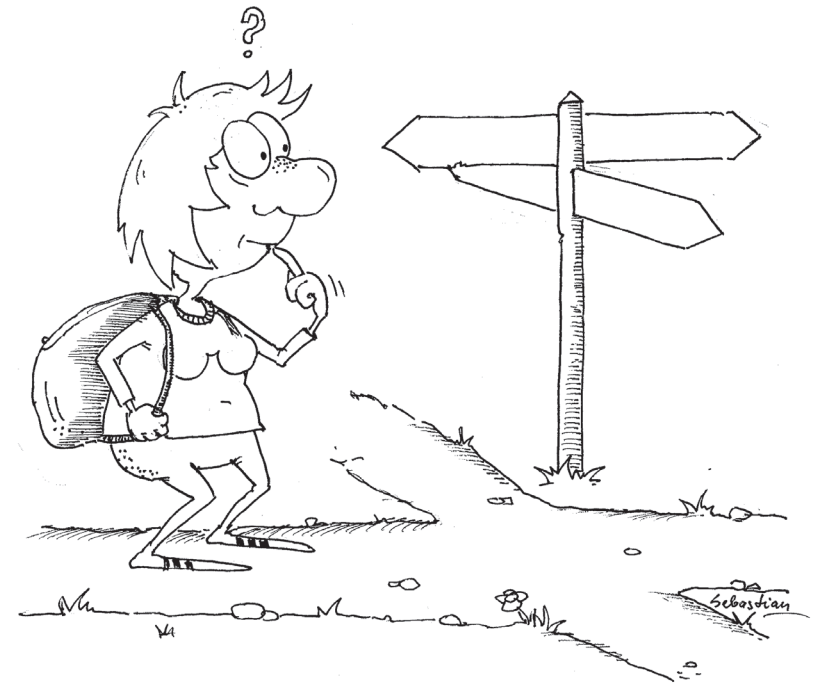
Mirjam Lindpere



**RAK**  
Eesti Riiklik Arengukava



Toetab Euroopa Liit



# **WORKING IN ESTONIA**

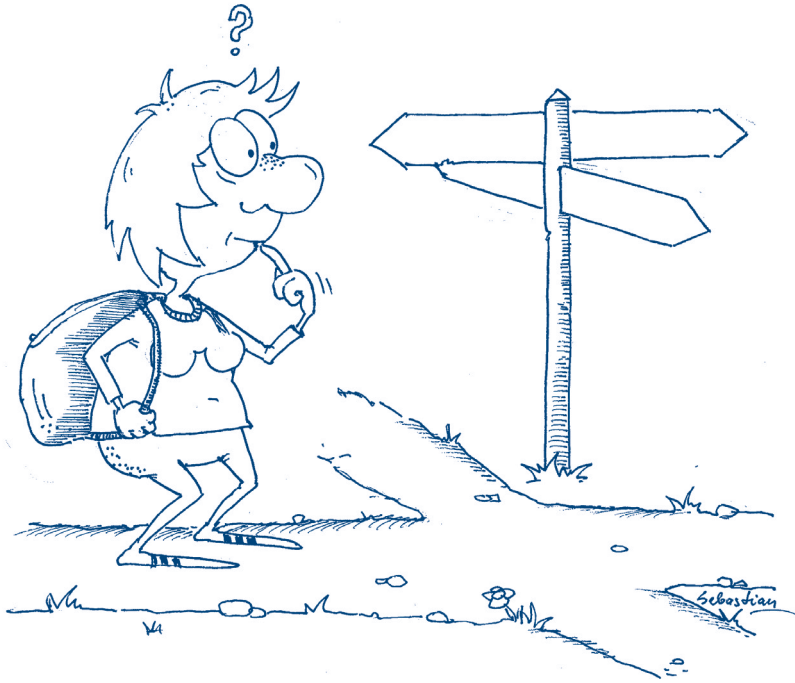
## **A Guide for International Students**

*Illustrations: Veljo Lamp*

*Supported by the European Union*

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# Introduction

This brochure is for international students in Estonian universities, for full-time masters and doctoral students as well as for exchange students, who wish to work in Estonia. You will find information on working regulations and legislative frameworks as well as action plan for job hunting in Estonia.

The Estonian labour market is interested in young and enthusiastic specialists to work here after graduating from international programmes in Estonian universities. At the same time, it may be difficult to find job if you don't speak Estonian or you are unfamiliar with Estonian customs and traditions. In some cases our international students have experienced that the initial contact with an Estonian employer might not be overly warm. This may be explained by employers' unfamiliarity with your cultural background and customs. Usually the initially distant attitude becomes warmer once you have shown the employer your competence, positive personality and eagerness to achieve good results for your work assignment.

This brochure tries to help you with your job hunting and contains information and advice on the typical job search process in Estonia, working regulations, work permits, and Estonian work habits.

We hope you find the information from this brochure useful. If you need any further assistance, please find the contacts of the advisors and counsellors of your university at the end of this brochure.

Wishing you all the best in job hunting,  
*Career Services*

# Estonian work habits and legislation

When starting your career in Estonia, you should be aware of Estonian customs and traditions in regards to communication. Like many citizens of northern Europe, Estonians, at a first glance, seem friendly but reserved, polite and calm but serious. Estonians do not tend to go to extremes with emotions and sentimentality: opening up and trusting others on a personal level may take some time. However, internationals are advised to be patient in finding an easy-going and fun conversation partner. In doing so, they will be rewarded with a generous host and a faithful friend who will give his or her warm hug to special people at special moments. Estonians have an ironic sense of humour, stubbornness, curiosity, patience, etc. Estonians are very determined and goal-oriented and at times are not overly appreciative when it comes to criticism. Estonians are quite precise, they don't like when someone is late for meeting

Additional information about the Estonian nation and culture:

[www.estonica.org](http://www.estonica.org)

[europa.eu.int/eures](http://europa.eu.int/eures)

# Working in Estonia

## Work habits in Estonia

The most common length for staying on in one position is 5 years. They say that in the first year you study the main methods of working at that particular place and get used to the working environment, etc. In the second and third year, you do your job actively and with great responsibility. From the fourth year, you may get tired of your job; you are not so active anymore. Because of this, people usually change their positions every 3–5 years.

## Work time and vacation

The length of a work week is generally 40 hours, five days a week, and eight hours a day. Annual vacation time is usually 28 days.

**Sickness** – In case of sickness, employees can be given paid vacation. The gross wage during such a period is 60% (hospital care) or 80% (no hospital care) of the previous year's salary and is paid by the state.

**Payment for overtime** – Additional remuneration of per hour of overtime paid to an employee shall not be less than 50% of the rate of hourly wage. Work during holidays could be compensated either by offering time off or by extra remuneration of at least 50% of the wage rate. Work on public holidays has to be compensated at a double rate.

## Public holidays:

January 1<sup>st</sup>, New Year's Day  
February 24<sup>th</sup>, Independence Day  
Good Friday  
Easter Sunday  
Pentecost  
May 1<sup>st</sup>, Spring Day

Mother's Day

June 23<sup>rd</sup>, Victory Day

June 24<sup>th</sup>, St. John's Day (Midsummer)

August 20<sup>th</sup>, Day of Restoration of Independence

December 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve

December 25<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Day

December 26<sup>th</sup>, Boxing Day

### Unemployment

Those who are out of work are eligible to receive an unemployment benefit (about 1000 EEK per month in 2007) for a period of six months, provided they have registered themselves with the Unemployment Office.

**Unemployment insurance** is 0,6% of the wage (in year 2007).

Additional info: <http://www.tta.ee/index.php?id=431>

## Taxes

**Social tax** is paid by employers at a rate of 33% of total payments.

**Income tax** is 22% (in year 2007). Income tax is paid by the employee.

### Example:

If your salary according your employment contract is 12000 EEK, the unemployment insurance, retirement insurance and income tax will be deducted and your net salary will be 9557 EEK. The employer has to pay additional unemployment insurance and social tax. So the total cost for employer is 15996 EEK.

<b>Net</b>		<b>9557 EEK</b>
Unemployment insurance	0,6%	72 EEK
Individual retirement insurance	2%	240 EEK
Taxfree minimum		2000 EEK
Income tax	22%	2131 EEK



<b>Gross</b>		<b>12000 EEK</b>
Social tax	33%	3960 EEK
Employers unemployment insurance	0,3%	36 EEK
<b>Total cost for employer</b>		<b>15996 EEK</b>

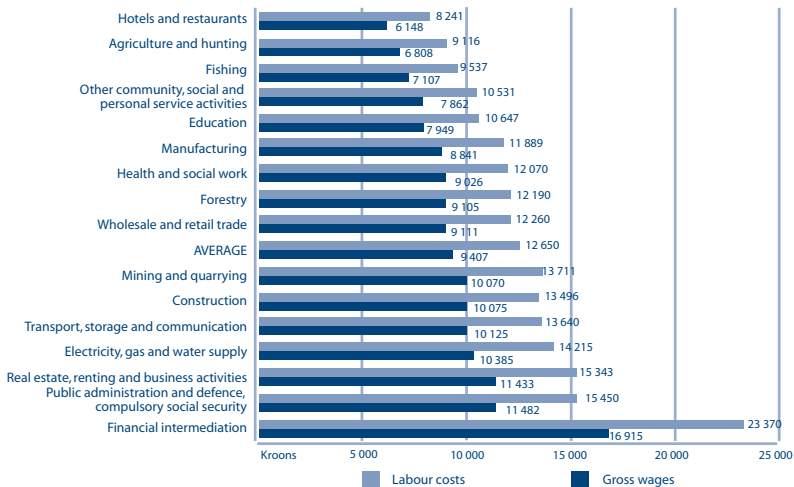
Salary calculator: [www.cvkeskus.ee/salary\\_enquiry.php](http://www.cvkeskus.ee/salary_enquiry.php)

Tax rates in Estonia: [www.emta.ee/?id=1751](http://www.emta.ee/?id=1751)

## Salaries

The minimum wage in Estonia is 3000 EEK per month (from 1.01.2006). The average monthly gross wage was 10300 EEK (in 2007 1<sup>st</sup> quarter). The highest gross wage is in financial intermediation and the lowest in hotels and restaurants.

**Average monthly gross wages and labour costs per employee, 2006 (EEK)**



source: *Statistical Office of Estonia*

### **Governing the labour market**

The governing labour market institution is the **Ministry of Social Affairs** under which the **Estonian Labour Market Board** collects information on vacancies, brings together employees and employers, provides information on opportunities for training activities, organises unemployment registration and regulates the payment of benefits to the unemployed.

### **Labour Legislation**

The most important statutes and rules regulating the activities in the labour market are the Constitution of Estonia, Conventions of International Organisation of Labour, Employment Contracts Act, Holidays Act, Wages Act, The Working and Rest Time Act, Collective Agreements Act and several enactments of the Government and ministries of Estonia.

**Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry**  
**Republic of Estonia Employment Contracts Act**  
**Working and Rest Time Act**  
**Holidays Act**

# Residence and work permits

## EU citizens

EU citizens can work in Estonia without work permit, starting the day they enter the country. The same applies for students who study in Estonia. If their stay is longer than 3 months, they need to register their place of residence in the local government authority and apply for an ID card from the Citizenship and Migration Board.

## Non-EU citizens

### Part time work while studying

Non-EU students with **residence permit for study** have the right to work in Estonia without a separate work permit in case of **practical training** according to their curriculum of study.

Otherwise, students may work in Estonia only on the basis of a **work permit**, but only outside of school hours on the condition that such employment does not interfere with their studies. If a student has received a residence permit for study in an educational institution in Estonia, he or she has the opportunity to apply for a work permit at the Citizenship and Migration Board.

If you want to **apply for work permit**, you have to present:

- Application form
- School/university permission
- Written explanation (why, where, what, contract)
- State fee ~750 EEK
- Photo 4x5 cm
- Copy of ID document

Bring or send the documents to the CMB office at:

- Sõle 61a, 10313 Tallinn
- Liiva 41, 50303 Tartu

### Long-term employment

Non-EU citizens can apply for a **residence permit for employment**. The residence permit for employment grants an alien the right to stay in Estonia for the purpose of employment according to the conditions determined by the residence permit.

A residence permit for employment is issued for a period of guaranteed employment in Estonia by an employer with a period of up to two years, and it can be extended for up to five years at a time. An alien must register his/her place of residence in Estonia in the Population Register within a month from the date of his/her arrival in Estonia. An alien who has a residence permit for employment does not need a work permit. You should submit an application to a diplomatic representation of the Republic of Estonia or the local Citizenship and Migration Board office. If you have a residence permit for study and wish to apply for a residence permit for employment, then the application needs to be submitted to the foreign representation of Estonia.

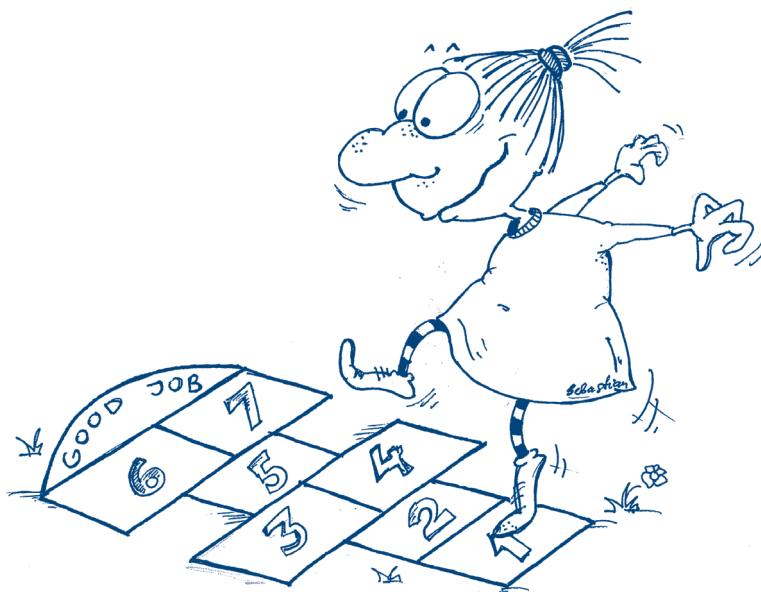
### More information:

- Citizenship and Migration Board
- Careers Service or the International Relations Office at your (hosting) university.

# Job search process in Estonia

7 main steps of job search process:

1. Find out your own interests and motivation
2. Find out your skills and competencies
3. Prepare CV and cover letter
4. Collect information about potential employers and vacancies
5. Send your application and CV to those of interest
6. Phone call from recruitment officer
7. Job interview



## **STEP 1 – Find out your own interests and motivation**

At first, you have to know why you want to work. Is it for money, professional experience, entering the labour market, personal development

or do you just have too much free time? According to your own motivation, you have different jobs to look for. If you want to enter the labour market and to get your first professional experience, you may not want to ask for high salaries – it's possible to work on voluntary basis. If you just need money, you may take a job that is not directly connected to your future career but that gives you enough money and enables you to stay in school.

Now, think about your interests and personal possibilities:

- What kind of work would you like to do? Is it something in your area of study? On which level would you like to start? What kind of company would be the ideal employer for you?
- How much time do you have for working while going to school? Can you work only on weekends or also on some weekdays? How many hours per week do you have for working? Be careful that the workload won't keep you away from studying.
- Do you need job for personal and professional development or for covering your living expenditures?

## STEP 2 – Find out your skills and competencies

- **Professional skills and knowledge** – What have you achieved already on an academic level? What skills do you have for working in your occupational area? Do you already have any experience working in this area?
- **Language skills** – How many languages do you speak? How many of them do you speak fluently? The working language in international companies is often English. Estonian employers expect usually Estonian language skills from applicants, but not always. If the tasks and responsibilities don't need Estonian language skills, then this requirement is negotiable. Learn Estonian

– at least on beginner’s level - so you can understand something. Estonians like people, who try to speak Estonian. You can find information on Estonian language courses [www.keeltekool.ee](http://www.keeltekool.ee) or at your university.

- **Computer skills** – What programs or programming languages can you use?
- **Transferable skills** – What would you say about your communication, teamwork, leadership, initiative, problem solving, flexibility, motivation, interpersonal skills, etc.? Employers value these skills as much as your professional skills.
- **Other competencies, strengths and weaknesses** – More and more employers pay attention not only to the skills, knowledge and experience, but also to the personality of a candidate.

What kind of possibilities could you have with these interests, these goals and these skills?

- Could you work in your own profession?
- Can you teach something (beginners’ course on your own area; languages; computers; handicraft, etc.)?
- Do you have any other field of work that could be suitable for you?

## STEP 3 – Prepare your application documents

### CV

CV is your personal profile and marketing statement – every time you read it you should feel quietly proud. A CV accompanied with a cover letter should demonstrate your suitability for the job in question.

One largely accepted CV form is the European CV: [europass.cedefop.europa.eu](http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu)

The most used CV style in Estonia is the chronological CV. This outlines your experiences in reverse chronological order with sections for education, experience and achievements. It is easy to organise and demonstrate how you have progressed over time. However, it may not be suitable if you want to change your career direction. Your CV should be up to two pages and highlight your key skills, strengths, experiences, achievements and abilities.

### Sample CV

Name:

Date of birth:

**Nationality or citizenship:** Shows your ability to work in Estonia.

You may describe your work permit status here.

**Address:** Your contact address in Estonia. You may add your home address as well.

Phone:

E-mail:

Education:

Dates (years) Name of institution and qualification should be listed in reverse chronological order. You may add detailed information of some of your course modules.

Dates Key courses, training, seminars attended.

Work experience:

Dates Listed in reverse chronological order. Company name, job title, preferably detailed with responsibilities, achievements in the role. Mention the skills you picked up. All experiences count, whether paid, voluntary, internship or work shadowing.



Skills:

**IT** What kind of computer skills you have. Name all the programmes and programming languages you can use. Name your certificates, if you have ones, to prove your skills.

**Languages** The level of language knowledge must be added – basic user / independent user / proficient user. If you have any certificate to prove your competence, then name it.

**Driving licence:** Category, from what year.

**Interests:** Clubs, organizations, social activity or other hobbies that distinguish you from the other candidates.

**Personal profile:** Profile is optional. You may cover this in your covering letter as well. Name some strengths and weaknesses. Avoid generic skills statements.

**Referees:** Name, position, contacts.  
Name one or two referees who know about your working habits. The referee can be former employer or colleague, or if you don't have any work experience, then some of your teachers from university. Ask the referees for permission to mention them in your CV. The recruiter may contact them directly. Have the reference letters with you, when going to job interview. If you prefer so, you may write that references available on request.

Don't include everything you have ever done! Be selective and prioritise – give more precise information about more important experiences and competences. Your CV needs to be visually pleasing and have a good layout with a simple font and effective highlighting. Make sure the final product is flawless. Visit your Careers Service Office and get expert CV advice.

## Cover Letter

A CV must always be accompanied by a cover letter. This is your opportunity to sell yourself to the employer and explain why you want the job, why you would be good at it and what you have to offer. The cover letter is just as important as your CV because it tempts the employer to read your CV and ask you for an interview.

A cover letter should be maximum one page, typed letter.

1. Briefly introduce yourself, what position are you applying for and where you saw the advert.
2. Explain why you are interested in this position and company. In order to do this, you have to do your homework and research about the company.
3. Highlight why you are suitable for this position. Prove your claims with evidence of knowledge, experience and personal skills.
4. Mention your plans for your future career.
5. Show your interest in an interview. You may mention when you are available for the interview and to start work.

If you send it via regular post, you should sign the cover letter. If you send it via e-mail, the cover letter is the e-mail text and the CV is the attachment. Let a friend or careers adviser check the CV and covering letter before sending it.

### Online applications

Many major recruiters use online forms as part of their application process. Sometimes they include even psychometric tests or essay.

Don't hurry when applying online, because short and speedy answers, errors in grammar or spelling may decrease your chances.

Give yourself plenty of time; it may take few hours to complete the form. Check you have completed all the relevant sections, and make sure your contact details are correct.

Print out the completed form and keep it for future; it may be useful when going to the interview.



## **STEP 4 – Collect information about potential employers and vacancies**

### **How to search the companies where you could apply for work**

Besides searching the vacancy pages and adverts, you should contact potential employers directly. Only about 30% of vacancies are advertised; the rest of them are hidden vacancies – you just have to find them.

To find job, it is very important to make yourself visible for employers; put your CV on many different recruitment databases, and talk about your job search to as many people as you can.

To make the first step as an employee in Estonia, you could offer yourself as volunteer or work as an intern without payment. If you don't speak Estonian, it could be more efficient if you try to contact the international companies first.

### University Careers Service

The Careers Service of your university has a database where employers leave their vacancy information and you can insert your job application. Add your e-mail address to the University's *career-mailing list* to get useful information on career-related happenings at the university and to get information about vacancies via e-mail.

At the Careers Service you can read also a number of paper-based vacancy advertisements.

Careers websites of Estonian universities:

- Tartu University: [www.ut.ee/career](http://www.ut.ee/career)
- Tallinn University of Technology: [www.ttu.ee/career](http://www.ttu.ee/career)
- Tallinn University: [www.tlu.ee/career](http://www.tlu.ee/career)
- Estonian University of Life Sciences: [www.emu.ee/career](http://www.emu.ee/career)
- Estonian Business School: [career.ebs.ee](http://career.ebs.ee)

### Graduate recruitment fairs, company presentations at school

Every year, in the end of March, there is recruitment fair for all students in Tallinn ([www.vt.ee](http://www.vt.ee)). On the recruitment fairs employers present themselves as potential employers for you. Sometimes they have some specific vacancies to offer, sometimes not.

You should have to be well prepared for the fair. Have some copies of your CV with you, and prepare yourself to answer employers' questions – they might take this conversation as the first job interview.

These types of events are excellent opportunities for face-to-face meetings with employers, for gathering information about what they offer and what they look for in candidates.

### Catalogues and brochures

There are some catalogues that include information about graduate employers. For example, one of them is the catalogue of the recruitment fair mentioned above. You can find these catalogues at the careers service of your university or at some student organisations' offices.

### Vacancies and recruitment databases:

You can search the most recent vacancies from these databases. Most of the vacancies are written in Estonian, even if working in the company doesn't require Estonian knowledge.

- CV online: [www.cv.ee](http://www.cv.ee)
- CV market: [www.cvkeskus.ee](http://www.cvkeskus.ee)
- BestCV.ee: [www.bestcv.ee](http://www.bestcv.ee)
- Search for a job in any European country: <http://europa.eu.int/eures>
- The Baltic Times. Jobs: [www.baltictimes.com/classifieds/job](http://www.baltictimes.com/classifieds/job)

### Vacancies in newspapers

There are many newspapers that provide weekly paper with vacancy advertisements. The newspapers are mostly free, and they are spread at supermarkets and other common buildings. Mostly they are written in Estonian, but, for example, The Baltic Times is in English and also has some job ads.

### Online applications on companies' websites

Many employers have the "Careers" sector on their website, where you can find the current vacancies and an online application form of the company. If there is nothing that appeals to your interests or suits your qualifications, you can simply send your application or profile anyway, so they can contact you when appropriate vacancies arise.

### Phone Book

Search the companies by keyword or sphere to find those of your interest.

[www.arikataloog.ee](http://www.arikataloog.ee)

[www.kontakt.ee](http://www.kontakt.ee)

## STEP 5 – Send your application and CV

Now, when your CV and cover letter are ready and you have found some vacancies or companies to which you can apply, send the documents via e-mail, post or the online form through the company's website.

The application documents may be sent as a response to vacancy adverts or as speculative applications. Speculative applications may be sent to companies that haven't advertised their vacancies but which you find as interesting potential employers for you.

It's quite useful to have your CV on many different recruitment databases so the employers can contact you directly. There are many different databases where you could have your CVs.

- Your hosting university's careers service database:
  - Tartu University: [www.ut.ee/career](http://www.ut.ee/career)
  - Tallinn University of Technology: [www.ttu.ee/career](http://www.ttu.ee/career)
  - Tallinn University: [www.tlu.ee/career](http://www.tlu.ee/career)
  - Estonian University of Life Sciences: [www.emu.ee/career](http://www.emu.ee/career)
  - Estonian Business School: [career.ebs.ee](http://career.ebs.ee)
- [www.cv.ee](http://www.cv.ee)
- [www.cvkeskus.ee](http://www.cvkeskus.ee)

## STEP 6 – Phone call from recruitment officer

After sending your application documents, you have to wait for the phone call from recruitment officer. Usually the call will come about two weeks after the deadline for application. If they haven't called you in two weeks after sending application, you may call them and ask about the recruitment procedure and whether they have checked the CVs yet or not. When answering the phone call from recruitment officer, show your interest in the company and the position; describe your time schedule (working after school, etc.), and make an appointment for job interview. Now it's time for prepare yourself for the interview.

## STEP 7 – Job interview

### Preparation for the interview – your homework

Preparation is the key to successful interview. The better prepared you are, the less likely you are to feel nervous at the interview.

- Research the organisation fully. You need to know who they are and what they do (history, culture, policies, recent events, current issues, what products /services they are engaged in). You need to have a good sense of the type of person they are looking into their team – soft skills they emphasize and the hard skills they need.
- Reread your application and employer’s recruitment ad. Take your documents to the interview with you, as well as the reference letters, copies of certificates etc.
- Prepare a list of suitable answers for the most common questions.
- Dress appropriately for professional and competent image.

At the interview

- Be there in time. Estonians are known as precise people and they don’t like it when you are late for job interview.
- Introduce yourself with firm handshake and warm smile.
- Be calm, listen carefully and think before answering.
- Speak clearly, looking at the interviewer while you are talking.
- Listen closely, showing you are responsive to the interviewer’s questions.
- If you are asked questions, which demand yes or no answers, do not leave it at that – volunteer information to support your answer.
- Have ready some questions of your own

### Typical questions

Be aware, that 75% of questions are predictable. Below you will find the most frequently asked questions. Try to answer them before going to the interview. You may ask your careers advisor’s help preparing these answers.

- Tell me about yourself.
- What subject have you enjoyed most/least and why?
- Why did you choose to study your subject?
- What motivates you to be successful?
- What project work have you done?
- Why are you interested in this particular job?
- Why do you want to join this organisation?
- What do you know about our company?
- What is the greatest challenge you have faced with?
- What kind of working environment is the best for you?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Why should we hire you?
- Where do you see yourself in three/ten years' time?
- How long would you like to stay in Estonia?
- What is your salary demand?
- When can you start?

### **What questions you could ask from the interviewer**

Show your interest towards the position and the company, asking questions to gather additional information. Here are some examples you could ask after answering all the interviewer's questions.

- What will be the responsibilities of this position?
- Do you have training and development program?
- What makes this company different from the others?
- What are the company's objectives for the 5-10 years?
- What kind of employee benefits package you have?
- What are the working hours?
- How do you feel about studying and working at the same time?
- What are the company's expectations of their new employees?

### **Closing the interview**

- Establish when and how you will hear from the employer with outcome.
- Thank for the interview.
- Close the meeting with handshake.





## Employers' expectations for students

Most common requirements for applicants:

- Right attitude (personal interest in the field; informed choice; personal goals for the job)
- Honesty
- Language skills (official language; foreign languages; professional terminology)
- Computer skills
- Communication skills
- Cooperation skills
- Professional theoretical knowledge
- Basic practical skills
- Knowledge on basic working methods, tools
- Professional education is not always a strict requirement, but is preferable
- Check out which residence permits you need: [www.mig.eeleng](http://www.mig.eeleng)

## Ask for further advice from advisors and counsellors in the university

**International Study Office** can help you to:

- Contact Careers Service of a university
- Contact advisers of various faculties
- Provide you with the contacts of your future tutor

International Student Office at Tartu University

Ülikooli 18, Tartu, 50090

Room no 104

Phone: +372 7375 152

[www.ut.ee/studentoffice](http://www.ut.ee/studentoffice)

International Relations Office at Tallinn University of Technology

Ehitajate tee 5, Tallinn

Room no III-209

Phone: +372 620 3549

[www.ip.ttu.ee](http://www.ip.ttu.ee)

International Relations Office at Tallinn University

Narva mnt. 25, Tallinn 10120

Room no P-320

Phone: +372 6409 217

E-mail: [iro@tlu.ee](mailto:iro@tlu.ee)

[www.tlu.ee/studies](http://www.tlu.ee/studies)

International Study Office at Estonian Agricultural University

Phone: +372 7313020

E-mail: [kylli.korgesaar@emu.ee](mailto:kylli.korgesaar@emu.ee)



**Careers officer /careers advisor** can help you to:

- Find out your potential to work
- Look for vacancies
- Search the companies, potential employers
- Prepare your CV and covering letter

Careers Service at Tartu University

Ülikooli 18, Tartu

Room no 102

Phone: +372 737 6205

E-mail: [career@ut.ee](mailto:career@ut.ee)

Website: [www.ut.ee/career](http://www.ut.ee/career)

Careers Service at Tallinn University of Technology

Ehitajate tee 5, Tallinn

Room no V-101

Phone: +372 620 3518

E-mail: [career@ttu.ee](mailto:career@ttu.ee)

Website: [www.ttu.ee/career](http://www.ttu.ee/career)

Careers Service at Tallinn University

Narva mnt 25, Tallinn

Room no P-215

Phone: +372 640 9127

E-mail: [career@tlu.ee](mailto:career@tlu.ee)

Website: [www.tlu.ee/career](http://www.tlu.ee/career)

### **Careers Service at Estonian Agricultural University**

Kreutzwaldi 1A, Tartu

Phone: +372 731 3894

Website: [www.emu.ee/career](http://www.emu.ee/career)