Work book

2027 – 2028

Guide for job search and career planning for students in technology, architecture, mathematics and natural sciences



Photo: Suvi-Tuuli Kankaanpää

Workbook 2027–2028

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Practical career advice



At TEK, the Academic Engineers and Architects in Finland, we want to support you during your studies by offering insights and tools to help you plan for your future.

Workbook provides you with tips on writing job applications, compiling your CV and preparing for job interviews. We shed light on the recruiter's perspective on job search and explain the various ways in which you can find hidden job vacancies. You'll also get expert advice on salary negotiations and checking your employment contract.

We'll help you deal with working life's uncertainties and prepare for the opportunities along the way. We introduce entrepreneurial communities on campuses and explain how TEK supports our members at different stages of their studies and careers.

All the best in finding and building your own path!

Sari Haataja-Helander
TEK Career Services

On Workbook's website, you'll find useful tips, as well as examples of CVs and job applications in Finnish, Swedish and English. www.tek.fi/workbook

Thank you

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Text: Katja Sulenko Illustrations: Maria Sann



Not all jobs are advertised

– here's how to find hidden jobs

Not all job opportunities are advertised publicly. Finding hidden jobs requires proactiveness. It also requires the ability to identify organisations that interest you and to make your skills visible to them. Small steps can help you spot opportunities and build networks to support your job search journey now and in the future.

Have you ever found yourself browsing through job postings and realising that there are no suitable internships, thesis positions or jobs in your industry? Perhaps you feel you're running out of options. It's always worth continuing to apply for vacancies that are posted on public job boards, but there are also other ways to find opportunities. According to statistics compiled by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, fewer than half the vacancies in Finland are advertised through public employment services.

Job opportunities can arise before a vacancy is advertised. An employer may need for new talent even when they aren't running a formal recruitment campaign. The hidden job market isn't a secret society or a clandestine route to a job. It's just another avenue to explore on your job search journey. It's a proactive approach to exploring opportunities and showcasing your skills.

What exactly is the hidden job market?

The hidden job market isn't about knocking on strangers' doors asking for work. The search for hidden jobs means expressing interest, engaging people in conversations and matching your skills with employers' needs. Navigating the hidden job market is a skill that can be learned one small step at a time. It's likely to feel daunting at first when you reach out to an organisation, but doing so can lead to discussions and open up job opportunities.

Taking advantage of the hidden job market means being proactive instead of waiting for a suitable vacancy to become available. The search may not lead to a job straight away, but the process also has other benefits: getting your name out there, learning more about organisations that interest you and making a positive first impression. If an organisation you've approached needs new talent later, it could be your name the employer remembers. Looking for opportunities on the hidden job market is a long-term commitment, and students with foresight start their network-building well before graduation.

Examples of hidden job search strategies:

- Contacting an organisation that you find interesting, even if they don't have any vacancies.
- Talking to people at careers fairs, student events or on company visits.
- Networking on LinkedIn and engaging people in conversations about roles or organisations that appeal to you.
- Approaching organisations about a potential thesis project.
- Identifying opportunities for further cooperation following an internship, a summer job or thesis position.
- Talking to former colleagues, supervisors or fellow students about career plans and opportunities in the industry.
- Attending industry events, seminars or networking activities and building new connections.

A successful hidden job search starts with understanding your skills

Identifying your personal skills and strengths is a useful exercise even before you graduate. Remember to think beyond your formal qualifications and employment history in your own field. Course assignments, laboratory projects, programming exercises, summer jobs, student activities, volunteering and hobbies are all opportunities to learn useful work skills.

The ability to give concrete examples of your skills is especially important in the hidden job market.

Another important consideration with the hidden job market is that people need to be able to find you and your expertise. Make sure that your LinkedIn profile is up to date, and that it features relevant keywords and describes your work experience and positions of trust. You can also use LinkedIn to post information about your projects, thesis or studies. Alternatively, you can assemble a portfolio or showcase your skills on GitHub.

Before you begin your hidden job search, consider these questions:

- What skills do you currently have?
- What kinds of responsibilities have you had in the past?
- What are your biggest achievements?
- What kinds of jobs appeal to you?
- What has earned you good feedback?
- What kinds of problems could you help solve?

Having answers ready for these questions makes it easier to verbalise your skills to potential employers.

Writing an open application

When you apply for a position advertised on a public job board, the goal is to meet the need the employer specifies. An open application is your opportunity to sell your skill set to an employer on your own terms.

The best way to approach an open application is to think of it not as a generic message to all employers but as a carefully crafted



First steps in a hidden job search

You do not need to have a perfect plan to start your hidden job search journey. Each new contact and conversation is an opportunity.

1 Identify organisations you'd like to work for

Make a list of between five and ten organisations that appeal to you. Cast your net wide: your list can include large corporations, start-ups, research centres and public-sector organisations. Most graduates want to work for the same big and famous multinational companies. Remember that there are other options, including smaller and lesser-known businesses.

2 Identify a point of contact

The right person to approach can often be identified by visiting the organisation's website or LinkedIn profile. Look for a supervisor, a team leader or a recruitment specialist as your first point of contact.

3 Get to know the organisation

What kinds of projects is the organisation working on at the moment? What kinds of skills could be needed there? What is it about the organisation that appeals to you? What could you offer them? A well-targeted approach stands out.

4 Don't hesitate to get in touch

The first conversation doesn't need to be long or perfect. Avoid trying to tell everything about yourself straight away. Focus more on establishing a connection and finding out what the organisation needs.

5 Remember that every interaction is valuable

Not everyone you talk to will invite you to a job interview. Nevertheless, every contact adds to your network, your understanding of the industry and your chances of finding work further down the line. Your job search journey is more likely to be a marathon than a sprint.

communication targeted at a specific organisation. The goal is to verbalise why you're interested in the organisation, and what you can offer them. The more targeted your application, the more likely it is to get the recipient's attention.

Try to identify a specific person to approach like the head of a team you'd like to join. If the organisation has a designated process or email address for open applications, follow the instructions provided.

What to say in an open application

- **Why have you chosen this organisation?** Explain what it is about the industry, organisation or line of business that appeals to you. This is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate that you are motivated and have done your homework, and to tailor your application to meet your chosen employer's needs.
- **What can you do?** Talk about your most relevant studies, projects, training, summer jobs or other experience. Remember to give concrete examples.
- **What kind of opportunity are you looking for?** Explain what kind of an opportunity you're looking for. Avoid generic statements like "I'm interested in opportunities in your organisation", as they can leave employers guessing. Try to identify specific roles or responsibilities that would be a good match for your skills.

Skills for your career

One of the benefits of the hidden job market is that you aren't competing for the same position with hundreds of other applicants, which can make it easier to get your expertise across. There are no job-specific requirements to meet, and you can focus on highlighting the strengths and skills that you want to leverage, with the employer's needs in mind.

Looking for opportunities on the hidden job market is more time-consuming than responding to job postings, and it requires self-reflection, commitment and initiative. Even if the process doesn't immediately lead to an actual job, it will help you identify your personal strengths, cultivate networks and build confidence. These skills will benefit you throughout your career.

3 *myths about the hidden job market*

1. "I don't have a network."

You do have contacts – your fellow students, people you know through your hobbies, former graduates of your university, your professors and colleagues from your summer jobs. You don't need an extensive network of contacts to get started. What matters more is the potential to build. Each new conversation adds to your networks.

2. "I don't have enough experience."

Students aren't expected to have years of work experience. Being highly driven, eager to learn and fresh out of university can be an advantage.

3. "I don't want to bother employers."

A well-written and carefully thought-out message tells the employer that you're motivated and proactive. You might get no reply or just a polite refusal, but there's also a chance that your message will spark a conversation that ends up opening doors to new opportunities.

As a TEK member, you can take our online course to learn more about the hidden job market: www.tek.fi/course-library

Text: TEK Career Services Illustrations: Maria Sann

A strong CV showcases you and your skills



A CV should spark an employer's interest, providing a clear and concise picture of you and your skills. At best, it will convince a recruiter to invite you to an interview, where both you and the employer can assess whether you're a good match in more detail.

Employers typically assess not only whether an applicant has the required skills for the role, but also how well their motivation and working style fit the role and organisation. That's why an effective CV is tailored to the position you're applying for. But there's no need to start from scratch every time. You can create a master version of your CV that includes all your experience and skills, and then adapt it for each opportunity by highlighting the skills and experience that are most relevant to the role.

A CV is more than just a list of your employment history and education; it's an introduction to you and your skills in the context of a specific role. Instead of just listing facts, focus on describing what you can do, what you've done in the past, and what you've achieved. Use complete sentences, write in the first person and incorporate active verbs such as "I built, I designed, I coordinated..." These descriptions help the reader build a clearer picture of your skills and the path that's brought you to where you are today.

It's important to include your employment history and education, but it's up to you to decide what to say about them. Think about what the employer would find relevant and interesting in your experience. At the least, the profile section at the beginning of your CV should be tailored to the position you're applying for. The profile doesn't have to be long, but it's your opportunity to explain who you are, what you can do, and what you'd like to do next in your career. If your CV includes a skills section, focus on the skills that the employer is looking for. Remember to include language and soft skills you've developed. Examples of soft skills are communication skills, ways of working, experience in different working environments, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

It's common to feel that there isn't enough to include in your CV when you're still studying or just starting your career. All work experience is valuable, including jobs outside your field. Think about all the skills you've acquired, not just through employment but also through your studies, projects, positions of trust and hobbies. You've been developing skills throughout your life, and you undoubtedly have strengths that are unique to your way of working. These are worth mentioning. It's particularly effective if you can highlight the strengths that are valued in the role you're applying for.

A good CV is informative, so it should be long enough to include all the relevant information. One or two pages is usually enough when you're just starting out. The file name should give the title of the document and your name. A PDF file is often a good choice for a CV. The content of your CV matters most, but a clear and easy-to-read layout helps the reader quickly understand the information you provide.



CV checklist

Your CV should include at least the following:

- ☐ Name
- ☐ Contact information
- ☐ Personal profile
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Work experience
- ☐ Skills

The following can also be worth mentioning:

- ☐ Positions of trust
- ☐ Volunteering
- ☐ Personal projects
- ☐ Courses and certifications
- ☐ References
- ☐ Hobbies and interests
- ☐ Right to work in Finland

If relevant, state clearly that you have the right to work in Finland.

Tip

The next page shows an example of CV content and layout.

See student CV examples: www.tek.fi/toolkit

Photo

You may add a photo of yourself (optional).

Contact details

Contact details could include:

- Phone number
- Email address
- Link to your LinkedIn profile
- City-level location

Education

Degree title
Name of the school
Start/end dates (month/year)

In addition to listing your degree, describe the content of your studies. For example, mention your degree programme, areas of specialisation, key courses, thesis topic and other relevant details about your education. Providing more information about your studies is particularly worth it if you do not have a lot of work experience yet.

Skills

Highlight your key professional skills, soft skills and technical skills. List all the languages you speak, including your native language and Finnish, even if your Finnish skills are only at a basic level. You can also include an assessment of your skill levels in this section.

First name Last name

Headline or title

A degree, job title or a short statement that highlights your professional identity.

Profile

Start your CV with a profile text, i.e., a concise summary of yourself in a few sentences. Describe who you are, what you can do, what your interests are and what your next professional goal is. Include the key skills and interests that relate to the job you are applying for, and tailor your profile to match the role and organisation.

Work experience

Job title
Name of the employer
Start date (month/year) – end date (month/year)
Description of the work experience

Present your work experience, starting with your most recent role. All work experience is valuable, so make sure to describe each role and highlight what you learned from it.

In addition to listing your job titles and employers, describe your work experience. Explain your responsibilities and achievements with as much detail as possible. Use active verbs and numbers to illustrate the impact and scale of your work. Highlight what the purpose of your role was, how you impacted the organisation's activities and results, what you succeeded in and what you learnt during your employment.

Use the word "I" to illustrate what you did. You can also present what kind of collaboration you were part of, in which team or unit you operated and, if needed, introduce the organisation. Do this particularly if the organisation is unfamiliar to Finnish employers. Include the company's industry, size (number of employees), and a short description of its products, services, or main activities.

You can use several pages for your CV, if the contents so require. Make the descriptions easy to read with suitable paragraphs, subheadings or bullet points.

References

If you have references, you can mention this in your CV by including the phrase: "References available upon request."

Only share your referees' contact details once you have confirmed that they are available and have given you permission to share their information. Suitable referees include people who know your work or studies well, such as a current or former supervisor, colleague, professor, mentor or another member of your professional network.

Hobbies and interests

If you want, you can showcase your hobbies and interests. Presenting them can give a sense of your personality. They can be particularly relevant if they highlight something new in your background or relate to the job you are applying for.

Positions of trust

Role
Organisation
Start date (month/year) – end date (month/year)
Description of the experience

You can present positions of trust and volunteer experience in your CV in the same way as work experience. Describe them in concrete terms, highlighting your responsibilities, achievements and skills developed through these roles.

Courses and certifications

You can present additional training, courses, licences, permits and certifications in a separate section. Include those that are particularly relevant to the position and help demonstrate your skills, competence and qualifications.

Other

If needed, add further sections that showcase your professional background and competencies relevant to your career goals. These could include, for example, scientific publications, honours, awards or personal projects.

Text: TEK Career Services Illustration: Maria Sann

How to write a convincing cover letter

The cover letter is your opportunity to explain to the employer why you're a good fit for the position. A cover letter is different from a CV: it gives you an opportunity to say why you're interested in the position and the organisation, and why your skills and experience prepare you for the role's responsibilities.

Start by analysing the job posting

The best way to start writing a cover letter is to analyse the job posting. Look for information about the skills that are needed in the position, and what's expected of the person chosen for the job. Once these are clear in your mind, you can reflect on how well your own background matches what is required, and how you can get this across in your application.

Build your application in stages

1 Introduction and motivation

Start your cover letter by specifying the position you're interested in and explaining why. Identify the aspects of the position that appeal to you. For example, you can explain what it is about the organisation's work that you find meaningful, or how the position fits with your career goals. You can mention your studies or your thesis in this context if they're relevant to the position.

2 Relevant skills and supporting evidence

Focus on describing your skills and experience that are relevant to the position. You can answer questions like why you'd be the right person for the job, or what added value you would bring to the organisation. Think broadly about the experience you've gained through work, studies, hobbies and volunteering, and highlight the examples that are relevant to the role in some way.

Previous work experience is valuable, but when you're still studying, your studies, projects and positions of trust can be just as important. These experiences can demonstrate to the employer that you've learned valuable skills like responsibility, punctuality and teamwork. If you're applying for an internship or a summer job, it can also be useful to highlight your ability to learn new things and apply what you've learned in practice.

Concrete examples of your skills are the best way to convince the reader. Instead of making generic claims, try to give examples that illustrate the skills you've learned that are relevant to the position, and how you would apply them in the job.

3 Working style and closing the cover letter

Describe what kind of a worker you are and how you work. Focus on any approaches to work that are mentioned in the job posting and that apply to your way of working. The cover letter is also an opportunity to express your desire to build a career in Finland by, for example, talking about your motivation to learn Finnish or explaining what experience you already have of working in Finland, Finnish culture or society. Check before you send off your application that you have covered all the points mentioned in the job posting. You can end the letter by mentioning that you would be happy to come and tell the employer more about you in person.

Using AI tools to support your writing

- Artificial intelligence (AI) is a useful tool for writing job applications. You can use AI to, for example, analyse job postings, draft cover letters or rephrase what you have written.
- If you do use AI, remember to read through the text carefully and to make changes and additions that sound like you and eliminate the kinds of platitudes that are typical of AI and that recruiters have learned to spot.
- Keep in mind that no AI assistant can describe your motivation, personality or strengths in as much detail as you can, and that AI does not know what your future plans are. AI also lacks the capability to give concrete examples that can add credibility to your application and set you apart from other applicants. Use AI sparingly and always check the accuracy and style of the text before sending off your application.



Quick tips

1. Get straight to the point.
2. In most cases, it is best to write your application in the same language as the job posting.
3. Let your personality shine through the text.
4. Keep your text concise and easy to read so that it fits on one page.
5. Use a clear font and name the file with your name and the title of the document.
6. Send your application as instructed in the job posting.

Exercise

Analyse a job posting

This exercise is a good place to start when you're writing a cover letter. It teaches you to spot what the employer is looking for and evaluate how well your skills and experience match the employer's wish list. This will help you identify what to include in your application to make it relevant to the position.

Fill in the table below when considering whether to apply for the position. Start by identifying what it was about the job that caught your attention. Use the left-hand column to write down the criteria or responsibilities mentioned in the job posting and the right-hand column to list your skills or abilities that match them. You may have developed relevant skills through your studies, summer jobs, projects, hobbies or positions of trust.

The idea is to identify the skills, abilities and motivation you'd bring to the position. Job postings often list many requirements. It's perfectly normal not to meet all of them, but this shouldn't stop you applying. Just focus on highlighting your motivation and your ability to learn and grow. You can give examples of situations in which you took on new responsibilities, learned new skills or cultivated professional growth.

Finally, use the ideas and examples you've written down in the exercise when drafting your cover letter.

Position details

Employer: _____

Job role: _____

What is it about the job and the employer that appeals to you?

(E.g. the industry, the organisation's values, learning opportunities, projects, products/services, technologies, compatibility with your personal goals.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is the employer looking for, and what can you offer?

What requirements and responsibilities are mentioned in the job posting? List the employer's wishes.	What relevant skills and experience do you have for this role? Think about your studies, summer jobs, hobbies or positions of trust.

What makes you a strong candidate for this job?
What selling points should you emphasise?

_____

_____

_____

What else is relevant or interesting for the employer to know about you?

_____

_____

_____

Text: TEK Career Services Illustrations: Maria Sann

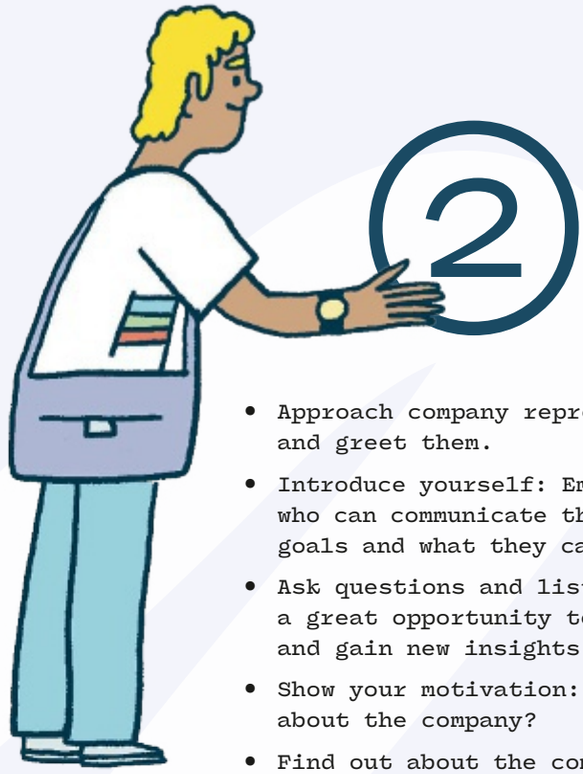
Careers fairs

Careers fairs are a great opportunity to learn about employers, gain insights into companies and the skills they value, and find out which organisations are recruiting professionals in your field now or in the near future. Fairs also provide an excellent opportunity to expand your professional network. It’s worth preparing in advance to get the most out of the event.



1 *Before a careers fair*

- Check which companies are attending and think about which ones you’d like to meet.
- Do some research on the companies to identify the kinds of skills and expertise they value.
- Prepare to introduce yourself: What skills and expertise do you have? What are your career goals? Which roles, departments or functions interest you?
- Think about the questions you’d like to ask: What would you like to know about the companies?
- Make sure your CV and LinkedIn profile are up to date.



2 *During a careers fair*

- Approach company representatives with confidence and greet them.
- Introduce yourself: Employers value candidates who can communicate their skills, goals and what they can offer clearly.
- Ask questions and listen carefully. This is a great opportunity to gather information and gain new insights.
- Show your motivation: What interests you most about the company?
- Find out about the company's recruitment process, and how to apply for opportunities with them. Make a note of the company representative's name.

3 *After a careers fair*

- Connect with the company representative on LinkedIn and include a short thank-you message.
- If you decide to apply for a position with the company, follow the advice shared by the company representative.
- You can mention your conversation with the company representative in your cover letter.



Text: Sanna Frisk Illustrations: Maria Sann Photo: Jean Koskikuru



Recruiter tips for jobseekers

Students can find job hunting surprisingly confusing. One company replies within days, another takes weeks. One recruitment process has one interview, another includes screening questions, assessments and several interviews.

As a recruiter, I see many strong applications every year, but I also see situations where small changes could have improved a candidate's chances. You don't need to be an expert to get your first job. Recruiters are often looking for potential: curiosity, willingness to learn, motivation and the ability to explain your skills clearly.

Why do recruitment processes differ so much?

Recruitment practices vary between companies. Different organisations have different systems, timelines and ways of assessing candidates. As a candidate, it's useful to understand what happens next. Ask how many stages there are, when decisions are expected, and when you're likely to hear back. These are valid questions, especially if you're applying for several summer jobs or internships at the same time.



Sanna Frisk

The writer was named Recruiter of the Year at the 2025 Finland's Recruitment Gala. She works for a financial services group, recruiting IT professionals across Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Poland. Passionate about recruitment development and candidate experience, Sanna also trained HR professionals in HENRY's national Recruitment Network from 2018 to 2024.

How to make a lasting impression on the hiring team

Many students wonder how they can stand out when there are many applicants. It's usually several small things that make you stand out: applying early, having a clear CV, tailoring your application to the role and showing why you're interested.

You can contact the recruiter, but it's better to ask something that you can't find out from the job advert or the company's website. A message that simply says "I've submitted my application" is unlikely to make much difference.

Talk to company representatives at career fairs, student events or on LinkedIn. They can tell you what the work actually looks like. Networking works best before you need a job. An alumnus or someone you meet at an event may become your connection with a future employer.

What should you highlight in your CV?

In engineering, architecture and natural sciences, recruiters are often looking for potential, problem-solving ability and willingness to learn. We want to understand quickly what you're studying, when you're graduating, what interests you, and what you can already do. If you have limited work experience, highlight course projects, tools and practical skills. If you've used Python, CAD, simulation software, data analytics or laboratory methods, say so clearly. Don't assume that a recruiter will understand what your skills are just from your degree title.

International students should provide context about previous employers. A recruiter in Finland may not know a company from India, Germany, Brazil, Kenya or the United States. Briefly explain the company's industry, approximate size, and whether it operates internationally. Most importantly: be authentic. Your CV should present you well – it shouldn't create a fictional version of you.

What if you don't have work experience yet?

Your CV doesn't need to be empty. Skills can come from courses, student organisations, volunteering, competitions, hobbies, personal projects or independent learning. Course grades can also demonstrate skills. If you haven't used a technology professionally yet, a strong grade in a relevant course can show that you understand the fundamentals. A programming project or engineering course can provide evidence of your capabilities.

The key is to connect your background with the job. Explain what you did, what you learned, and why it's relevant. If you're changing careers, your previous degree and work experience are part of your story. You don't need to hide them. Connect your existing skills with your new direction.

Summer jobs and trainee programmes: be early

Summer and trainee recruitment often starts earlier than students expect. Applicant numbers can be high, so applying early can make a difference. Update your CV before the recruitment season starts in January. If you need support, book an appointment with your university's career services in October or November rather than on the last evening before the application deadline.

When a suitable position is published, apply as soon as you reasonably can. Take screening questions seriously. They can help the recruiting team understand which candidates they should prioritise.

And don't be discouraged by a rejection. Your CV is a tool – it isn't you! Recruitment is also about timing – and sometimes luck. Keep applying, learn from each process and improve your materials gradually.

Remember the following when you're creating your CV:

You can gain skills not only from work experience, but also from studies, student organisations, volunteering, competitions, hobbies, personal projects or independent learning.

What on earth is an ATS?

An ATS, or Applicant Tracking System, is a recruitment system used to collect and manage applications. It isn't a mysterious robot waiting to reject good candidates. Companies use ATS systems differently. Recruiters may review applications manually; the system helps organise, filter or process candidates. You can see the name of the ATS in the browser address and Google how many AI functionalities it has. Make your information easy for both the system and the human reader to understand. Use relevant keywords from the job advertisement when they genuinely describe your skills. If it mentions data analysis, project management or customer work, and you have that experience, use the same terminology. Think of this as data repetition: important skills should appear consistently across your CV, LinkedIn and application.

Keep your CV simple and readable. Clear headings and straightforward formatting usually work better than complicated graphics, tables or images. Save your CV as a PDF and only include visual elements if they add value.



Use AI, but don't outsource your thinking

AI can be a useful writing partner, especially for international students and career changers. You can explain your background, degree and target role, and ask an AI tool to help communicate your experience more clearly. AI can help you describe a university project, improve structure, practise interviews or adapt your CV to a job advertisement. But AI should be a tool, not your substitute. Avoid sending an application you don't recognise as your own. If every sentence sounds generic and polished, your personality and actual experience can disappear.

I'd rather read a genuine application with a few imperfect sentences than a beautifully written application that doesn't sound like the person sitting in front of me in an interview.

Make yourself discoverable

Not every opportunity is publicly advertised. Staffing and recruitment companies can be useful, especially for students. Many have clients looking for temporary workers, trainees and junior professionals. Creating a candidate profile on several staffing company websites can open another route into the Finnish labour market. Some consulting companies also use a "Try & Hire" model, where you first work through the consultancy and may later move into a permanent role with the client.

LinkedIn is another important part of this. Ask yourself whether your profile tells the same story as your CV. Recruiters headhunt candidates using keywords, so being discoverable matters. Include at least your studies, interests, key skills, projects, and the technologies or tools you can use. The more clearly you describe your skills and expertise, the easier it will be for recruiters to find your profile through relevant keyword searches.

Be active: build your profile, talk to people, register with staffing companies, and stay open to different industries and roles.

There's no single correct route into working life. Keep your profile honest, make your skills visible, apply early and keep going. Your first job is a beginning, not a final verdict on your career.

A few basics are worth remembering:

- Recruiters should treat candidates equally.
- Interview questions should be related to the role and your skills.
- You have the right to ask how your personal data is processed.

Understanding working life

It's worth learning as much as you can about working life before you graduate. TEK studies working life and compiles statistics that are also widely available to students.

Academic Engineers and Architects in Finland TEK keeps a close eye on the job market in the technology industry and takes an interest in working life's current topics and phenomena. TEK's more than 85,000 members offer a great window into what it's like to work in the technology industry.

TEK leverages this research-based insight in its advocacy and lobbying. Our goal is to improve working life and give individuals a stronger position based on factual data. TEK's annual surveys provide the basis for its salary recommendations. TEK publishes its research widely and applies its knowledge to provide meaningful services to our members.

Summer jobs and study

TEK Student Survey 2025 asked about students' experiences of working and applying for jobs. According to the survey, one in five respondents had worked in a role that was closely linked to their field of study that summer. One in five had worked in roles unrelated to their discipline.

Around 10% had had jobs that were loosely related to their studies. Approximately 13% of the respondents had stayed in a job that they had started during the academic term. Six per cent had spent the summer working on an industry thesis, and around 8% of the respondents had advanced their studies independently during the summer.

Job search requires perseverance

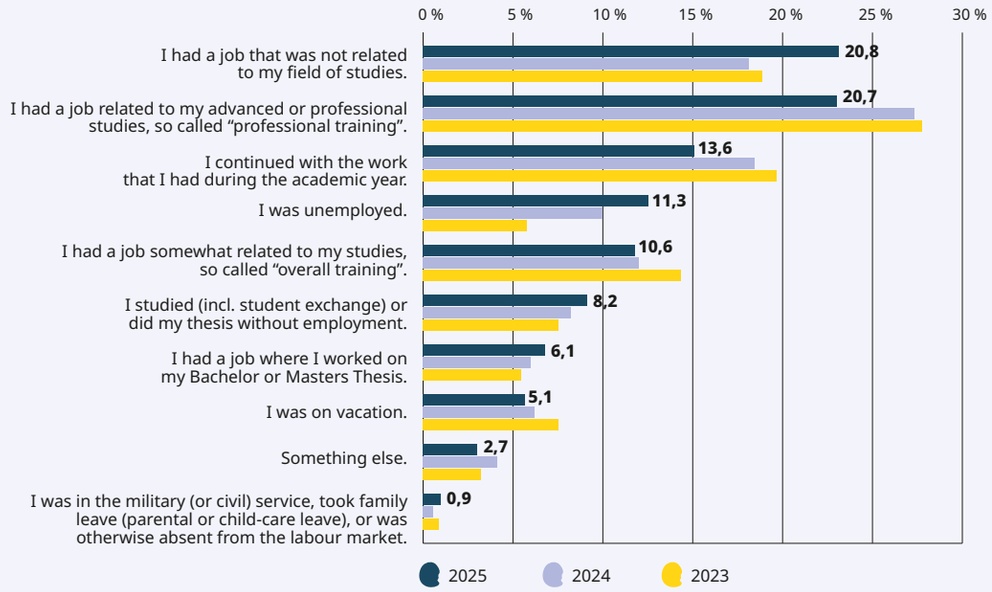
Many of the students who took part in the survey had found it more difficult to find a summer job than in previous years. One in five respondents had found the process of finding a job easy, however. Some had previous knowledge of their employer, which may have helped in securing a position for the summer.

The respondents mostly looked for and found work on public job boards and LinkedIn. Some had found summer job opportunities through employers' own communications or their family, friends or university. Many needed to send out multiple applications before they were employed.

Methods of finding a summer job may also depend on the applicant's field of study, phase of studies, previous work experience and existing contacts. It's natural for students to accumulate work experience at different rates during their studies. The important thing to remember is that all work experience builds competence and confidence in working life. Even if your summer job isn't directly related to your discipline, it will give you skills and experience that can prove useful in your future career.

Employment situation during the summer

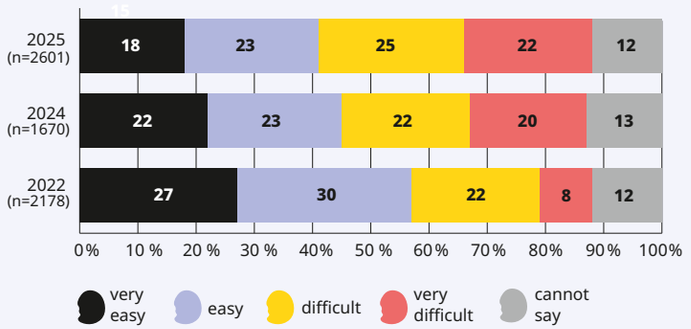
Primarily during the summer... (% of all respondents)



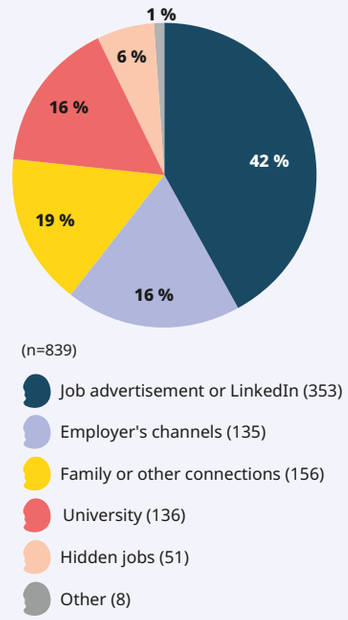
TEK's more than
85,000 members
offer a great window into what it is like to work in the technology industry.

Those who had summer jobs felt it had become more difficult to find work

Finding a summer job this year was...



Students found their job mostly through a job advertisement or via LinkedIn.



Unlock the hidden job market

Knowing how to navigate the hidden job market becomes all the more important after graduation. Few of the students who answered the survey had mastered the art of hidden jobseeking, however. Hidden jobseeking skills are worth practising and honing before you leave university.

New ways of searching for information or exploring personal networks can also lead to exciting job opportunities that you wouldn't otherwise have known about. Hidden jobseeking skills are especially useful when you're looking for a business to partner with you for an industry thesis.

However, the survey's results highlight that everyone's circumstances are different. Try to identify new ways to approach the jobseeking process, even if those approaches feel uncomfortable at first. And if don't succeed in finding a summer job next year, there are plenty of other ways you can learn about and prepare yourself for the job market.

For our top tips for navigating the hidden job market, see pages 2–5.

60%

had based their salary expectation on TEK's salary recommendations.

Salary data in job search

Verbalising your salary expectation is no less important a job search skill than writing a cover letter or preparing for a job interview. TEK issues salary recommendations for internships, students' work in their own field, thesis positions and starter salaries for recent graduates.

According to the Student Survey conducted in the autumn of 2025, 60% of the respondents who had communicated their salary expectation to potential employers and had based their expectation on TEK's salary recommendations had been paid more than those who had not.

Read more about salary recommendations and salary negotiations on pages 37–39.

TEK studies working life

1. **TEK Student Survey** is conducted every autumn to learn how students are doing, how they see their future, and what concerns they may have. The 2025 survey focused on guild culture and neurodiversity.
2. **TEK Graduate Survey** for all technology and architecture graduates collects feedback on studies, as well as working both during studies and on graduation. The survey provides valuable information about writing an industry thesis. The survey is conducted in close cooperation with universities.
3. **TEK's Labour Market Survey** collects data annually from members who are currently in employment. The survey provides an overview of members' labour market situation, as well as their salaries and salary trends. The annual survey also covers a range of changing topics related to working life.

Learn about the latest research at TEK:
tek.fi/research

The most unexpected classroom on campus?

Entrepreneurship Society

Have you considered a career in self-employment? Oskari, Petteri and Netta lead student-run entrepreneurship societies on the campuses of Lappeenranta and Tampere. They say anyone can get involved, even if you have no idea what your business could be – or even any interest in running one! What matters is a willingness to learn and grow.



Oskari Salmivesi



Petteri Kalliomäki

Entrepreneurship isn't necessarily something you think about when you're at university, as **Oskari Salmivesi** well knows. However, getting involved in your campus's entrepreneurship society could be exactly what you need.

Oskari wasn't thinking about starting a business either when the president of the LUT Entrepreneurship Society in Lappeenranta, or LUTES, invited him to come along. The president could see something in Oskari.

– A common misconception is that you need to have an idea of a business already to join an entrepreneurship society. That's what I thought, too, Oskari says.

– But you don't need one! The only requirement is that you're brave enough to join, **Petteri Kalliomäki** chimes in.

Oskari and Petteri are president and vice president of LUTES in 2026. According to Oskari, the society attracts people who also want to learn skills that aren't taught at the university. As a member of LUTES you can gain experience

of public speaking and interacting with a wide range of people, as well as opportunities for networking and challenging yourself.

LUTES has more than 1,200 members, and Oskari estimates approximately half of them are international students. Being part of the society has done wonders for his language skills.

Petteri feels that LUTES has become an important community for many, as that is where their friends are.

– If you have even the slightest interest in entrepreneurship, we're always looking for new people to join our ranks. LUTES is a great place to find business partners and make lifelong friends who share your interests and values, he explains.

Petteri is studying for a master's degree in international business and business analytics at LUT Business School. He started his first business around a decade ago and has been self-employed for the last five years or so. He had started to miss having people around him, which is what led him to LUTES.

– I was only attending the society's events at first, but I soon realised that I wanted to be more involved. Networking is the most important skill the society has taught me.

Everyone in Petteri's family is self-employed, and he always felt destined for entrepreneurship.

– I like exploring new ideas and seeing whether and how they work.


Netta Pihlanen

Oskari is a third-year student of industrial engineering and management at LUT University. He's hoping to find paid employment after graduation, but the freedom of self-employment is also tempting.

– Naturally, you have to work to your clients' schedules, but you get to choose your own hours. You can do your own thing. As an entrepreneur, you can blaze your own trail, which feels meaningful and motivating.

For now, however, both Oskari and Petteri are focusing on LUTES. LUTES hosts guest speakers, pitching competitions, international excursions, hackathons, start-up accelerators and business incubator events. The society even has its own clubroom, called "Parvi", on campus.

– Everyone's welcome at our events. You don't even have to be interested in entrepreneurship, just in self-improvement, Oskari says.

– We give you the tools and networks to start your entrepreneurship journey, so when you do get an idea for a business, you'll be ready to run with it, Petteri explains.

Entrepreneurs tackle problems

Netta Pihlanen is a fifth-year student of biomedical engineering at Tampere University. Her involvement with the Tampere Entrepreneurship Society, or TRES, came about by chance.

Netta needed a couple of credits to complete her bachelor's degree. She came across a course run by TRES about technology start-ups.

– It was a happy coincidence! Risk-taking and the idea of start-up entrepreneurship have always appealed to me, she says.

Netta's dream is to do something meaningful that makes the world a better place. What particularly fascinates her about entrepreneurship is the opportunity it offers to solve problems and find positive new ways to use technology, for example. The concept of research to business – the commercialisation of scientific discoveries – is especially close to her heart.

– I like multifaceted risks and the idea that no two days are ever the same, says Netta, who now runs her own business.

She's also the 2026 president of TRES. According to Netta, TRES is an inspiring and instructive community that offers opportunities for experimenting and learning. There are events for everyone, "from freshman to founder". A recent example is a robotics workshop where participants could build their own robots using parts supplied by TRES. Everyone with an interest in robotics was welcome. This year's main event was the society's Summer Founders Programme – an intensive two-month accelerator programme that included a trip to Silicon Valley.

– We have the contacts and experience to help anyone who wants to organise an event. For example, one person recently organised a hackathon that attracted 120 participants, Netta says.

TRES's communication channel has just over a thousand subscribers. TRES has around forty active members. The society's clubhouse, which is called "House", is on the Hervanta campus. Its doors are open to all students, regardless of what they're studying, or whether they already have an idea for a business.

What particularly fascinates her about entrepreneurship is the opportunity it offers to solve problems and find positive new ways to use technology, for example.

– I remember thinking I need a business idea to join an entrepreneurship society. But that's a myth, as is the belief that only students of industrial engineering and management or those doing business studies can join. TRES is the perfect place for programming, brainstorming, studying, reading start-up literature, or just hanging out and sipping soft drinks.

Netta is thrilled with how many students from different disciplines have discovered the society. For her, diversity is a strength. TRES operates mostly in English, but there are also plenty of Finnish speakers at the clubhouse.

– I believe in learning by doing. The society has already taught me team leadership, project management, event organising, public speaking, investing and finance. TRES is an incredibly powerful learning environment!

Are you interested in entrepreneurship?

Academic Engineers and Architects in Finland TEK is here for you.

As a member, you can turn to TEK's lawyers and guides for advice on starting a business, as well as on shareholders' and commission agreements in which you are a party. TEK's lawyers don't draw up contracts for you, but they can read through your drafts and offer advice. TEK also hosts events and offers online courses on themes related to entrepreneurship.

– Entrepreneurship societies like LUTES and TRES are a great place to start for a student, says **Martti Kivioja**. He acts as TEK's policy adviser for entrepreneurship and industrial policy.

– I highly recommend giving entrepreneurship a go! And if it isn't for you, you can always go back to working for someone else, Martti says.

For small business owners who only work on their business sporadically and have no employees, Martti recommends a system called light entrepreneurship, which involves using an online invoicing service such as Ukko.fi or OP. TEK's members get a discount on these services.

– It's important to remember, however, that entrepreneurship is both an opportunity and a risk. Entrepreneurship can have an impact on your unemployment security and other benefits, which is also something worth checking, he says.

Read more about TEK's services for entrepreneurs: www.tek.fi/entrepreneur

Text: Henri Heikintalo Illustrations: Maria Sann Photo: Sanna Nuutinen / Foto Bakery

Moving forward in your career despite uncertainty

You can’t predict the path your career will take. However, uncertainty shouldn’t stop you taking action. The key is to identify the aspects you can influence and try to accept those you don’t fully control.



Feeling uncertain isn’t a sign of failure

People who are just starting out on their career and looking for work often feel they should already know what they want, have the ability to convince others and trust in their ability to succeed. Doubting yourself, however, is also common: what if you can’t find work in your own industry? Are your skills up to scratch? What if you make the wrong choice? It’s natural for your brain to try to find a definitive answer, even when there is none.

The labour market and employers' needs continue to change in all industries, including technology, architecture, mathematics and natural sciences. Feeling uncertain is part of being human. The job market and chance often play a significant role at the beginning of a career, and there’s no way to predict whether a choice you make today proves right or wrong in the future. Comparing yourself with others can also warp your perspective: people tend to talk more about their successes and plans for a bright future than their doubts and moments of indecision. Uncertainty is something everyone experiences, and there’s no need to see it as a fault you need to fix or a sign of inadequacy. Focus instead on recognising whether uncertainty is starting to limit what you do and stopping you seeing or going after opportunities.

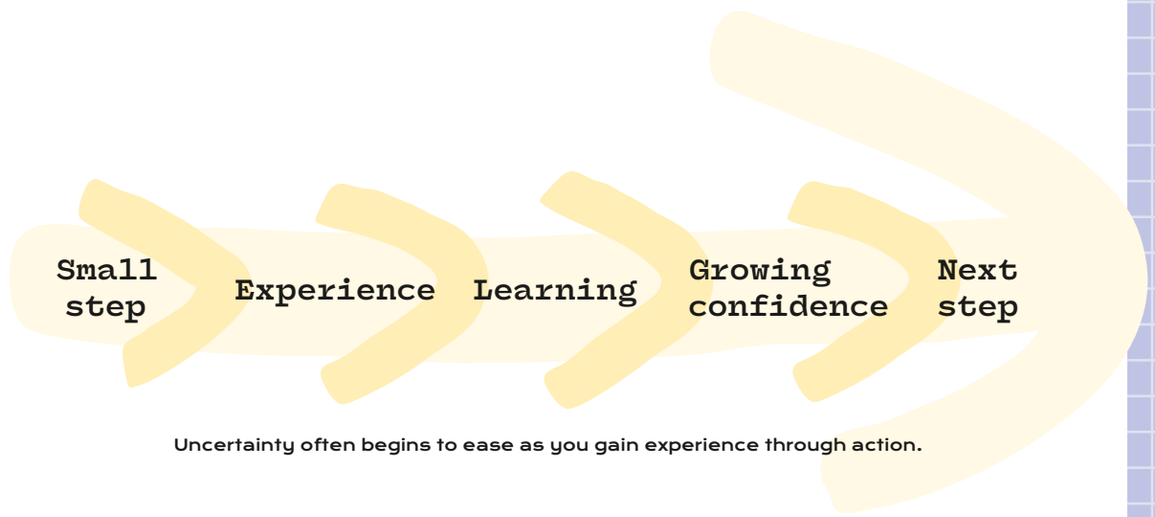
The pressure that comparing yourself with others and doubting yourself creates can make you think you need to know everything about everything and be certain about every decision you make. A more sustainable approach is to trust in your ability to learn, ask for help and receive feedback. You aren’t meant to be a seasoned expert when you graduate.

Allow uncertainty to be present, but don’t let it decide for you

It’s natural to try to get rid of uncertainty before taking action or making a decision. However, uncertainty often begins to ease only after you gain experience through action. Instead of trying to make uncertainty disappear, you can learn to accept it as part of developing your professional self-awareness.

The thoughts that self-doubt evokes can be acknowledged and examined without letting them determine your next move. When you notice yourself thinking “I won't manage”, try to rephrase it: “My mind is telling me that I won't manage.” Can you see yourself making the move even with this thought in the back of your mind? Such negative forecasting or catastrophising is a natural psychological defence mechanism: “If I avoid going after this opportunity, I’ll save myself from feeling I’ve failed. ” Taking action can help you realise you can move forward despite your doubts, and that having doubts or fearing failure doesn’t have to stop you pursuing what’s important to you.

The thoughts and fears that come with uncertainty aren’t reliable indicators of what will happen. Try to identify steps you can take, even without knowing the outcome.



Uncertainty often begins to ease as you gain experience through action.

4

questions to help you deal with uncertainty

When a situation feels uncertain, ask yourself:

1. What aspects of the situation are beyond your control?

E.g. the job market, the recruiter's final decision

2. What aspects can you try to influence?

E.g. how you present your skills, what new knowledge or competence you acquire

3. What choices can you make, and what actions can you take yourself?

E.g. whether to submit a job application, whether to reach out to an employer that appeals to you

4. What kind of support or self-care do you need to be able to take the next step?

E.g. sharing worries with family and friends, pausing to de-stress

This distinction can help you focus your resources on where your own actions can make the biggest difference. Taking action doesn't mean simply trying harder and achieving more. It also includes asking for help, setting boundaries and looking after yourself, as well as having the courage to rethink your goals and change direction if your previous choices no longer feel right. In difficult times, self-care and taking a break can also be important forms of action. The variables we can influence most are often simple everyday things.

It's also good to remember that the journey to achieving your dreams is rarely a straight line, and that it's normal for plans to change along the way. Experiences and choices that feel inconsequential now can end up benefiting you in ways you could never have imagined.

If you notice yourself returning to the same worry again and again, ask yourself whether this is a problem that needs solving, and whether there's anything you can do about it at the moment. It could be your worry is a natural, unavoidable uncertainty that is beyond your control. If there's something that you can do, however, try to identify a small and realistic next step that feels achievable. If thinking about the problem gets you nowhere, try to refocus your attention on what's next on your plate right now.

Focus on what feels meaningful to you

A good way to maintain hope in moments of uncertainty is to identify directions that feel meaningful to you and learn to see more than one way forward. When there's no single perfect path, try to look for direction in what feels meaningful to you.

- What do you consider important in your professional life and otherwise?
- What do you want to achieve through your work?
- What would you like to contribute to the world through your work?
- What kind of professional or colleague do you want to be?



Thinking about these questions can give you direction when there's no clear career path in sight.

Even when you feel disappointed or afraid, you can still take action on things that matter to you, even if hope feels difficult to find. Look for strength in your loved ones, familiar routines or small steps to get through difficult times. You don't have to face uncertainty alone. Talking to your friends and family, a fellow student, a recent graduate, a teacher, or a professional can give you both practical tips and a new perspective.

You don't need to see the entire path ahead to take the next step that feels right for you.



Henri Heikintalo
Nyyti ry

What to remember in times of uncertainty:

- Having doubts doesn't make you a failure, and it isn't a sign of inadequacy.
- Uncertainty doesn't have to stop you taking action – try to identify one suitable next step.
- Learn the difference between what you can't control, what you can influence, and what action you can take yourself.
- Asking for help, setting boundaries and taking time to recharge your batteries are important actions.

Text: Satu Myller Illustration: Maria Sann Photo: Helena Hagberg

Your career is also

shaped by the unexpected

When you're still a student or just beginning your career, it can feel like you have a lot of decisions to make. What kinds of jobs should you apply for? What kind of work would suit you? What direction would you like your career to take?

There are rarely clear answers to these questions, but thankfully you don't have to decide everything at once. Careers develop in many different ways: some people follow a fairly straightforward path, while others change roles, industries or career direction several times. Your career isn't just about the choices you make but also the people you meet, the environment around you and sometimes unexpected events – or even pure chance.

What could be possible for you?

When you're making choices about your career, it's worth examining not just yourself but also the world and the job market around you. Try to answer the following questions:

Questions to consider

- What are you good at, and what interests you?
- What would you like to learn more about?
- What kind of working style or environment suits you?
- What kinds of job opportunities are emerging in the job market?
- What kinds of jobs would you at least like to try?

Remember that people usually only see a fraction of their options themselves. Your perception of what feels possible and achievable is likely to be influenced by your educational background, previous experience, the people around you, and what you believe about your own abilities, for example. However, this perception often changes over time. A new experience, meeting someone new or succeeding at something can help you discover an option you hadn't previously considered.

Instead of asking yourself "What's the right career for me?", try asking, "Which option would I like to explore next?"

Make room for chance

Looking back, many people realise something important in their career began with a small, perhaps even unexpected, event. It could have been a conversation, an inspiring training course, a project or a person who opened their eyes to something new.

Making room for chance doesn't mean leaving your career to luck. You can take steps to increase your chances of encountering exciting opportunities. Exploring different environments, meeting people, trying new things and talking about your interests can open up new options.

Five qualities are particularly helpful: **curiosity, flexibility, persistence, optimism** and **the courage to try new things**. At the beginning of your career, you can practise these skills in very practical ways. You can join a project, try a new kind of job, take part in an event or learn something that interests you, even if you don't yet know where it might lead.



Something to consider

Exploring different environments, meeting people, trying new things and talking about your interests can open up new options.

If you're unsure, give it a try

When you don't yet know what the future holds, thinking things through may not give you all the answers. Small experiments can help you learn more about different kinds of work and yourself. Internships, summer jobs, university assignments, volunteering or just talking to people whose jobs you find interesting can help you understand what suits you, and what doesn't. This is valuable information.

There isn't any rush to find the right career path straight away. You can move forward one step at a time, adjust your plans as you gain experience and change direction when you discover something new.

What could your next small step be? What could you do to learn a little more about yourself or the opportunities available to you?



Satu Myller
TEK Career Coach

As a TEK member, you have access to our online course, "My career check-in". The course offers an easy and practical way to reflect on your skills, strenghts and motivation, broaden your perspectives, and consider your next steps. www.tek.fi/course-library

Text: TEK Career Services Illustrations: Maria Sann



Understanding job interviews

Job interviews are part of the job search process, and doing well at interviews can feel like a high-stakes goal. Thankfully, a job interview isn't an interrogation but a two-way conversation. The objective is to find out whether the applicant and the role are a good match and to discuss the nature of the job, the applicant's skills, and both parties' wishes and expectations.

What is a job interview all about?

A job interview is an opportunity for the employer to get a better idea of you as a professional and to make an informed decision on whether to employ you. The interview is also your opportunity to get to know the employer and decide whether the position on offer is a good fit for you.

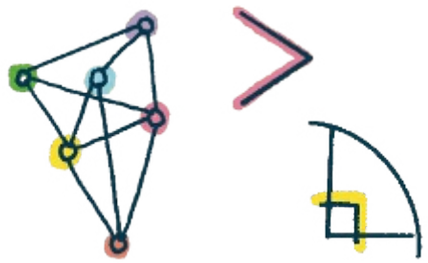
Every organisation approaches interviews slightly differently: some conduct interviews remotely; others prefer to meet applicants in person. Some organisations only interview each applicant once; others want to see the candidates several times. The interviewer can be an employee of the organisation or an independent recruitment consultant, and one or several interviewers may be present. Most organisations explain the steps involved in their recruitment process and who you will meet at your interview ahead of time. If you want more information about what to expect, you can ask the person who invited you to the interview.

How to answer interview questions

The questions at a job interview typically focus on your skills, motivation, style of working, career aspirations and wishes. The interviewer doesn't necessarily need to know everything that you can do and have done, and is likely to be more interested in what skills you have that are relevant to the position. As you prepare for your interview, it's worth rereading the job posting or description, and thinking about the skills and personal attributes that make you a good fit for the job.

A strong answer at a job interview covers every angle of the question but doesn't wander off-topic. The people interviewing you are there to learn more about you, so try to provide more than just brief answers. Providing concrete examples makes your answers stronger. For example, if the interviewer asks you about your strengths or skills, you can tell them how you learned each of the skills you mention, and how you've applied your skills in the past.

If a question feels difficult to answer, you can ask for a moment to think. It's also okay to ask the interviewer to explain what they mean or to repeat a question. A job interview is also a learning opportunity for you. The interviewer will usually ask you whether you have any questions of your own, or you can ask about any aspect of the position that feels unclear to you at a convenient point of the interview.



What helps with interview nerves?

It's perfectly normal to feel nervous at a job interview, and there's no need to try to get rid of those feelings completely. A certain amount of nervousness can even help you stay focused during the interview. If your nerves feel overwhelming, careful preparation and practising the situation in advance can help. It can also be helpful to remind yourself of situations where you've succeeded despite feeling nervous. In the interview, instead of focusing on your own nervousness, try paying attention to the conversation and the people around you.

Remember, feeling nervous can even be seen as a positive sign. The fact that you're nervous shows that the opportunity is important to you. You might not be alone: the interviewer could be nervous about their own performance. Many jobseekers find that the beginning of the interview is the most nerve-wracking part. Your nervousness may well fade once the conversation starts to flow.

What else is useful to know about job interviews?

You may find that the interview isn't at all what you anticipated. It's therefore a good idea to prepare yourself mentally for surprises and unexpected twists. For example, the interview may include a short work sample task, questions in a foreign language required for the role, or an opportunity to learn more about the organisation and its premises.

There are as many types of interviews as there are people – the people taking part in the interview all influence how it unfolds. Fortunately, recruiters also hope that you will succeed, as a successful interview helps both sides learn more about each other and build a better understanding of one another. So, be yourself during the interview, while focusing your answers on your strengths and successes.

Text: TEK's lawyers Photo: Suvi-Tuuli Kankaanpää



Starting an employment relationship

Before entering an employment relationship, it's important to understand some key points about employment contracts and certificates of employment. This article is a collection of the main takeaways identified by TEK's lawyers, as well as their answers to frequently asked questions.

Written employment contracts are important

Verbal agreements are just as valid, but a written employment contract is strongly recommended. A written contract makes it easier to go back and check what's been agreed if there's a dispute. We also recommend that you ask to sign the contract before your first day of work.

What needs to be included in an employment contract

The employment contract lays down the terms of employment. The list on the next page shows the information that must be included in an employment contract at the very least.

There may be provisions in the collective agreement, where applicable, that override the terms of the employment contract. A collective agreement is a contract between an employee association and an employer or an employer association that lays down the terms of employment. If a collective agreement applies to the employment relationship, the terms of the employment contract cannot be worse than stated in the collective agreement. The employment contract must also comply with the provisions of the Employment Contracts Act, the Working Hours Act and the Annual Holidays Act.

Other terms that may be included in an employment contract

The employment contract may also include terms governing travel time pay, travel expenses and training courses, non-disclosure and non-compete clauses, and arrangements related to intellectual property rights. How intellectual property rights are divided is particularly relevant if you work in the creative industries. Checking the terms of your employment contract is especially important if you also have personal creative pursuits.

Non-compete clauses are inherently designed to weaken the employee's position, and those that remain in effect after the end of the employment relationship especially can make it difficult to find another job in the same industry. Non-compete clauses that survive the termination of the employment relationship can only be imposed for a particularly compelling reason related to the employer's business or the nature of the employment relationship, and the employer must pay compensation for the duration of the restrictions as stipulated in the Employment Contracts Act. Penalty clauses are another thing to look out for in an employment contract. A penalty clause is a term that imposes a penalty on a party that breaches a contractual obligation.

Make sure that the employment contract includes at least the following information:

- The names of the parties to the contract
- The date on which work is due to start
- Whether the contract is for permanent or fixed-term employment. In the case of a fixed-term contract, the length of the contract term and the reason for its fixed-term nature. Alternatively, a note stating that no justified reason is required within the meaning of the Employment Contracts Act.
- The length of probation if there is to be a trial phase
- The location where the work is to be performed
- The main duties that the employee is expected to perform
- How pay and/or other remuneration are determined, and the payment schedule
- The employee's regular working hours
- Annual holidays: the best time to agree on holidays is at the start of the employment relationship before the employee starts accruing holiday
- The notice period
- The applicable collective agreement
- The date on which the contract enters into effect and signatures: both parties retain a copy of the contract

Negotiate, ask questions and understand your contract

An employment contract is always an agreement between two parties, which means that its terms are negotiable. Focus on a few points that matter most to you. Have your response ready in case the employer refuses to budge. Try to find a compromise. If the employer is unwilling to change one point, they may be willing to change another. The old rule of thumb also applies to employment contracts: never sign any document or contract until you fully understand its terms. It's okay to ask for time to familiarise yourself with the terms of the contract before you sign. The safest option is to consult a lawyer.

As a TEK member, you can send your draft employment contract to our legal team to review: www.tek.fi/law

Remember to ask for a certificate of employment

Ask for a certificate of employment when you leave a job. A certificate of employment is an easy way to demonstrate your work experience when applying for future jobs. You can ask for an extensive or brief certificate. A brief certificate of employment only states the length of your employment relationship and your duties; the extended version also explains the reason for the end of the employment relationship and includes an evaluation of your performance. Requests for a certificate of employment can be made up to ten years after the end of the employment relationship.

For more information about employment contracts and employment law, visit the legal databank on TEK's website. www.tek.fi/legaldata

TEK's lawyers' answers to frequently asked questions

My employment contract is for a fixed term. How do I give notice of termination?

Fixed-term employment contracts are binding on both parties until the agreed expiry date and cannot be terminated prematurely unless the possibility of early termination has been written into the contract. Going forward, you might want to try to include a clause in your contract that would allow you to give notice of termination similarly to a permanent employee. There is no harm in asking your employer if they would agree to an early termination.

There is one exception to the above: where the Employment Contracts Act specifically allows a fixed-term employment contract to be concluded without justified grounds, the contract may be terminated once it has been in force for at least six months.

I was given notice of termination four months into my trial phase. I signed a fixed-term contract, and the total length of the contract term is six months. Is this ok?

The trial phase for a fixed-term contract cannot be longer than half the total length of the contract term and never more than six months. The trial phase in your case ended at the three-month point, so the more relaxed terms of termination during probation do not apply.

I have signed a zero-hours contract that gives my working hours as 0–37.5 hours per week. My employer is now upset with me because I turned down a shift they were offering. Am I not allowed to turn down shifts?

You and your employer have agreed in the contract that you may end up working zero hours and you therefore have the right to decline shifts.

My employment contract includes a non-compete clause. How do I know who counts as a competitor?

The safest way is to assume that any company operating in the same industry as your employer is a competitor. More specifically, a competitor is a business that provides the same products or services to the same client base. Drawing the line can be difficult, which is why clear wording is especially important in a non-compete clause. Ideally, your contract will stipulate that the non-compete clause only applies to specific companies or companies in a specific industry. Limiting the clause to only apply to specific geographical markets can also be useful. Your employer will be able to tell you exactly who counts as a competitor and who does not. If there is a dispute, a court will settle the issue.

I have not been paid. What should I do?

Before you do anything else, talk to your employer. Sometimes payments are missed by accident, and there could be a simple fix. It is always worth pointing out a late payment, and if your employer regularly misses payments, you may want to raise the matter in writing. If your employer still does not resolve the issue, contact TEK's lawyers and we will help you to get what you are owed. It is important to take action quickly if your employer misses a payment. No one should work without pay. If the missed payment is due to your employer's financial troubles, you only have three months from the date on which you should have been paid to submit a claim for pay security.

I have a zero-hours contract. I was meant to work a shift but felt unwell so I called my employer and cancelled. My employer is refusing to pay me for the shift. Am I entitled to sick pay?

You are entitled to sick pay for any shifts or other days of work that were agreed before you fell ill.

As a TEK member, you can consult our lawyers:
www.tek.fi/law



Speak up for better pay

TEK's Student Survey 2025 shows that students who communicated their salary expectations to the recruiter and took advantage of TEK's salary recommendations got paid more for their jobs. Here's how to set your salary expectations and leverage TEK's salary recommendations.

Applying for a job or internship

Some job postings ask applicants to specify a salary expectation in their application. The salary is often discussed in more detail as part of an interview.

The EU Pay Transparency Directive requires employers to provide information about pay in the recruitment process. As this publication was going to press, national legislation on pay transparency was still being drafted. Of course, many employers already operate in ways that support pay transparency.

It's a good idea to find out the pay level and consider your salary expectations in advance, even if you plan to approach employers with an open application or a proposal for an industry thesis.

Salary recommendations

TEK studies salaries and salary trends in the technology industry. Based on these studies, TEK gives separate recommendations for internships, industry thesis positions and graduate/entry-level positions.

Internship salary

TEK publishes internship salary recommendations that include internships and other employment in your own field. Recommendations are based on data collected in the TEK Student Survey, which asks students what they've been paid for internships, summer jobs and other work performed during their studies. The recommendations also factor in the latest predictions of how the general salary level is likely to change.

TEK's internship salary recommendations set a useful benchmark for students' salary expectations in their own field. Remember to factor in the complexity of the job and your previous work experience.

Thesis collaboration

Many master's degree students complete their thesis in collaboration with a private company, and a separate salary recommendation applies to the work performed in connection with writing an industry thesis. Remember that you can expect higher pay if you also have other responsibilities beyond the work that's directly related to your thesis.

Starter salary

The TEK Graduate Survey provides information about salaries of recent graduates. TEK uses this information to calculate starter salary recommendations. TEK sets its recommendation slightly above the average salary to promote higher pay for its members. The latest economic forecasts and salary trends are also factored in.

TEK's starter salary recommendation applies to recent graduates seeking specialist positions matching their education, who do not yet have extensive work experience in their own field.

Salaries are higher for particularly demanding roles and for graduates who already have extensive work experience. The industry, employer and geographical area can also affect the graduate salary level. This is why TEK's recommendation is a bracket, not an exact figure.

What happens during salary negotiations

- You'll be asked to state your salary expectation and explain why you feel your request is reasonable. You can talk about your skills or previous experience to justify your request.
- Focus on the aspects of the position that require particular expertise and compare them with your skills, learning potential, achievements, motivation and commitment.
- Emphasise your skills and abilities relevant to the organisation.
- Try to use the employer's own concepts in your arguments.

How to prepare for salary negotiations

- Find out whether the employer uses a pay scale.
- Familiarise yourself with TEK's salary recommendations and statistics. TEK members can also consult the Salary Surveyor and speak to salary advisers.
- Make sure you understand every aspect of the position, and what it will require of you.
- Practise verbalising your salary expectation in your head or with someone else.
- Prepare your arguments and think about the best ways to communicate them.

You can also think of the starter salary recommendation as a benchmark against which to compare your salary expectation, skills and experience. Try to identify a salary you'd be happy with given the complexity of the work involved and your circumstances. Remember to also ask about other benefits the employer offers in addition to salary.

TEK's Salary Surveyor provides information about the monthly salaries for TEK members.

Broaden your perspectives with the Salary Surveyor

TEK's Student Salary Surveyor provides information about the monthly salaries students can expect from summer jobs. The tool is based on statistical data on the salaries that students of technology, architecture, mathematics and natural sciences have been paid for summer jobs in their respective fields since 2021. The tool is available for all TEK members.

There's also a Salary Surveyor tool that uses the results of TEK's labour market survey and provides information about graduate salaries in different fields and roles.

Salary negotiations

Your salary expectation is usually the starting point for salary negotiations. The employer often has an idea of a salary bracket that they are willing to offer to students. Public-sector organisations typically pay their employees according to a set pay scale and pre-agreed criteria.

Even experienced jobseekers can struggle to determine the level of pay they should expect. TEK's salary recommendations and Salary Surveyor tools are designed to make it easier for you to calculate, verbalise and justify your salary expectation.

The final salary is agreed in the employment contract. Factors that affect the level of pay during an employment relationship include collective agreements, as well as personal pay rises. Personal increases are usually based on good performance, learning and general career progression. Personal pay rises are negotiated separately with each employee.

More information about salaries, salary recommendations and Salary Surveyor tools is available online at www.tek.fi/en/salary.

Sources: TEK's salary advisors and career services, as well as YTN's salary negotiation manual.

Reflect

Identify your skills and reflect on them ahead of negotiations.

Role

- Analyse each of your previous jobs and projects separately. What did the work entail?

Responsibility

- What personal responsibilities have you had in your previous jobs?
- Did you share any responsibilities with a colleague or team?

Accomplishments

- How did you perform in your previous jobs or studies? What tangible achievements can you identify?
- What kind of feedback did you receive from your supervisors, colleagues, customers or other stakeholders?

Skills

- What skills have you learned through your past work experience or studies?
- What skills relevant to the position do you have?

Strengths

- What are your professional and personal strengths?

Learning

- How would you describe your aptitude for learning and professional growth?
- How will this help you in the job?

Text: Heidi Tomperi Photo: Suvi-Tuuli Kankaanpää

Nothing but the best (working) life



The technology and natural sciences field is vast and offers all kinds of opportunities, both in your studies and later in your career. Who knows what your future holds – but one thing we do know is that at TEK, we want to help build the best possible working life for both the field and you.

How? You're holding an example in your hands right now: this Workbook. But there's much more, too. Read on to learn more.

Experts by your side

If unexpected situations arise at work, or you have any questions related to working life, our members can easily reach our experts through OmaTEK. In urgent cases, our lawyers are also available by phone during our phone service hours. We provide support and advice on topics like determining a suitable salary request, reviewing employment contracts and resolving various workplace issues. Feel free to check even the smaller things with us.

Contact us: www.tek.fi/legal-advice

Skills and connections through events

As a TEK member, you can expand your expertise and network through our events. We organise webinars and live events on topics like technology, leadership, presentation skills and wellbeing in Finnish and English. Student members are warmly welcome to join. As many as 81% of participants recommend attending TEK events – why not give them a try yourself? Participation is completely free of charge.

Browse upcoming events: www.tek.fi/events

*Did you know that student membership is **completely free**?*

See all our services for students and join: www.tek.fi/students

Fair working conditions and rewarding pay

We're helping to build a working life where you and your friends have time and energy for things outside work as well. We make sure that salaries for professionals in technology and natural sciences continue to develop, and that working conditions are fair. Union membership is a smart investment for both students and graduates – each year, nearly 80% of the pay increases received by TEK members come from general increases included in collective agreements, which unions have negotiated for their members.

Read more about our collective bargaining work: www.tek.fi/work-life-finland

According to a survey by Taloustutkimus, TEK was the most respected and most attractive trade union in 2025.

*Students who have used TEK's salary recommendations earn higher summer job salaries.**

Source: TEK Student Survey 2025, median salary.

Insightful data

We work to promote an equal and encouraging working life. Through TEK's surveys and studies, we explore the experiences and views of students and professionals in technology and natural sciences. For example, in recent years, we've identified that Finland's "AI elite" consists primarily of men aged 40–49 and observed that the median starting salary of new Master of Science in Technology graduates has risen to €4,000. Our research findings have been featured not only in our own channels but also in the national media – helping bring the perspectives of TEK members to decision-makers and the wider public.

Read more: www.tek.fi/influencing

THE UNEMPLOYMENT FUND FOR HIGHLY EDUCATED

Student,

are you already
a member of the
unemployment fund
KOKO?



With KOKO, you can receive earning-related daily allowance if you ever become unemployed.

Become a member as soon as you start your first job to ensure the required employment condition is met in time.

Join KOKO via TEK

Use the allowance calculator to see how much you could get:

kokokassa.fi/en/allowance-calculator

Read more:

kokokassa.fi/en/conditions-earnings-related-allowance

Career Services on your campus

;) Throughout your studies, you'll have access to your university's career services, which will help you plan your future career and support you in your job search.

;) Make the most of career lectures, workshops and events at your university. You may also benefit from individual career counselling. You'll also have access to a wide range of materials to support your career planning.

;) Visit your university's JobTeaser portal to find job and internship advertisements targeted at students at your university.

HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Career Services
studies.helsinki.fi/instructions/work-and-career

Aalto-yliopisto
Aalto-universitetet
Aalto University

Career Design Lab
careerdesignlab.aalto.fi

UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

Career Services
uef.fi/careerservices

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Career Services
jyu.fi/careerservices

LUT University

Career Services
lut.jobteaser.com

UNIVERSITY OF OULU

Career Centre
oulu.fi/en/for-students/working-life

Tampereen yliopisto
Tampere University

Career Support
tuni.fi/careerplanning

UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

Career Services
utu.fi/rekry/en/

Vaasan yliopisto
UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

Career Services
uwasa.fi/en/students

Åbo Akademi

Career Services
abo.fi/career-services

Workbook's English section ends here.

