



How to

Curriculum, cover letter
and job interview

Get started with resume and the job application

What should you be aware of when you are looking for a job or internship?

In this leaflet you will get inspiration on how to get started with your curriculum/cover letter and how to prepare for a job interview.

Most people will experience both good and bad job interviews. There can be many reasons why one's job application is rejected or one does not get the job after the interview.

For example, one can be rejected due to not being well prepared, not focused or because of mistakes that easily could be avoided.

An applicant can be selected because of their personality matched the company's requirements. Being well prepared is essential in order to make a good impression during both the job application and the job interview.

Job seekers can be rejected simply because of typing errors and misspelling in the resume or the job application. At other times because they were unable to convince the company that he/she could solve the tasks listed in the job ad or because they were not the right match for the job.

In this folder you will get tips and tricks that you can use now and in the future, when you apply for a job or an internship.

Good luck with your job search.



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1 Preparation

It is important to be prepared before you write a job application and it is important to plan and practice what you want to say when you are called into the job interview.

Google the company and find a lot of information about what the company stands for. You may also have this in mind when you check out the company on the various media:

- How the organization is structured
- How many employees the company has
- What publicity the company gets
- How they communicate on their website (us, you / you / your)
- How they present their employees on the pictures (professional or relaxed)
- What other positions are online at present.
- Has the company grown

Contact the business, introduce yourself and ask questions, for example “I can see that many of your employees have an MSc in Economics and Business Administration – why are you looking for another type of degree now?”.

Other questions: “Is the position newly established (if this is not stated in the job ad)?”, “I can see that the job requires good English skills – does the Curriculum/cover letter need to be in English or Danish?”, “What does success in this position take?”.

Ask no more than 3 questions – you’re calling because:

- this will help **you** assess whether the business/job is interesting for you, and whether you want to send your Curriculum and cover letter.
- this will make **you** look interesting to the business/seem so relevant that the person at the other end asks you some questions. **Remember to get the name of the person you spoke to.**
- you want to gather all your knowledge about the business in your Curriculum and your cover letter. If you do not call the business before you send your Curriculum/cover letter, use the information from your phone call to ask good questions during the interview.

Remember that the business expects you to be prepared for the interview

Also use your research on the business/job to:

- answer questions if the business calls you after having received your Curriculum.
- prepare questions for the actual job interview.

2 The Curriculum

The Curriculum is a summary of your professional and educational qualifications and competences. The purpose of the Curriculum is to provide the recipient with an overview, and insight into what you can do.

Avoid spelling mistakes and if you are dyslexic – you may want to write it.

Rule of thumb:

- if the job ad is in English, your Curriculum and (cover letter) should be in English as well
- if the job ad is in Danish, your Curriculum and (cover letter) should be in Danish

A Curriculum is always written in reverse chronological order; present first and then backwards.

Under “Study programme”, write about the projects or subjects that are relevant for the job.

Write results: For example “Updated the entire customer database, so that all

salespersons could see the most recent customer information first.”

“I don’t want to boast”... talking about your successes/results is not boasting – it only shows what you can do – and that’s important.

As a student – and until you have worked in your first job for 1-2 years – you should write about your studies **before** your job.

Under “Work experience”, write the jobs that you’ve had during your studies as well as spare time jobs.

If you choose to insert a photo in your Curriculum, the photo should have a plain background (not party/holiday photos), wear smart clothing, and the photo should be neutral or business-like – depending on the job you’re applying for and the business.

You can be creative with your layout – if you are a creative person, and it is relevant for the job to show your creative side. Don’t think that you’ll get an interview or the job just because your Curriculum has five

colours and is written in ‘landscape’ view. It all depends on how well you sell yourself and whether you clearly show that you can do the job.

NB! You aren’t obligated to disclose any information about your age, ethnicity, religion or sexuality.

The people reading your Curriculum should get a sense that you have the qualifications they’re looking for, and that you’re enthusiastic about the job.

Some businesses have started to ask for a video Curriculum, and some applicants have started recording a video which they enclose with their Curriculum and cover letter. See more under “Video”.

Make it easy for yourself

Your Curriculum can also be uploaded as a PDF file on your LinkedIn profile – perhaps together with a video.

Make your Curriculum as a template, and then change it every time you’re looking for a job or new internship.



Fact box – Curriculum

Curriculum is short for curriculum vitae (Latin for “course of life” – biography).

All contact information is written on the first page: Name, address, telephone no./email address/LinkedIn profile/perhaps website.

Current education – stating relevant subjects, projects and results.

Work experience – stating responsibilities and results/successes (write job title before name of business).

IT skills (write systems/languages).

Languages (if you are a Dane writing your Curriculum in Danish, you don’t have to write Danish on your Curriculum – if you write your Curriculum in English, you can write Danish on your Curriculum).

Any voluntary work, leisure time, sports.

Any references – see below for more details.

Save your Curriculum as a PDF file before you send it. Name your PDF file Hanne Hansen_Curriculum, for example.

Sometimes you’ll be asked to send your Curriculum and cover letter in one file, sometimes you only need to send your Curriculum, and sometimes the business/recruitment agency will ask for your Curriculum, cover letter and certificates of education in three separate files. In this context, it would be relevant to save the files as follows:

Hanne Hansen_Curriculum, Hanne Hansen_cover letter, Hanne Hansen_certificates of education.

Curriculum

Susanne Carlsen
Anystreet 3
0000 Inacity

susannecarlsen@gmail.com
Telephone no.
Website
Linkedin.com/susannecarlsen



Professional and smart photo

Professional profile

3-4 lines on your qualifications (professional) and your competences (personal). Target the content to the job and the business.

Education

2016 - 2018: Degree in Marketing Management, Zealand

Professional focus: X

Projects: X

Results: X

2013 - 2016: HTX, Hillerød

Professional focus: X

Projects: X

Results: X

Work experience

2015 - 2018: Salesperson, IKEA

Month - month → Write the different work areas

→ Perhaps special areas of responsibility

→ Results

2013 - 2015: Telephone salesperson, TDC, student job

Month - month → X

→ X

2011 - 2014: Christmas helper, Magasin

Month - month → X

→ X

Courses

2017: Excel for new graduates 1-5, 6 months at 4D

2011: "Sell well", internal course at Magasin

Voluntary work

2011-2018: Danish Red Cross, voluntary visitor, teaching immigrants

IT skills

Microsoft Office Pro

→ Superuser

Adobe InDesign

→ Superuser

MailChimp

→ Medium level

Instagram, Facebook

→ Medium level

Languages

Danish

→ Native language, write and speak professionally

English

→ Write and speak professionally

Personal life

You don't have to write anything here – but you can write married to Peter, who has just graduated as a civil engineer. We like to travel and have just been to Chile during the summer to help build a school".

References

Only if you have agreed with the relevant person.



3 LinkedIn and social media (SoMe) in general

If you don't have a profile on LinkedIn, it would be a good idea to get one. Your LinkedIn profile should be structured like your Curriculum – also with a professional photo.

To make it easy for yourself, you should only have one profile in either Danish or in English – otherwise you'll have to spend time on updating both profiles.

LinkedIn is a professional network, primarily for professional relationships. As opposed to Facebook, which is a network more for private relationships. On Linke-

dn, you speak and write in a more professional tone.

On LinkedIn, you can upload PDF files and videos of relevant material and share the material with your network. The more contacts you have in your network, the more people you can share news with, ask for advice, or follow.

Join groups that share your interests and follow businesses that you'd like to keep an eye on. Many businesses post their vacancies via LinkedIn.

Invite all your fellow students, current and previous colleagues, teachers, student counsellors, the people you meet via your internship, etc. to 'connect' with you.

Many businesses often google the candidates they invite to an interview. Therefore, you should google yourself, and see what is online that isn't relevant for a future employer to see (photos, statements, etc.).

Consider making your SoMe profiles private, so that only the people in your network can see your content.



4 The cover letter

The purpose of a cover letter is to make the employer so interested in you and your competences that you'll be invited for an actual job interview. This is the same as your Curriculum.

Before you write the cover letter, it is important that you fully acquaint yourself with the job itself and the challenges the business may be facing.

Your heading can be catchy and personal, so that the reader remembers you. It should also describe why you are the right person for the job. "Marketing economist specialising in digital marketing is looking ..."

Use the introduction to describe your motivation for the job. It's important that your motivation for applying for the job is clear. You also need to explain why you find the job interesting and what you find interesting about the business.

Describe your background, your relevant experience and competences. The cover letter should be forward-looking, as it concerns the future, your foundation is what you have learned, your education and any job experience – perhaps from an internship. Explain how you can carry out the tasks of the job on the basis of your skills.

It's a good idea to write examples of how you have performed tasks that are similar to those in the job you're applying for. Writing that you are good at something is not enough. Give examples of how you have addressed a specific task in the past.

Your personal competences also play a role. Remember to describe these in the cover letter, if relevant. Personal competences may be that you're an experienced team worker, you're structured, or you're a skilled proofreader (and such competences should, of course, be illustrated by examples).

Fact box – Cover letter

- The cover letter should not exceed 1 page
- Avoid using clichés and repetition
- Get someone to check for misspellings and typos
- Compile your cover letter and Curriculum in one PDF file if you're going to send the cover letter and the Curriculum online
- If you have spoken with a person from the business, remember to write this person's name down
- You won't always be asked to send a cover letter – many businesses prefer just a Curriculum
- Remember to save the documents: Hanne Hansen_Curriculum, Hanne Hansen_cover letter, Hanne Hansen_certificates of education
- **Tip!** Google "The AIDA model!" – this is a good way of structuring your application.

5 Video

A video, in which you say who you are and why you're the right person for the job, is a good supplement to your Curriculum and cover letter. Video applications have gained popularity, particularly within the more creative professions such as communication and marketing. Making a video allows you to show your personality in a more direct manner.

Some of the employers/recruitment agencies who specifically ask for a video together with your Curriculum often have special requirements for the content/design, and naturally these should be met. These may be that the business gives 2½ minutes to present yourself, your competences, your motivation for applying

for the position, and why they should choose you.

Some businesses have a recruitment system that allows them to receive a video, but the system does not set any requirements for the content of the video or for how long it should be.

Remember:

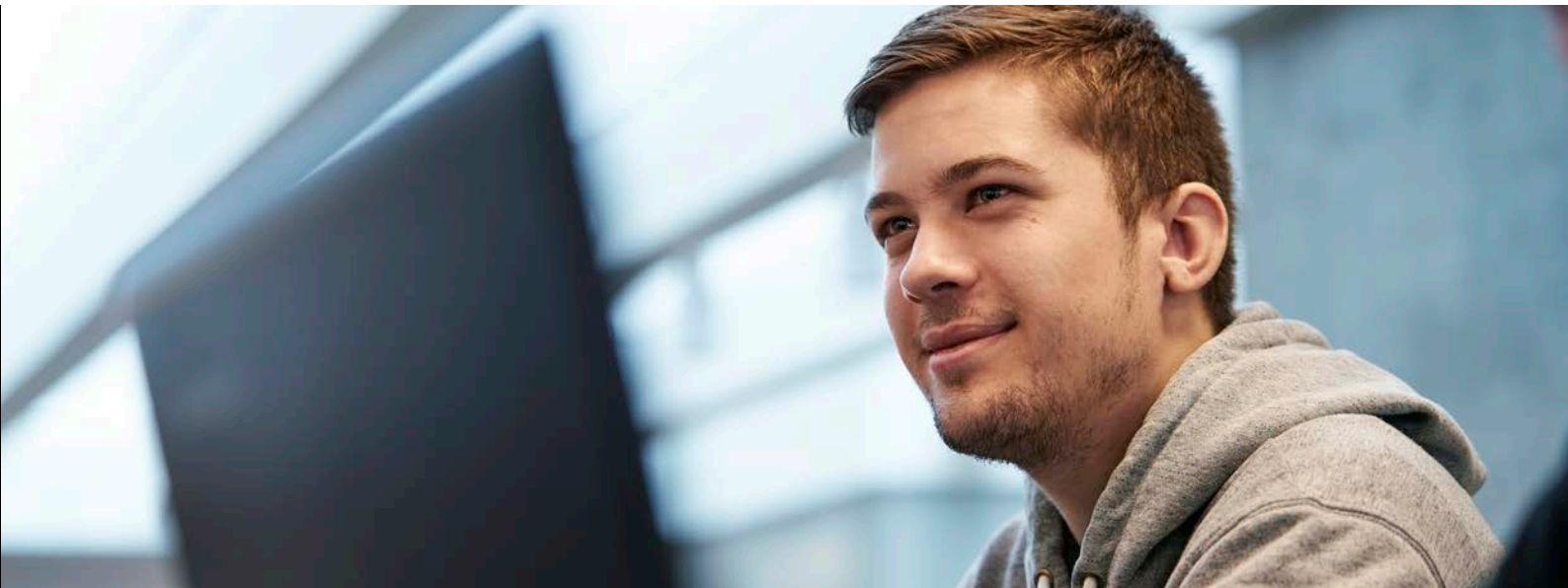
- to be clear in your communication
- to be prepared (practice before using a script)
- to think about your clothing and appearance
- to try to create contact with the recipient.

One of the advantages of making a video is that you can record it over and over again until you're satisfied with the result. Be careful not to make a video that is too long – 150 seconds is more than enough.

It is a good idea to get one of your friends to watch the video before you send it. This will give you a chance of correcting any “mistakes”.

Remember that lighting, sound and the background are important, and that the video should be filmed correctly (horizontal).

Tip! You can also upload the video to your website or LinkedIn profile.



6 The job interview (internship interview)

The business will typically invite 2-8 candidates for the first interview. Perhaps slightly fewer if the position is an internship. You will meet 1-3 people from the business – and you need to convince these people that you’re the right person for the job. The interview is therefore like a sales pitch. The fact that you’ve been invited for an interview is positive in itself, and you need to remember this, even if you don’t get the job.

It’s important that you’re thoroughly **prepared** for the interview. Try to put yourself in the employer’s place.

Think about how your competences and experience can add value. Perhaps you

would like to emphasise projects or assignments from your study programme. If you have been in an internship before, you may have done similar tasks for another business. You may also have relevant experience from a student job or other spare time jobs.

It’s important that you spend time on research and preparation before the interview, so that you can give the most positive impression of yourself at the interview.

Consider what is appropriate clothing for the position. You can find out how the employees dress by looking at the businesses’ website or LinkedIn profile.

Come to the interview early. Preferably 10-15 minutes before it starts. Announce your arrival at the reception.

Remember a firm handshake, be kind and accommodating, smile and try to keep eye contact with the people participating in the interview. No one should feel ignored.

The aim of the job interview is to give a clear impression of who you are – professionally as well as personally.

It’s a good idea to prepare a 2-minute presentation. You can practice in the mirror, or with a friend. Focus on the parts of your professional presentation that match the position you have applied for.

Fact box – References

A reference can either be a current/former colleague, manager, customer or supplier. A business will talk with references when they need to find out whether you have the skills that you say you have and what you are like as a person.

A good reference should also be able to say what you need to be better at.

Obviously being a reference is voluntary – and you should not hand out a reference’s mobile no. or email address unless this has

been agreed. If you want to help both the business and the references, you can send a link to the job ad or call the references and tell them what job you’re applying for.

You will typically be asked different versions of the following questions:

- We have so many applicants. Why should we hire you?
- What do you find particularly interesting about the job?
- Why do you want to work for us?
- Have you any concerns about the job?
- Can you give a specific example of how you'd address this task?
- What are you good at?
- What are you not good at? The business can ask about professional and personal aspects.

Tip! When the business asks about what you are not good at, a trick is to mention something that you **know** isn't relevant for the position. For example, German – and then: “I'm actually not that good at German, but if it becomes relevant for the job, I'll, of course, brush up on it”.

It's also important that you prepare questions for the business.

Ask about their expectations for future employees – what does it take to become a success, etc.

You need to show that you've researched the position, the job content and the business in general. This is where the business will assess your motivation.

You may be asked about your salary expectations as early as in the first job interview. Make yourself acquainted with pay levels in the sector, and make an ambitious, but realistic suggestion.

You'll often be asked about references from previous managers or colleagues. You should have these references ready for your interview.

Remember to finish the interview properly – say thank you and goodbye to all the participants with a handshake and eye contact. Also remember to say goodbye to the people in the reception before you leave.

After the first interview

Follow up – it can be a good idea to write an email to the person(s) that you interviewed with, and write to them to thank them for a good meeting, make them aware that you've available if they have any questions, and that you look forward to hearing from them.

Sometimes the business meets several candidates and it can take up to 3-4 weeks before you hear from them (you should be informed about this at the interview – if not ask them).

The business will assess the candidates they have met. At this point, there will be 2-5 candidates left in the process.

Fact box – Tests

Logical reasoning tests are often a collection of linguistic and mathematical tasks, sometimes just figures or something completely different. Google “logical reasoning test” for example.

A personality test consists of a number of questions about how you react in different

situations, what you like/don't, whether you're willing to take chances, like change, etc.

Sometimes you can take both the personality test and the logical reasoning test online, at other times both tests or one of them will be while you're at the business.

You're entitled to receive proper feedback on the logical reasoning test/personality test and to have copies of both.

You can also find tests on the internet, so you can prepare as much as possible before you complete the tests at the business.

If the business invites you for a second interview, you've made a good impression!

Sometimes you'll be asked to complete a logical reasoning test and a personality test before the second interview. Sometimes the business will ask you to do this in connection with the first interview.

If you receive an invitation to complete a logical reasoning test or a personality test, you should also receive feedback (you're entitled to receive feedback). You're also

entitled to take the tests with you after your interview.

Complete the personality test and the logical reasoning test as well as you can – and listen carefully to the feedback you get. Be honest and let them know if you think that the tests provide a good picture of you and your competences – or if you don't agree with what they show. Give examples!

You'll often be asked about pay and references at the second interview. At this

point, you need to know what you're worth (study salary statistics, ask your network, use Google...).

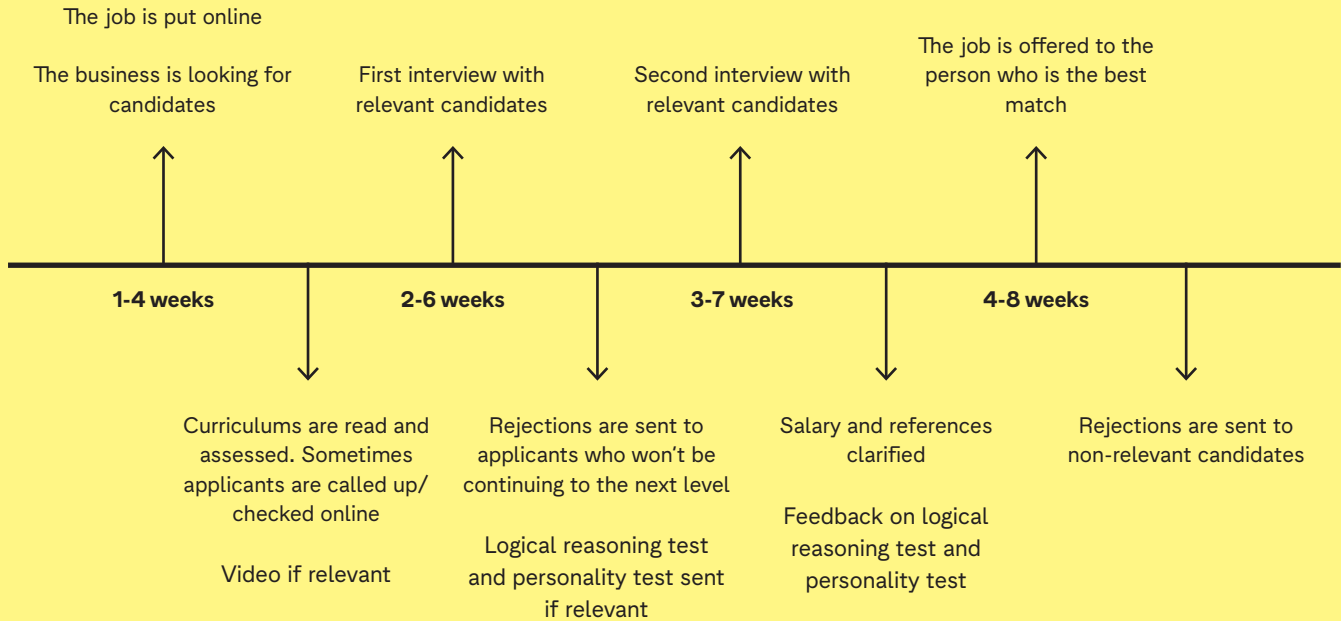
Remember that when you're negotiating your pay, a pay package can consist of fixed salary, pension, holiday, extra holiday entitlements, telephone and internet connection at home, staff benefits (newspapers, fitness subscription/training), bonus, commission, extended notice period, car and much more.

Don'ts

- Don't write/say conflicting information in your Curriculum/cover letter/on LinkedIn/ in a video.
- Don't ask the business questions about things that you can find online or via your network.
- Don't show up for an interview without your Curriculum, cover letter (if you have written one) and good questions. This is like showing up for an exam without revising and seems very unprofessional.
- Don't lie about what you can do – they'll find out sooner or later...
- Don't use a party or holiday photo in your Curriculum/cover letter/on LinkedIn.
- Don't show up for the interview more than 15 minutes before it's due to start (stay in the carpark or wait nearby). Some people consider it unprofessional that you can't plan things better...
- Don't show up late! If something unforeseen happens, call the business and tell them when you'll be there.
- Don't ask for the wrong person at the reception when you arrive for an interview.
- Don't refer to references who don't know that they have been mentioned – or that their contact information has been passed on to a business. Also, don't use references who only have fantastic things to say about you or horrible things to say about you...
- Don't leave the business looking at your shoes and without saying goodbye to the reception.
- Don't write an incorrect name of the business/attn. person on your cover letter/Curriculum.
- Don't save your documents as Name of business_Curriculum.pdf/Name of business_cover letter.pdf.
- Don't make a video with poor lighting, sound and background! Or where you're sitting on your bed, in a café or somewhere else that doesn't suit the job you're applying for.

Example of a recruitment process

Remember that the process varies from business to business!





Questions?

Find an internship coordinator → zealand.com

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Academy of Technologies and Business