

Basic details must be accurate, **so be careful with these points!**

- Your up-to-date contact details are at the beginning of the document.
- There are no spelling or grammatical errors.
- Your education and work experience are clearly presented, along with other skills which are relevant to the position (e.g., language or IT skills).
- The file is named in a clear way, ideally with your own name (e.g., CV_Firstname_Lastname.pdf).
- The file type should be a common one to avoid any problems with opening it: a PDF is a safe bet.
- List things in reverse chronological order, starting with the latest one.

If you do not have a good photo of yourself, ask someone to take a picture of you looking relaxed but professional. It can also be useful to add the contact details of one to three referees at the end of your CV. Remember to inform your referees that you are actively seeking a job.

When describing your work experience, please note that just listing your job titles or duties does not tell the reader much about you. Make sure to include which things you were responsible for, what



the position required, what you achieved and what kind of feedback you received.

There are many different CV templates available, and you can find them by searching online for, e.g., “visual CV”. The traditional black and white style is becoming less common in CVs. A CV should stand out and reflect your personality, but the layout, colours and graphical elements should always be chosen to suit the position you are applying for. Make sure that the appearance and fonts are legible, and remember that at the end of the day, the content of your CV is what counts.

A CV should be between one and two pages in length. A single page with a tight layout is fine, or you can extend your CV to two pages if you have more work experience. Place the most important things on the first page: your contact details, education and key work experience. Once you have accrued more work experience, you can list it before your education in your CV.

The information in the CV must be relevant to the position. Sometimes it can be difficult to decide what to include. For example, your hobbies may not be directly related to the position, but a brief mention of what you like to do in your free time may tell the recruiter what kind of a person you are and reassure them that you have things in your life that help you unwind from work.

MAIJA MATIKAINEN

EDUCATION

9/2018 – ongoing (expected graduation 2020)

Master of Arts, University of Helsinki

Study tracks: biology, communication studies

9/2015–06/2018

Bachelor of Science, University of Helsinki

WORK EXPERIENCE

11/2018 – ongoing

Fashion retail assistant (part-time), Meijun Muoti Oy

During my shifts I am responsible for store maintenance, customer service and sales. I also participate in drafting the shift roster. I have received excellent feedback for my customer service skills.

5/2018 – 8/2018

Office assistant, Eskon tapetti Oy

I was responsible for many assistant duties, including order processing and payroll. I also drafted media releases and advertisements as well as redesigned the company website. I used my digital and social media skills to revamp the company's social media strategy.



CONTACT DETAILS

Phone 040 234 5678

maija.matikainen@gmail.com

Mutkakatku 2 C, 00560 Helsinki

www.linkedin.com/in/maija-matikainen

INTRODUCTION

I'm a biology student with robust experience in communications and customer service work. Environmental ethics and communication are my passion. My personality is analytical, active and creative. My career goal is to promote the environment through communications.

LANGUAGES

Finnish	Native
English	Excellent
Swedish	Good
French	Basic

IT SKILLS

I am comfortable with a wide range of software, from text and photo editing to layout and social media platforms:

- MS Office
- Adobe Photoshop
- Adobe InDesign
- Facebook & Instagram

I can also create basic websites.

HOBBIES

Jogging, reading and writing my blog:
www.maijamaista.com

6/2016 & 6-7/2017

Club instructor/coordinator, Metsään! Nature clubAs nature club coordinator, I was responsible for school groups of around 20 children. I also took part in planning the activities for these environmental clubs and the associated communications.

I have also worked in childcare, park maintenance and newspaper distribution.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

1/2017 – ongoing

Communications officer, Ulpuukka student organisation
I am responsible for creating content for the organisation's newsletter, website and social media together with a colleague.

REFERENCES

Esko Virtanen, CEO, Eskon tapetit Oy
Phone 050 123 4568

Minna Metsänen, coordinator, Metsään! Nature club
Phone 040 555 6666

Example of articulating and tailoring your competence for an employer

Matti is a student of mathematics. Alongside his studies, he has worked as a receptionist at a gym for two months. When Matti spent some more time thinking about his work experience, he realised that in the course of his work he had learned the following things: a good group of colleagues helps work run smoothly, patience is the most important virtue in customer service, and when things are busy, organisation and prioritisation of tasks is key.

Now Matti has found an interesting project in the field of mathematics, and he is applying for work as a client liaison. After talking to the project manager, he realised that the work requires good interpersonal skills, the capacity to organise tasks in a busy environment and the ability to see the bigger picture. What should Matti write in his CV?

5/2018 – 7/2018

Receptionist, Voimaveikko Gym Oy

Customer service and administrative tasks

→ *This is a brief description that doesn't reflect Matti's work experience in the best possible way.*

5/2018 – 7/2018

Receptionist, Voimaveikko Gym Oy

Customer service, making class bookings, organising the schedule, sales and marketing, writing notices, assisting in event organisation

→ *This simple list of duties tells the reader a little more about the work, but the part of Matti's experience which is relevant to project work is still obscured.*

5/2018 – 7/2018

Receptionist, Voimaveikko Gym Oy

My work at the reception desk included a wide variety of tasks relating to the daily operation of the gym, ranging from customer service to communications. In my work, I learned to organise my tasks particularly during busy times and to work as part of a team. I received positive feedback for my proactive customer service.

→ *This might be the most relevant description.*

Remember that the things **you** should write in your CV depend on your specific skills and strengths as well as the things required for the position you are applying for. Be honest, don't exaggerate or belittle your achievements. The employer wants you to communicate your skills effectively and honestly.

APPLICATION LETTER

The application letter is a single-page document intended to communicate your motivation and get you an invitation to an interview. It's also an opportunity to explain to the employer at more length what you can offer to the organisation and how you could apply your skills to the position. This means that you will be able to demonstrate your suitability for the position and environment in question. The application must respond to the job advertisement as closely as possible and address the requirements and requests stated in it.

When writing an application, remember that quality is often more important than quantity. This means that you should not send the same application letter to different employers. Instead, tailor the letter for each position separately. Genuine motivation and carefully done groundwork will come through in your application letter, and they must be different for every position. Your application letter

will show whether you understand what the organisation does. The more you know about the values and tasks of the organisation, the kinds of people who work there and the types of people and skills they appreciate, the easier it will be for you to write a compelling application.

If you are interested in an organisation that has not publicly advertised an open position, you can always send an open application. In an **open application**, it is particularly important that you make a convincing argument for what your role in the organisation could be. For example, you can describe a challenge facing the employer that you could help solve with your skills. This requires double the amount of groundwork, but in the best case, you will be able to highlight a need for an important skill that the employer may not have identified yet.

Keep a list of the organisations where you have sent applications. In general, it's a good idea to make and keep notes of whom you have spoken with, on what date and what you have agreed in the course of the conversation.



Structure of an application letter

Maija Matikainen
Phone 040 234 5678
maija.matikainen@gmail.com
www.linkedin.com/in/maija-matikainen

Open application
1 February 2019

Director Päivi Pomo
Työnantaja Oy
Duunikatu 1
00560 Helsinki

Re: our phone conversation (if relevant)

YOUR PERSONALISED HEADLINE

The **first paragraph of the application letter describes your motivation and summarises you as an applicant.** Explain the types of positions that your skills could be applied to and why. Also explain why you are interested in this employer in particular and what is your main motivation for these specific duties. List your ideas and provide examples. Remember that your first paragraph is also intended to arouse the interest of the reader. Avoid clichéd opening lines like “I am a 25-year-old Master of Arts in linguistics...” You can be very creative when writing your opening as long as you’re in line with the style of your target organisation.

The second paragraph should be about your skills. **Explain how the employer could benefit from your skills and what kinds of demands you can address.** Describe your skills that are most applicable to the position. Don’t try to explain everything, just focus on what is relevant. Your strengths may relate to your study or work history or other experiences. Describe how you could apply these skills in your prospective duties.

In the third paragraph, you can **describe yourself:** what are your work methods like, how do you work alone and as a member of a team. Demonstrate your claims, for example by citing feedback you have received.

Propose the next step: state that you are interested in meeting and discussing matters further.

With kind regards,
Maija Matikainen

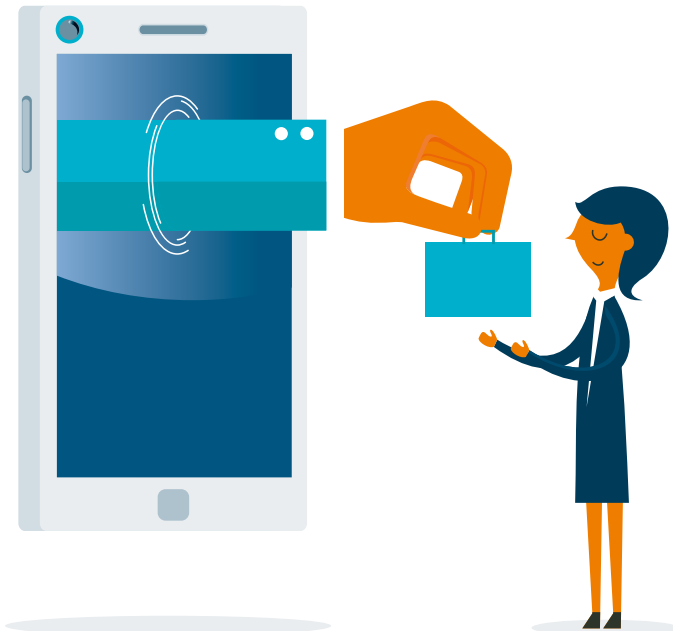
Attachment: CV

DIGITAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEMS

Some employers use digital recruitment systems. Municipalities (kuntarekry.fi), the government (valtiolle.fi), recruitment companies and large corporations often have their own systems. If you apply through such systems, you will typically have to enter your information onto a digital form.

Make sure you fill out the form carefully, even though it will require some patience. Recruitment systems usually process applications automatically, meaning that the system scans your information for specific keywords. If it doesn't find any, your application may not make it to the next round.

If it's possible to add attachments to the form as separate files, such as your CV or application letter, it is a good idea to do so. Try to include everything you would normally explain in your CV and application letter.



JOB INTERVIEW

An invitation to a job interview means that the employer considers you a qualified applicant. The interview lets the employer evaluate your motivation and your suitability for the position and work community. You will also be able to evaluate whether the position is suitable for you and to ask more detailed questions about the work and organisation. Genuine interest in the position will come through, so try to think about things you would like to know beforehand and during the interview.

During the interview, the employer will try to gain an overall image of you as a person. The main focus will be on determining your motivation and suitability. In addition, the interview will assess your knowledge, skills, attitudes, experience, values, style of working, work methods and other strengths.

Be prepared for a variety of settings: there may be several interviewers or observers present, or the interview may feature problem-solving assignments that relate to the position. Please note that the interview may be conducted in several languages, depending on the language skills indicated in your CV.

Always try to find out as much as you can about the position beforehand, for example from the organisation's website, and also look through the basic information of the organisation. Prepare to state your desired salary at the end of the interview, or to react to a salary proposal. You can refer to the collective agreement that the organisation works under, or your field's salary recommendations, to draft your salary suggestion.

At minimum, be prepared to

- Introduce yourself: “Tell us a little about yourself” is a typical request.
- Provide a summary of the education and work history you described in your application documents.
- Explain your ideas and expectations about the position.
- Demonstrate your motivation and interest in the position and organisation.
- Briefly describe your skills relevant to the position.
- Describe matters relating to you as a person and your individual characteristics as well as your strengths and areas of development.
- Explain how you work as a member of a team and what you expect from a supervisor.
- Describe your life situation and when you would be able to start in the position.
- Ask the interviewer for additional information, for example, what kind of a team would you be working in, what would your typical working day be like, or what kind of performance is expected.

List examples and try to speak in concrete terms. If you say you're a good team worker, you can briefly describe a real-world situation where you worked well in a group and mention the positive results that were gained thanks to the teamwork. Be honest: don't downplay your skills, but don't overstate them either. Think about what should be your main message to the interviewer and make sure you bring it up during the interview. Avoid speaking too long or hopping from one topic to the next when you answer questions.

According to the law, the employer can only ask you questions that are directly related to the position to which you are applying. If for one reason or another they ask you questions which are personal or do not relate to the position at hand, you can politely decline to answer.

Bring your CV and employer testimonials with you to the interview. Check that you know where the interview is set to take place and how to get there, and ensure that you arrive in good time. Set your phone to silent. Remember to present a positive attitude and to smile. Give a friendly greeting to everyone you meet. You can try to determine an appropriate dress code from the employer's website, for example. It's fine to be nervous! A little bit of nervousness can be good, and the interviewer may be nervous as well.

Remember to ask for feedback after the interview every time, and particularly if you are not selected for the position. Don't waste time mulling over whether you did something wrong or whether you could have done something better. Even if you don't get the job, you can still get valuable feedback that can help you move forward. Good luck!

VIDEOS AND PORTFOLIOS

Using video is becoming increasingly common both in applications (video CVs) and interviews (video interviews). Videos are your chance to highlight your personality, and for the recruiter they are a quick way to get a first impression of you and your style of communication.

When shooting a video, make sure the background is appropriate, the lighting good, your appearance neat and that the sound is audible. Find a well-lit place, and when preparing for a video interview, place the camera so that it's at, or slightly above, eye-level. In a video CV you can be creative in terms of the location and the content of the video.

Video interview

Video interviews are particularly popular when the recruiter expects a large number of applications. This is typically the case when organisations are seeking employees for summer jobs. Based on the videos, the candidates with the most potential are selected for an interview, but remember that if you are invited to a video interview, you will have already passed the first round.

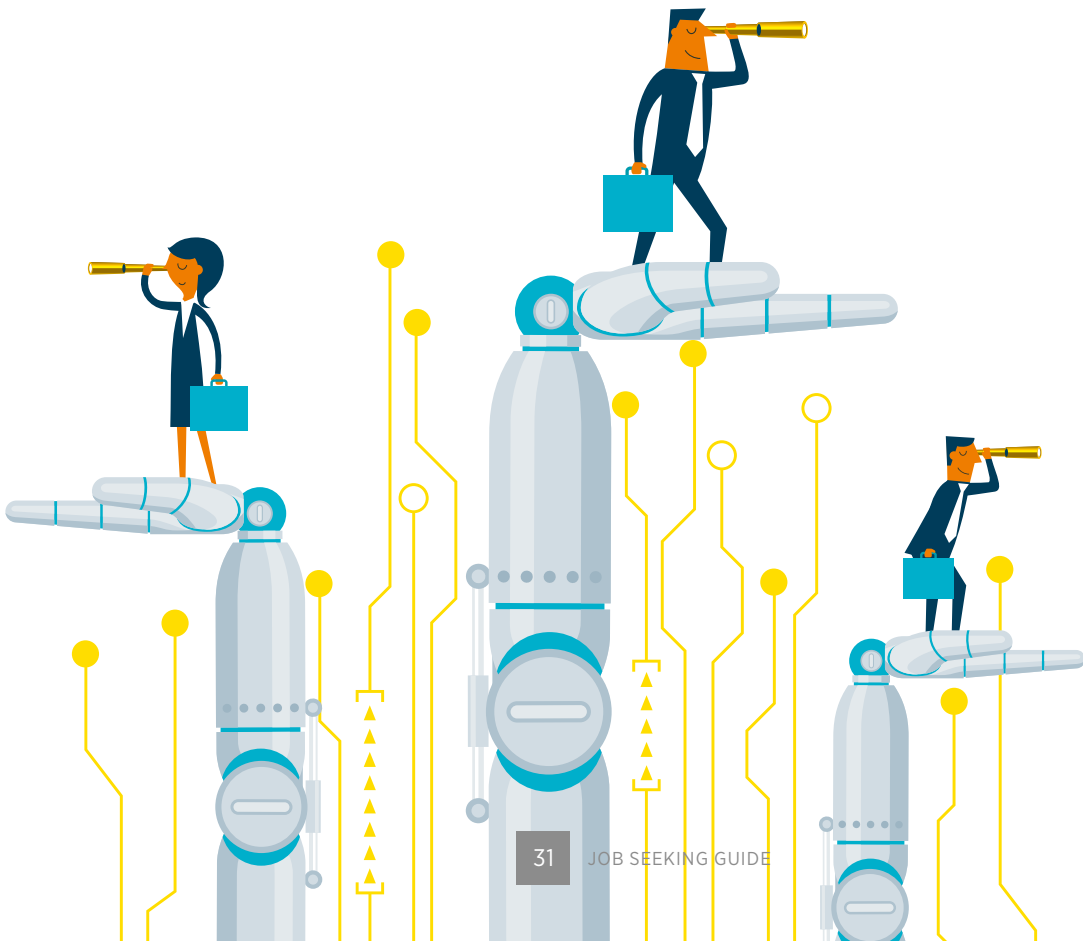
In most services which are used for video interviews, you will be able to listen to or read the questions beforehand. Do take advantage of this opportunity. You can plan your answers by bullet points or similar so that you can be sure you will say the most important things. Try to be natural, don't read directly from your notes and don't forget to smile! If the employer has set a time limit for your answers, don't exceed it.

Don't be afraid to press record! Usually you will be allowed to make several tries before sending your final answer that you are satisfied with.

VIDEO CV

Video CVs can be made for a wide variety of purposes. You can tailor yours for a specific job or make a more general video describing your skills to publish on your LinkedIn profile, blog or other online platforms. Don't recite your full CV in the video, just pick out the most important things. Be very concise: a good video CV is just one or two minutes long. Drafting the script carefully and editing your video after recording will help you make a polished product. Make sure to ask for feedback from others.

Your video can be a pleasant surprise for the recruiter, it can help set you apart from other applicants and emphasise your motivation. You can find examples of video CVs from [Google](#).



PORTFOLIO OF YOUR WORK

Portfolios are a concrete way of demonstrating your skills. Collect a private portfolio of images, texts or links for all examples of work that you consider significant, including results from your study and work projects, received feedback as well as any texts, images and videos you have published. Please note that the contents of a portfolio can be very different in different fields. This compilation is your meta-portfolio and is not intended for publication as such. Instead, it will serve as your own memory bank into which you collect various work samples and artefacts.

You can draft a sample portfolio from your meta-portfolio for many different purposes by selecting the most relevant samples for each situation. You can also publish your portfolio on several platforms, just like your video CV. A direct link to your portfolio gives your employer an easy way of browsing your earlier projects and becoming even more interested in your work.

The key point of a portfolio is that it demonstrates a dialogue between your work and the associated work samples and your self-reflection. Tell the reader what you want them to understand about your skills, experience and personality from each sample. When drafting your portfolio, consider what kinds of headers would be best to organise your samples and reflection. For example, you can proceed chronologically from one point in your life to the next like on a CV, or you can set headers for different themes, compiling samples from different stages of your life under the same header.



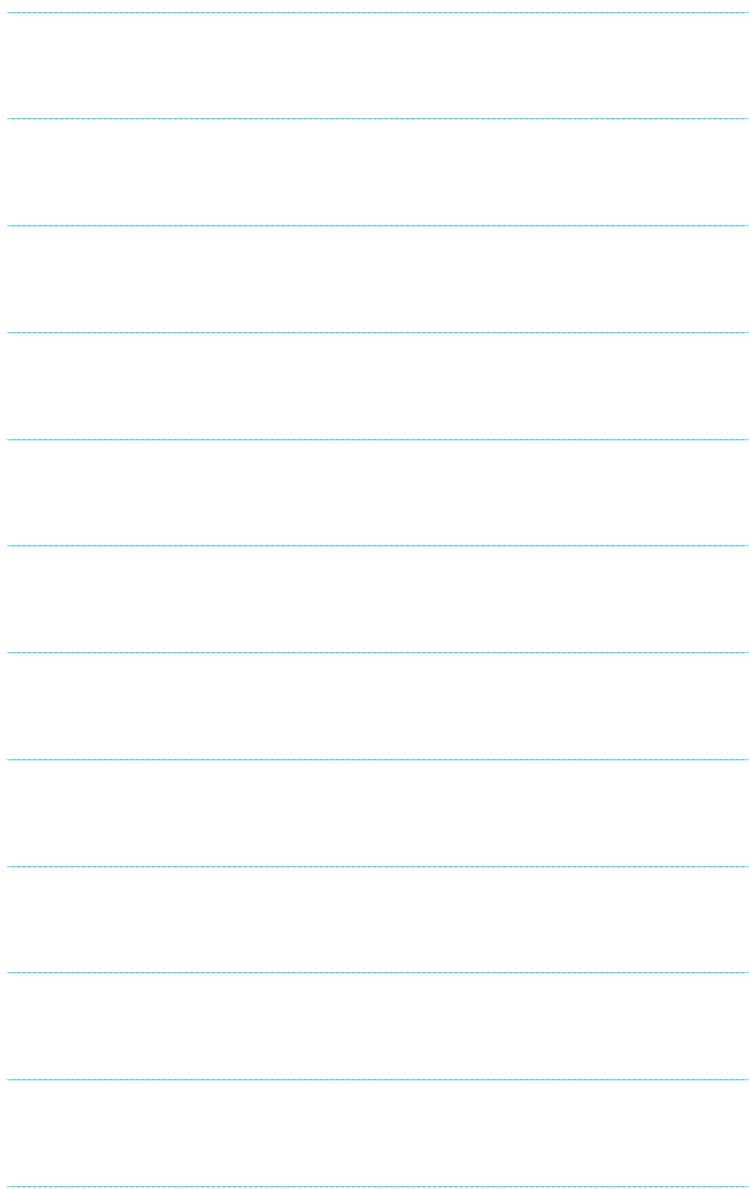
We hope this guide has given you good tips and ideas for your job search. Job seeking can sometimes be a long process which can take several months and test your determination. However, if you feel stuck, don't be afraid to reach out for support. Mulling over things alone will do no good. Ask for feedback from your friends and family, and find people who are in a similar situation to form a peer support group. Help is available from many places.

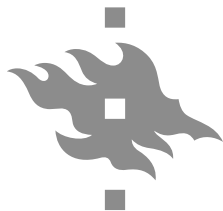
Don't be afraid to contact us if you need training in career planning or job seeking. Good luck!

Career Services

On the web

Instructions for students > Work and Career, Traineeships
guide.student.helsinki.fi/en





**HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI**