



Kuntoutussäätiö

# Jobseeker's Guide

Duunikummi-model



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# Intro

Welcome to Jobseeker's Guide. You can read through this guide on your own or find yourself a mentor. The making of this guide was funded by STEA (Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations).

In practice a mentor helps you get acquainted with working life, helps with job applications, joins you in job interviews and carries out the practical training during the first days if the you find employment. The main goal is to give the jobseeker confidence to find their path in life and get used to working life. We hope this way of training will help young people move ahead in their lives.

# In this program you can get help from a volunteer mentor

## The mentor helps entering working life

If working life seems far away or you have difficulties getting employed, this program is for you. With this program you'll get help for job seeking. You can also find your own path through other means such as studying.

Prior work experience or education is not required. In this program you're allowed to take your time to consider your options and recognise your strengths.

The three groups taking part in this program are jobseekers, WorkMentors and employers.

The guide and training make it easier to look for jobs after you've gotten acquainted with employers' perspectives.

## Steps of the training

Your collaboration with a mentor advances as follows

- You'll **train for working life** on your own and with your mentor
- Your mentor will help you **look for a job**
- Your mentor can participate in your **job interviews** with you
- Your mentor will help you with **practical training** during the first few days, if you get a job

This program includes at least steps one and two. Taking part in this program does not guarantee you'll be invited to job interviews or get to job. It does, however, increase your chances.

This program should take about four months. Because participation is voluntary you can quit any time.

Your mentor listens to you, trusts in you and believes in you. Your needs come first.

Your mentor helps you even if your current situation seems challenging. At the beginning your collaboration the two of you will determine your situation and set realistic goals. Taking only small steps or having setbacks is totally fine.

## Time required to cover different topics may vary

The table below shows different topics to cover as well as number of suggested training sessions.

The number of training sessions depends on your needs. On the first session you'll get acquainted with the program i.e. Chapter *Getting acquainted with WorkMentor program*.

Your knowledge of working life might already be enough. Chapter *Finding out about working life and employers' expectations* might take only one session to cover.

Many jobseekers find training for working life important. You might have exhaustion or lack of routine without a job or other activities to organise your days. In this case you should invest in Chapter *How a jobseeker can get their everyday life in order*.

Chapter *Job seeking takes patience*. If job seeking itself is the thing you want to prioritise in this program you can go through earlier topics faster, even several topics in one session.

Topics on the guides	Number of training sessions
Getting acquainted with WorkMentor program	1
Finding out about working life and employers' expectations	1-4
Help with practical training and the employee's commitment ease the hiring process, say employers	1
The jobseeker learn that work secures their future and offers meaningful tasks	1-2
How a jobseeker can get their everyday life in order	1-6
Stories on work and life changes	1-2
Job seeking takes patience	1-6
At the workplace	10 days at the work place

## Where can I find a mentor?

A mentor is a person who knows working life thoroughly through their own experiences. They have several successful years behind them and are not afraid to take on new challenges. They guide you and demonstrate how to solve problems calmly.

You can ask your neighbour, relative or other acquaintance if they could be your mentor. If you already have a certain line of business in mind, a mentor could be a professional in that field. In that way they can tell you things about such work others might not know.

Sometimes an employer has a previous employee as a practical trainer.

## What does WorkMentor program offer the jobseeker

### **When one problem is solved, others follow**

Even if working life seems hard to reach, you can join the program and find out more about the possibilities of employment. Your goals can take time to form and change as the program advances. This program is voluntary and you can quit any time if you want to.

This program and its schedule will be tailored to your needs and situation. Your volunteer mentor recognises the difficulties you've faced because of e.g. living with low income or poor opportunities for education.

You can plan your path together with you mentor. You'll plan how to approach dreams even if they feel distant.

### **Lack of work experience doesn't prevent you from participating**

Even if you have no prior work experience or education your mentor helps you as well as they can. We want to get rid of the Catch-22 of not getting a job and experience without prior experience. The purpose of this training program is so working life gets more familiar even before getting a job.

During this program you might be surprised how simple some things in working life are.

Proper coaching means you'll learn and try new things on your own pace without pressure. We're looking for a method that brings out the best in you.

And more importantly you'll get a trustworthy person to support you in your path.

### **These activities benefit all involved**

The jobseeker and mentor both enrich their lives by working together and learning from each other:

- the jobseeker will find a job,
- mentors will get a way to teach all they know to younger generations,
- employers struggling with labour shortage get help with practical training which could otherwise take up a lot their resources.

## **Meeting 1: Get to know your mentor and the program**

In this project the jobseeker and the mentor advance according to the guides provided. You can start by browsing the guide and then going through it together chapter by chapter.

In your first meeting you'll get to know each other and take a look at the guides together. You can discuss what would be the right schedule for you and what topics do you find easy and what do you need to learn more about.

## Meetings 2 to 4: Finding out about working life and employers' expectations

### Help with practical training and the employee's commitment ease the hiring process, say employers

This section includes quotes from employers. The quotes are from the study [People with partial work ability as competent workforce](#) (in Finnish, abstract in English) conducted by The Rehabilitation Foundation.

#### What do employers say about hiring?

*"We want to help the locals get ahead in life. The individual's own motivation and willingness to commit to the job they are offered also play a part."*

*"In our case it was important to get a worker for free at first, then with pay subsidy. At first their condition was worrisome at times, but they have rehabilitated and work for us full time now."*

*"Businesses need monetary compensation for the trainer."*

#### What if I have lower work capacity—how do employers react?

A quarter of employers in this study have positive experiences employing a worker with lower work capacity.

*"We've had a person with lower work capacity applying. We didn't see it as a problem, so we offered them a job fitting their needs and schedules."*

*"If we find the right person, their work capacity or background doesn't matter at all. What matters is whether they come to work when they're supposed to, can work independently and want to learn more. A nice personality is a bonus."*

#### Practical training is thought to take a lot of resources

A good career starts with proper training. Practical training is important for work safety. Practical training means that the new worker gets help during their first days. Oftentimes the trainer is a colleague or a boss.

*“We’ve found practical training very expensive. Because we need another person to give advice the entire time and the training can take months or more depending on the tasks.”*

*“Giving enterprises monetary support in hiring a trainer. If someone with lower working capacity starts work here it takes up another worker’s time for weeks.”*

*“For an enterprise hiring someone with lower working capacity doesn’t just cost their wages but also expenses of management.”*

*“Outside supervision that the worker commits to the job (comes on time every day) and personal support with whom the worker and employer could talk about how the tasks are going and if everyone’s happy. Good pay subsidy.”*

## **Motivation will get you far in working life**

The most important thing about working is that you do your best, are punctual and focus on your tasks.

A good contract of employment begins with proper practical training. The mentor’s involvement at the start secures learning the job well. Usually the new employee has no say in how well their training is done.

Many things are only learned on the job: schedules, the premises, co-workers, customers. Sometimes you must learn to use new machines or programs. For example, you can become a cleaner with little experience. Other professions require years of studying, e.g. only a professional can work as a doctor.

It’s critical that the employer finds the right person for the job. Owning a business requires that the expenses, including wages, don’t exceed the profits. Other expenses include the pay of the trainer, tools, uniforms and insurance. The employer needs workers who take their job seriously.

Many employers have ethical principles and they might want to help local people get employed. This doesn’t mean all employers have similar principles, and many jobs require professionals.

Pay subsidy at the beginning of employment lessens the pressure to learn faster. Pay subsidy means your employer gets money from TE-services (TE-palvelut, employment office) to pay you. You’ll get your wages in full, but your employer only pays a part of it. You need to be an unemployed jobseeker (työtön työnhakija) to be granted pay subsidy. Please contact your personal clerk at TE-services to find out if you qualify for pay subsidy. The qualifications may vary. Your employer applies for the pay subsidy themselves, you don’t have to. [More info](#) on TE-services website.



## **No need to pretend being more qualified than you are**

A recruiter wants to know if you'll take work seriously, follow the schedule and are willing to learn new tasks. Other possible criteria include cultural fit, the customers and networks a new employer brings with them to the business. These are things few people looking for their first job have.

If you don't already know how to do everything they require, you can say so openly. Say you are willing to learn. You don't need to pretend to be more qualified than you are. Recruiters know when someone is dishonest and prefer authentic and trustworthy people.

The employers face a challenge because they can't find out the applicants' skills through CV and interview alone.

Recruiters have different methods. Some only check your CV, some only your cover letter. Every recruiter has different views on recruitment.

The recruiter might utilise spec work which gives you an opportunity to show your skills. Spec work might even be more important than your other documents. Spec work can be done either at home before the interview or as a surprise in the interview. Please remember to be cautious as employers may not use spec work to replace their employees.

The recruiter might ask you to bring your letters of reference to the interview. They're usually not interested in the content, they just want to see if your CV is holds true.

Some recruiters ask for references. References can be your previous bosses, co-workers or teachers. Even your WorkMentor can become your reference. Always remember to ask their permission before you pass on their contact information!

Diversity in a work community is an important strength. People have different strengths and personalities. You don't have to excel at everything. When applying for a job think about what you have to offer them that they don't already have. You could ask this in a job interview. You might have a skill or feature nobody there already has.

## **Your mentor can take part in your job interviews**

You can arrange a test interview with your mentor, who takes the role of an employer. After practicing in a safe environment, the real deal won't feel as scary.

Your mentor can also participate in your interviews. Then you can both tell the interviewer about the WorkMentor program and how it has improved your motivation and knowledge on working life.

Usually in job interviews there are one or more interviewers having a conversation with the candidate but other ways of job interviews have also become more commonplace. For example in a group interview you'll take the interview alongside the other interviewees. Some recruiters conduct interviews on the phone or in a video call. In some interviews

there isn't even an interviewer, instead you'll record yourself answering their pre-assigned questions.

Ask the interviewer beforehand if they agree to your mentor being there with you. For example, group interviews are more and more common, and they don't allow outside participants.

## **Work secures your future and gives you meaningful things to do**

### **Work secures your future and living independently**

Regular income makes it easier to balance your finances. Being financially stable makes it easier to plan for the future. You'll be able to save money for bigger purchases and surprise expenses. Having a savings account lessens stress.

As a worker you'll get paid time off, pension, occupational health care as well as activities with the work community and colleagues.

Employees can study, with the permission of their employer, in accordance with the law regarding study leave law while receiving financial aid for students (opintotuki). However, the employer does not sustain expenses. When you need additional skills and training as an employee the entrance requirements to different institutions may differ from other students. [More info](#) on the website of Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland.

### **What does working life offer?**

Work gives life routine. It helps create a daily and weekly schedule.

Days go by fast when you have clear tasks. If you have worries at home, you won't always remember them at work.

Working and taking rest breaks helps you stay energised through the day.

Working contract includes paid time off. Taking a holiday is relaxing when it takes place after a year of work.

Wages, vacation times and other important information is included in the collective labour agreement (CLA, työehtosopimus or TES in Finnish) of each trade union. The CLA in question is often mentioned in the job advertisement.

For many the joy of working comes from collaboration with co-workers and customers. You'll meet many kinds of people at work. Sometimes even those you get along with

splendidly. Even menial tasks go smoothly in good company. Co-workers might become friends you share your everyday thoughts with over your tasks, during breaks or after work.

Not all work requires being social, people work in groups or by themselves. Communication skills always come in handy. Communication simply means everyone knows what's going on. You don't need to make small talk with your co-workers, but it's easier for everyone when important information reaches everyone. Then you can all do your tasks and be in the right place at the right time.

## You'll learn a lot at work

You'll gain confidence when you get the chance to show what you can do. People will appreciate your contribution. After successfully doing your job well you'll get new opportunities to grow. You can try finding a better job elsewhere or ask for a promotion. You'll know what kind of work you want to do in the future, so it'll be easier to plan ahead. You'll gain new skills and knowledge.

Being content at your work can be a result of a neat workspace or seeing the good your work does for the clients. Many young people nowadays want to do meaningful work.

# Getting your everyday life in order

## Training by yourself

People without a job or other activities to keep their daily routine often don't keep a specific schedule. Even employees lose their routine on holidays. What matters is you take small steps towards a stable everyday routine that's right for you. It's easier to start working when you've already gotten used to the schedule.

You should keep a routine similar to the kind of job you want. Try waking up, eating and going to bed about the same time each day. At first new situations might make you feel anxious. Even meeting your mentor for the first time might feel scary. If you've spent a long time at home, you can get used to going outside again. Going for a walk is a good start. You could try sending job applications in the library.

Have regular days off. Rest days are important, so you won't get exhausted.

Your mentor should mainly help you with getting employed. They are not an expert on health, financial problems etc. but you can ask them if they could offer some advice. If you have health problems, please contact a doctor or a nurse.

If you are under 30 years old you can ask for help on your local [Ohjaamo](#). They offer guidance in wellbeing, financial questions, housing and relationships.

## Dreams help you get further in life

It's okay to dream! WorkMentor project is here to support you whatever you want to achieve.

If your dream job seems difficult to achieve you could try approaching it gradually. You could try working in your preferred line of business as an assistant and start networking. It never hurts to know many facets of your field.

Every single profession teaches you valuable soft skills you can transfer to any job. For example offering great customer service, problem solving and punctuality.

You can also do many things as a hobby, volunteer at local organisations or take gigs as a freelancer. By training on your own you can hone your skills even if you can't find your dream job right now. For example, a lot of authors or artists work nine to five and spend their free time on their creative work. In that way they don't have to worry about income. Some people have even gotten fed up with their hobby after doing it as a day job.

## Stories on work and life changes

### How to make your work more interesting

#### Story 1.

A real estate agent said their work was always the same, but the different customers and their needs were interesting. Gradually, the real-estate agent became interested in getting to know what kind of a person their clients were and how they could be helped to find a good apartment with good surroundings. Often the agent and their client would think about the client's needs. The agent started taking the clients to completely different areas and apartments than what the client had initially hoped for. The agent also got interested in solving issues concerning moving and renovation.

The agent expanded their role into new areas which resulted in many customers being satisfied when their homes were furnished with the exact furniture they had wished.

#### Story 2.

A young actor was fed up with their work and the competitiveness in their profession. The actor wanted something completely different from their life and went to Lapland. He decided to start working as a ski lift manager at a ski resort. The new ski lift manager did their work magnificently and offered excellent customer service. As a result, there was always a long line at their ski lift because of how well the manager treated their clients.

After a while they went on to try out a different profession.

## **Sales work is problem solving**

In the business world there are sales jobs everywhere. It might be the most common kind of job nowadays.

In sales work it's important to note

- the goal is to solve a problem,
- the product should be of good quality.

Oftentimes you'll learn about the job and the products on the job.

The estate agent in the earlier example solved their clients' problems and didn't just sell the first house they found. As a result, they got plenty of happy customers and a good reputation, which in turn lead to more customers.

## **Two stories on envy**

### **Story 3.**

A fifty-year-old head dispenser, in the medical profession, told their cousin he chose his profession because he had been jealous the cousin's work as a dishwasher at a laboratory. They had started to orientate their studies and career towards medicine because the laboratory sounded so exciting.

### **Story 4.**

A student had been jealous of a classmate who had an ear for music. They always knew everything about music and never had to rehearse or tune their instruments to know what pitch would come out. However, the jealous student started studying music and tried to develop different methods to understand different sounds and pitch heights. They got a job in the music industry and noticed they had gradually developed a skill to compensate for the lack of ear for music.

They applied what they had learned to further their career, developing a model through which it was possible to practise the ear to understand different pitches even without musical instruments This became a business model that they practise, as well as being a professional musician.

## **Job seeking takes patience**

### **Make a schedule that is right for your life**

You and your mentor can plan your schedule together.

How many hours per day or per week can you spend on job-seeking?

You could try writing down different tasks on your calendar. Finding the right job advertisements, writing cover letters, tailoring your CV, calling the recruiters, networking, doing spec work, going to job interviews, attending recruitment fairs.

Some jobs have more vacancies during holiday seasons, some don't. Recruitment fairs often take place in January or autumn. You can find local fairs by searching rekryointita-pahtuma, rekrymessut, työnantajatreffit.

## What kind of things do you need or want in a job?

What kind of things do you need or want in a job?

- Location
- Schedule
- Do you prefer working by yourself or in a group?
- Do you want to have different kinds of days or do you prefer routine?
- What do you dream of?
- What do you want to learn?
- What things do you enjoy doing?
- Are you particularly good at something?

You could check [Occupational Barometer](#) or browse [open vacancies](#) to see which professions employ the most.

All these are things you can discuss with your mentor while filling the registration form.

## Gather your sources of job advertisements

You could start with these English-language sources

- [Mol.fi](#)
- [Kuntarekry](#)
- [Duunitori](#)
- [Monster](#)

Check these regularly or have new advertisements automatically sent to your email.

If you know a little Finnish, you could try checking your local Facebook group for job advertisements.

Tell people you know you're looking for a job. They might know positions on the hidden job market, jobs that aren't advertised publicly.

## Document your job seeking process

We offer a form you can use to document your job search online or on paper.

You could try jotting down interesting jobs and their application deadlines on your calendar. You should always send your application on time, the earlier the better.

Copy and paste each job advertisement you apply to as well as saving copies of the applications you've sent. You'll always see which jobs you've applied to and which still go unanswered. If you get invited to an interview, you'll have the ad on hand and can revise the requirements of the specific job.

## Small steps take you far

All the tips mentioned in this guide might already be familiar to you but you still haven't got a job. Then you could think about which parts of your job seeking might need some developing.

Do you never receive answers to your applications and never get any interviews? Or do you write excellent cover letters but fail the interviews? Or do you just need some help with networking or phone calls to recruiters? Think about these things with your mentor and based on your thoughts plan how to develop your job seeking progress. The mentor can help you to polish your CV, proofread your cover letters, arrange a practice interview or offer moral support to phone calls.

There are many ways to get a job. Try different methods. Sending applications to open vacancies, cold calling employers, talking to recruiters at job fairs etc.

If you don't get the job you applied for, think about what you learned from the experience. Tailoring your cover letter for different employers and going to job interviews always teach you new things about working life. You can't control everything. Sometimes you just have bad luck.

In your applications you can mention you're taking part in WorkMentor program. That way the recruiter sees you've actively worked towards being employed and gotten to know working life in Finland.

## At the workplace

This section tells you how to proceed if you get a job while participating the WorkMentor project.

Your mentor and new employer take care of the job subsidy application.

## **It takes time to learn a job**

If you and your employer wish, your mentor will help you with on-the-job training for the first two weeks.

At the beginning of employment, you'll document your work with your mentor. The Rehabilitation Foundation offers forms for documentation. The documentation makes sure nothing important is left out and that you have notes of important information. At the beginning of new job there'll be lots of new things to learn and keep in mind and you can't be expected to remember all of it. Note down important information: schedules, deadlines, how certain machines function, colleagues' phone numbers etc.

The goal of practical training is preparing you, so you'll know how to do your job and keep doing it permanently.

A good work community has many kinds of people with different skillsets. One person doesn't have to know everything. You might, even without work experience, know something a colleague with years of experience doesn't.

## **Everyone makes mistakes**

You should be allowed to learn and practise new things and make mistakes in a safe environment. If you have trouble with a task, take a moment to stop and practise slowly. Ask for help if you need any.

It's expected that you'll make mistakes on your first days. The most important thing is you learn from them. How can you avoid that mistake next time?

The employer can't expect you to be perfect from the start and they can't give you too much responsibility.

## **Trial period**

Workplaces often have a trial period which is there to protect the employee and the employer. During the trial period each of them can terminate the contract without a reason.

If a worker quits and becomes unemployed, they might lose their benefits.

The duration of the trial period is noted on the contract of employment or the CLA (TES) of your field of employment. The maximum duration is six months but no more than half of the duration of a temporary contract.



## Things to keep in mind

Your WorkMentor is there to guide you. We hope you do your best to get interested in working and job-seeking even if you have trouble getting started.

- The most important thing is for you to do your best.
- Working has many benefits.
- Any job can be made interesting.
- Ask for help if you feel you need it.
- People take different kinds of career paths.
- Know your limits and prioritise your own well-being.



# Kuntoutussäätiö

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