

Job search

Guide to CV and application



Pharmadanmark

Get ready for your job search

You are facing an exciting and significant challenge: finding a great job in the right workplace.

For some, entering the job market is straightforward and without obstacles. For others, the path can be longer and more complex. There are many reasons why you may be out of work for a shorter or longer period—voluntarily or not—and just as many ways to return to the job market.

Job searching requires effort and persistence. Planning, research, phone outreach, writing applications, attending interviews, and completing personality and skills assessments can all be demanding.

Treat your job search like a job. Create structure in your day, set clear milestones, and evaluate your progress on a weekly basis.



Before you start writing your CV and application

Preparation is essential. The more background knowledge you have about a job and/or a company, the better and more precisely you can target your application.

Whether you are applying for an advertised position or sending an unsolicited application, it is important to gather as much information as possible about the role and the workplace. This will give you confidence when writing your application—and later, hopefully, when attending an interview.

You are in a stronger position as a candidate when you do thorough preparation. It helps you avoid feeling unprepared, and the company will value your motivation and effort. Many job seekers misdirect their efforts by focusing on quantity rather than quality. As a result, they receive many rejections because they have not prepared sufficiently. Research is essential to avoid applying for jobs without a clear direction.

Job and company analysis

The job advert

When you come across a job posting that interests you, the next step is to analyse the job advert or job description. You need to assess both whether the role and the company match your expectations, and whether your qualifications align with the position. Read the advert carefully, and remember that the job and candidate profile reflects the company's ideal candidate. So do not be discouraged if you do not meet 100% of the requirements.

Fortvivl ikke, hvis du ikke kan leve 100% op til kravene.

Job advert analysis – what does the advert specifically tell you about::

- What formal requirements are specified? (e.g. educational requirements, specific courses)
- What is the company looking for in you? (professional and personal qualifications, experience, results)
- What does the job description include? (tasks, responsibilities, competencies, development opportunities, etc.)
- Can you identify anything about the company culture? (what is the tone, and which words act as signals?)
- Is anything mentioned about employment terms and conditions?
- Does the role match your own expectations?
- What information is missing for you to write a targeted application?

How does your profile match the role:

- How do you match—or not match—the job profile?
- Which areas can you develop quickly?
- Are there any aspects you would not thrive in?

The company

Knowledge about the company or organisation is essential to gain a deeper understanding of the role. The position you are applying for is part of a larger context, and the better you understand that context, the better prepared you will be. It is therefore important that you focus not only on the job itself, but also on the company where the role is based.

The company, including:

- The company's history
- The organisation (how the company is structured and organised)
- Key facts (location, products, etc.)
- Business idea, mission, strategy, and goals
- The market (customers, suppliers, etc.)
- The culture (values, people, working environment, tone)
- Reward systems and leadership style
- Employees

There are many ways to gather additional information about the role and the company. On the company's website, you can find factual information about, for example, its mission, vision, strategy, goals, values, organisational structure, working conditions, and current vacancies. When browsing the website, keep in mind that it presents the company's official image.

Job adverts often include a contact person who can provide further details about the role and the organisation. It is usually a good idea to call this person, as it gives you the opportunity to clarify any questions before submitting your application. However, only call if you have specific and relevant questions—for example, about expectations for the role, success criteria, or the team's work. Remember that many candidates may do the same, so your call should add value and help you write a stronger application.

You can often find relevant information about a company through your network. You likely know someone who knows someone who can share insights about the company, the type of role, or the industry you are interested in. This information can be invaluable and may even lead to a contact or reference that can help you move forward..

Du kender sikkert én, som kender én



The CV

Your CV is an important attachment to your application. A CV (curriculum vitae) is a structured overview of your personal and professional background. In other words, it is your overall professional profile. The purpose of the CV is to give the employer a clear basis for assessing your professional and personal competencies.

It is important to always tailor your CV to the specific role you are applying for. Make sure to highlight and elaborate on the experience and qualifications requested in the job advert. A good rule of thumb is to write both your CV and application in the same language as the job posting.

Your CV should outline the tasks you have carried out in previous roles, where you have worked, your educational background, and the results you have achieved. The key is to emphasise the most relevant competencies and experience, and tone down what is less relevant.

There are many ways to structure a CV, and no single template fits all roles. Employers have different needs, so your CV should reflect the specific position. However, all CVs should make it easy for the reader to find the most relevant information.

How to prepare your CV

When working on your CV, it is a good idea to start with a comprehensive “master list”. This is a detailed overview of your career, including all tasks and responsibilities you have had. In practice, this means listing the skills you have developed through both paid and unpaid work, as well as through leisure activities. You can use this master list as your working document when creating tailored CVs for specific roles.

If you are a recent graduate, your master list may include tasks and responsibilities from student jobs, as well as descriptions of your academic courses. Reviewing course descriptions can help you identify the competencies you have developed. Below is an overview of the sections a CV typically includes. There are many possible formats, so choose a structure that suits both you and the company you are applying to.



Et CV indeholder typisk disse emner

Personal details

- Contact information and link to your LinkedIn profile: Make sure your contact details are up to date.
- Photo: Consider including a photo on your CV. Choose one where you appear friendly and professional. It can be the same photo you use on your LinkedIn profile.

Profile

Invest time in writing a strong, tailored profile summary that focuses on the parts of your competency profile most relevant to the role you are applying for. In 5–8 lines, highlight your key professional and personal strengths. If you do not emphasise the right points here, there is a risk that the rest of your CV will not be read.

Core competencies

- Include 4–5 key professional competencies in bullet points
- Tailor them to the specific role
- For example: GMP, HPLC, project management, etc.

Work experience

List your work experience in reverse chronological order, including employment period, company name, and job title. Use bullet points to describe your responsibilities and key achievements. Highlight the tasks and competencies that are most relevant to the role you are applying for.

Education

Your CV should always include an overview of your educational background. If you are experienced, it is rarely necessary to go into detail. However, if you are a recent graduate, you can describe what you have learned during your studies. You may also include information about your thesis, relevant electives, study periods, internships, or time spent abroad. Only elaborate on elements that are relevant to the job you are applying for.

Relevant courses

Only include courses that are relevant to the position you are applying for. This shows that you are professionally up to date and engaged in your field. If the courses represent key competencies, briefly describe the provider, scope, and content. Listing unrelated courses will only create noise.

Language skills

Describe your language skills and indicate your level. If your proficiency is limited, it is best not to include it—for example, there is no need to mention German at secondary school level.

IT skills

If you have experience with specific programmes that are relevant to the role, describe your level of proficiency.

Personal

You may include hobbies, voluntary work, marital status, or similar details if they support your overall profile and demonstrate how you match the role.

Publications

Include a list of publications only if it is relevant to the position. If not, you may briefly mention under relevant roles that you have published a certain number of articles and provide a link to your full publication list.

References

You do not need to include names and contact details of referees in your CV. Simply state that references are available upon request.

Your application

Your application should clearly communicate what you want and who you are—professionally, personally, and overall. The purpose of the application is to present yourself in a way that makes the employer want to invite you for an interview.

Your application should capture attention and create interest in you as a candidate. This is why it is essential that it is well prepared and carefully written. It is equally important that your application is tailored specifically to the role and the company, and that you are clear about your key message. Reflect on why you are applying, what you can offer, and how you will use your competencies in the role.

Tips for your application

Avoid generic applications – tailor to the role

Never use standard applications. Tailor every application and CV to the specific role you are applying for. Your application and CV must not appear generic in content. Elements such as motivation and professional competencies should always be adapted to the individual position.

Layout, language, and length

Write clearly and concisely. Your application should not exceed one page. Use spacing between paragraphs and include clear, meaningful headings to give an overview of what you offer. Make your application easy to read by writing in the present tense and using active language. Avoid long and complex sentences. There should be no spelling or punctuation errors. Use fonts consistently and appropriately, and write your application in the same language as the job advert.

Be proactive and tailor your application

It is important to tailor your application so the employer can clearly see the match between your skills and the company's needs. Analyse the job posting to understand what the role involves and research the company thoroughly. Feel free to contact the company's point of contact if you have questions about the position. A relevant call can often help you better understand the company's needs and allow you to write a more targeted application. Be positive and use active language (e.g. opportunity, challenge, goals). Be honest, but avoid highlighting your weaknesses. Use examples to demonstrate the results you have achieved—this makes your application more engaging and credible. Put yourself in the company's position and focus on the value you bring and what the organisation gains by hiring you.

Show your personality

Show who you are in your application—not through statements, but through your language and examples. Let your wording and concrete examples reflect your personality. Instead of using clichés such as “I am detail-oriented, flexible, a strong team player, and able to work independently,” provide specific examples. In short: don't tell—show.

For example, a sentence like:

“I thrive in roles with people management responsibilities, as in my previous position in a self-managed department with external sales functions”

says far more than:

“I am responsible, cooperative, and outgoing.”

Example structure of an application

Company name

Attn: [Contact person]

Headline

(State the position you are applying for, or write something that highlights how you match the role) City, date.

Start with your motivation

Explain your motivation. Employers are, of course, looking for someone with the competencies to perform the tasks required in the role—but they are also looking for someone who is genuinely motivated by the specific position and the company. Always explain why you are applying for this particular role. Show your genuine interest in the company and make yourself stand out as a candidate.

Your professional competencies in relation to the role

Your application should not be a prose version of your CV, listing your experience from A to Z. Instead, it should be a forward-looking description of how your knowledge, skills, and motivation match the tasks of the role. Create curiosity and give the reader a clear sense of how you will make a difference in the position. Use this section to clearly and positively document your key competencies and qualifications in relation to the role.

You can use bullet points in your application to highlight key contributions and value.

- Describe what you expect to contribute
- It is a good idea to highlight the value your profile brings to the role
- Emphasise specific professional qualifications and competencies relevant to the position

Your personal competencies in relation to the role

In this section, use examples to show who you are. Highlight the personal competencies that are relevant to the position and support them with well-chosen examples. Avoid exaggeration and clichés.

Conclusion

Tie your application together so that the introduction and conclusion are aligned. Ensure there is a clear thread running throughout—from motivation to professional and personal competencies—so your application appears coherent and credible.

Yours sincerely

Your full name

Phone number

Always tailor your application to the job you are applying for.

Unsolicited applications

Unsolicited applications are enquiries sent to companies that have not advertised a vacancy. The goal is to capture the company's interest and take advantage of the period between when a company recognises a hiring need and when it decides to advertise the position. This allows you to initiate a dialogue without going through the highly competitive process associated with advertised roles.

An unsolicited application gives you the opportunity to take initiative and target companies you find interesting.

The two most important elements in an unsolicited application are presenting your competencies clearly and concisely, and demonstrating strong motivation for the specific company you are applying to. We know that many employers place great importance on motivation.

Preparation

When applying unsolicited, it is essential to conduct a thorough analysis of the company. You need to be clear about the types of roles you are targeting and why you want to work for that particular organisation. Your application must not appear generic.

When applying unsolicited, smaller private companies often place greater value on your insight into the market, industry, customers, and competitors than larger organisations do.

A useful tip is to identify companies that signal potential opportunities—for example, those engaged in new research, moving from one development phase to another, or receiving major orders or funding. These can indicate potential job openings at different levels within the organisation.

Follow-up

Always follow up on an unsolicited application. At the end of your application, state that you will contact the company. Remember, the goal is to secure an informal conversation where you can get to know each other.

Many people find it difficult to contact strangers to present themselves—but it is very important to do so, both before and after sending your application. This is often what reassures the company of your seriousness.

As with advertised applications, there is no fixed formula. However, you are more dependent on capturing the recipient's interest, as they have not requested your application. Here are some tips for your unsolicited application.

- **Headline / attention grabber:** In an unsolicited application, you depend on capturing the reader's interest. Create a strong opening that makes them want to read on.
- **Refer to prior contact:** If you have been in touch with the company before sending your application, refer to the conversation or visit. Be sure to mention the contact person's name.
- **State the type of role you are seeking**
- **Explain your motivation:** Why are you applying, and why this specific company?
- **Highlight your value:** What can you do? What do you offer? What can you contribute?
- **Be flexible:** Indicate, for example, if you can start quickly or are open to temporary or part-time roles
- **Express your interest:** State that you hope the company will consider a candidate with your background
- **Explain your follow-up:** Specify when and how you will follow up
- **Include your CV:** Attach your CV or provide a link to your LinkedIn profile



