

Country Profile - Finland

Job market

What are my chances of getting a job?

The chances of UK graduates finding skilled jobs in Finland are positive, particularly in shortage occupations such as healthcare. The Finnish government is welcoming people from abroad to fill the gaps in the labour market caused by the older generation of workers reaching retirement age.

- **Typical problems encountered:** competition from home graduates may be high due to the fact that many Finnish graduates are often fluent in several languages, including English, Swedish, German, French and Spanish.
- **How to improve your chances:** relevant work experience is usually required and graduates are expected to have professional experience before being hired for more advanced jobs. It may be necessary to gain this experience before moving to Finland. Employees are also expected to be constantly updating their skills and knowledge and so evidence of this may also be helpful.
- **Language requirements:** there are very few jobs where it will be possible to work without any knowledge of Finnish. Swedish is also an official language, spoken by a minority. As English is often the language of business for companies in the international market, it may mean that English language skills are required, but a working knowledge of Finnish is still extremely important. [Finn-Guild](#) runs evening courses in London and also provides links to other courses around the UK, as well as distance learning materials. In Finland, there are many adult education institutions which offer language courses to immigrants.

Where can I work?

- **Major industries:** electronics, metal, wood and paper industries, agriculture and forestry, engineering and manufacturing.
- **Recent growth areas:** the private services sector.
- **Industries in decline:** manufacturing.
- **Shortage occupations:** healthcare and social work as well as services that support public and business life. Graduates with experience in engineering, IT and electronics are also needed.
- **Major companies:** Kesko (retail), Metsäliitto (forest industry), Neste Oil, Nokia, Outokumpu (stainless steel), Sampo (insurance), SOK (also known as S Group) (retail), Stora Enso (forest industry), Tamro (pharmaceutical wholesaling), UPM-Kymmene (forest industry).
- **Search for more companies:** [Finnfacts](#) has a list of Finnish companies searchable by industry sector. [Kompass](#) is a worldwide business directory searchable by country and product/service. The Finland Central Chamber of Commerce publishes the [Contact Finland Directory](#), which includes information on Finnish companies. You might also find [Wikipedia - List of Companies of Finland](#) useful.
- **Major cities:** Helsinki (capital and largest), Espoo, Tampere, Vantaa, Turku, Oulu.

What's it like working in Finland?

- **Average working hours:** Approximately 40 hours a week, but this varies depending on the sector. Office hours may vary regionally.
 - **Holidays:** Employees accrue holiday at the minimum rate of two days per month. For some positions this increases to two and a half days each month when the job continues for a full year. The majority of annual holiday days are taken over the summer, leaving about one week for the winter.
 - **Tax rates:** Everyone, including immigrants, pays taxes to the state and local authority. If you are planning to work for longer than six months in Finland you should visit the local register office that will issue your personal identification number. The tax office will then give you a tax card that your employer can use to deduct tax from your pay, which will be based on a fixed percentage of your income. If you will be working in Finland for less than six months, your employer will withhold around 35% of your wages as tax. More details are available from [Vero Skatt](#).
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Applying for jobs

It's a good idea to start looking for employment before you move to Finland, although it's not vital to do so. International jobseekers are able to register with the [Employment and Economic Development Office](#) (TE Office) which offers advice on getting a job and help with applications. A registration form can be completed online but this can only be done in Finnish.

Job applications in Finland are usually made by a CV, which should always be sent with a covering letter. Application forms are becoming more popular (including online applications), especially with larger companies. Applications can also be made through the TE Office and CVs can be posted on their CV-net service, although this is only available in Finnish or Swedish.

A Finnish CV is similar to a UK one. [Eurograduate - the European Graduate Career Guide](#) has a working abroad section that gives information on the application process in Finland with an example of a Finnish CV.

Experience may be worth more than formal qualifications, so emphasise work experience as much as possible. As in the UK, employers are interested in your reasons for applying and are looking for evidence of teamwork, communication, IT and language skills (such as Finnish, Swedish, German, English and Russian). Some employers accept applications in English and this is often stated in the advertisement, although if possible you should write your CV in one of Finland's official languages (Finnish or Swedish).

The amount of interviews you'll have for each job varies depending on the company. Use Finnish in the interview if possible and be direct, confident and concise. Smart business dress is usually expected on these occasions. There is an increasing use of group activities and psychometric tests, especially by larger organisations. Assessment centres are used for management positions and are also becoming increasingly popular for public sector jobs.

Will my UK qualifications be recognised?

If you wish to compare your professional, vocational or technical qualifications with Finnish qualifications, consult the [ENIC-NARIC](#) website.

The [Finnish National Board of Education](#) is responsible for deciding whether foreign qualifications or degrees meet the requirements set by Finnish authorities for regulated professions and public sector jobs.

Do I still need to pay UK tax and National Insurance?

If you are planning to live and work in Finland, check your UK tax and National Insurance position with [HM Revenue & Customs \(HMRC\)](#) to ensure that you are not losing any UK pension rights.

Vacancy sources

Job websites

- [Aarresaari](#) - includes academic job listings.
- [EURES - European Job Mobility Portal](#)
- [Monster \(Finland\)](#)
- [Oikotie](#)
- [Temp Team \(Finland\)](#)
- [Uranus - Finnish Career and Recruitment Service](#)
- [Uratie](#) - for technology and commerce jobs.

Recruitment agencies

- [The Private Employment Agencies Association](#) - a list of recruitment agencies in Finland.
- [VMP-Group](#) - recruitment services.
- [VPS](#) - recruitment services.

Newspapers

- [Helsingin Sanomat \(international edition\)](#) - on Sundays.
- Details of Finnish newspapers are available online at [Kidon Media-Link](#) or via the [BBC Country Profile - Finland](#).

Other sources

- [InfoPankki](#) - nationwide and regional-based information, linking to job sites, newspapers and other sources of vacancies.
- [Employment and Economic Development Office](#) - details of job vacancies in Finnish. It also has contact details of the employment offices in Finland.
- New entrepreneurs are needed in many sectors, both for the ageing population and the developing industry. Details about business and entrepreneurship may be found at [Ministry of Employment and the Economy Finland](#) and [Enterprise Finland](#).

Hidden vacancies

Many vacancies are filled through personal networks or speculative applications and only about one-third of jobs are actually advertised. Although in the past speculative applications were mainly for larger companies, they are now becoming more common for all companies. Making direct enquiries by telephone usually gets a better response than written enquiries.

Work experience

Work placements and internships

[CIMO \(Centre for International Mobility\)](#) organises and administers many of the scholarship, exchange and practical training programmes available in Finland. This includes their own trainee programmes as well as ones offered in trade centres, cultural institutes, international organisations and the civil service.

Traineeships are open to international graduates as well as students who have completed at least one year of university study. They are most common during the summer months, but may also take place at other times of the year. The minimum training period is one month and the maximum is 18 months. See [Study in Finland](#) for further information.

Exchange programmes

CIMO is the national agency for [IAESTE \(The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience\)](#) in Finland, which arranges about 200 exchanges a year with other IAESTE countries.

It's used by students wishing to obtain technical experience abroad. The majority of the exchanges take place between May and September and last between eight to twelve weeks. Applications are made through the IAESTE office in the student's home country.

CIMO is also the national coordinator of the [Leonardo da Vinci Programme](#) which arranges vocational training exchanges and work placements with partner organisations in other countries. Contact your university careers service or international office for more information.

Teaching schemes

For graduates interested in teaching English, there are opportunities in private schools and kindergartens, folk schools and colleges. There is also the option of freelancing. Visit [Keltaiset Sivut - Yellow Pages Finland](#) to find organisations that run English language schools in Finland (use the search criteria: kieliopisto).

Volunteering

The [International Cultural Youth Exchange \(ICYE\)](#) programme operates in Finland and offers voluntary work in community service projects. The majority of projects last between six to twelve months. See the website for further information.

Other volunteering opportunities in Finland include projects with [International Voluntary Service \(IVS\) in Britain](#), [British Council - Finland](#) and [Concordia International Volunteers](#).

Casual work

There are many opportunities for seasonal, summer work. Roles are available in the horticultural, agricultural, catering and tourism sectors. Part-time work is not as common in Finland as in other European countries.

Gap year opportunities

Gap year opportunities include administration or hospitality roles at hotels, ski resorts or even Santa Claus' Village in Lapland. Childcare and au pair opportunities with local families are also available. See [GapYear365](#) for more information.

Postgraduate study

How does the higher education system work?

The Finnish higher education system consists of polytechnics and universities. The [Ministry of Education and Culture Finland](#) steers the activities of polytechnics and universities by means of performance management.

Universities are autonomous and so are independent in their affairs and research. Undergraduate and Masters degrees offered are similar to those in the UK.

Polytechnics have close contact with businesses and industries at a regional level. The degrees offered by polytechnics have an occupational emphasis, designed to meet the needs of employers.

What courses are available?

Full-time Bachelors degrees last three years and Masters degrees take two years. Both Bachelors and Masters degree courses are classified as undergraduate degrees in Finland.

Postgraduate degrees are the Licentiate degree, which lasts two years, and the Doctoral thesis, which can be completed in four years but often takes longer. Doctoral studies are closely linked with research work done at universities and international institutions. Students may start working for a Doctorate once they have completed a Masters degree.

The [Study in Finland](#) website has an international study programmes database, which gives information on courses taught in English in universities and polytechnics.

Where can I study?

There are 16 universities in Finland. Ten are multi-faculty, two are universities of technology, one is a school of economics and business administration and the remaining three are arts academies. There are 25 polytechnics which operate under the Ministry of

Education and Culture. A list of universities and polytechnics in Finland is available from [CIMO \(Centre for International Mobility\)](#) and [Universities Worldwide](#).

World university rankings may be found on [Top Universities](#) and [Times Higher Education \(THE\)](#).

Applying for postgraduate study

Higher education institutions in Finland decide independently on the eligibility of foreign qualifications, so you'll need to contact the admissions office at the institution to which you are applying. Usually, if you would be eligible to apply for higher education in your home country you would be eligible to apply for it in Finland. You may be invited to take part in an entrance examination in Finland. For some Masters degrees at polytechnics, a degree and three years' work experience is required.

Application dates vary depending on institution, course and your country of residence (some have no application deadlines) and you should contact the relevant institutions for more details. Make sure you apply in plenty of time. The academic year runs from September to May.

Applications are made directly to the university you wish to attend. Forms are available from the universities and polytechnics. For contact details, visit [Study in Finland](#).

Ten Finnish universities use the [University Admissions Finland \(UAF\)](#) application system, which is an online admissions service. Check the website for a list of universities that use this system.

Each course and institution has different application procedures, but in general you may be required to complete a 'motivation letter' or personal statement and provide copies of your degree transcript.

Fees and scholarships

There are no tuition fees for Finnish or EU/EEA citizens studying Bachelors or Doctoral programmes in Finnish universities or polytechnics. Non-EU/EEA citizens may have to pay tuition fees for some Masters degrees, however. Check tuition fees policies with individual institutions.

Students' unions in universities charge an annual membership fee of about €30 - €100 to cover their activities. Membership is compulsory for those who are studying Bachelors or Masters degrees, but optional for those doing a Doctorate. Students' union membership in polytechnics is also optional.

Students in both universities and polytechnics have to pay for their books and other materials, plus their accommodation and living expenses. The average total monthly living expenses for a student are around €700 (Study in Finland).

The following websites contain information about scholarships:

- [CIMO \(Centre for International Mobility\)](#) - small number of Finnish government scholarships.
- [SYL \(The National Union of University Students in Finland\)](#) - scholarships from the Finnish government.

- [Study in Finland](#) - details of scholarships for international students.

Are there any exchange programmes?

UK students on undergraduate degree programmes or Masters and some PhD programmes may be interested in spending time studying in Finland through [Erasmus](#). This programme is open to all subject areas but check with your institution's Erasmus coordinator first (usually based in the international office) to see which countries they have links with and in which subject areas.

Will my qualifications be recognised in the UK?

As part of the [Bologna Process](#), a Finnish postgraduate course is directly comparable to the UK equivalent. Full details on comparing international qualifications are also available from [UK NARIC \(National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom\)](#), which gives information and advice on vocational, academic and professional qualifications from over 180 countries.

Visa and travel information

Visa requirements and applications

Most EU nationals do not need to apply for a visa or work permit but citizens of non-EU countries may be required to have these documents. If you plan to study or work in Finland for longer than three months, you should register your right of residence with the local police. A written registration certificate is issued once it has been proven that the preconditions for residence have been met. See the [Employment and Economic Development Office](#) for more information.

If you are from a non-EU country, applications may be made from your home country via the [Finnish Immigration Service](#). If you are living in the UK, go to the [British Embassy Finland](#).

You might also find it helpful to contact your ministry of foreign affairs (or your own embassy if you are not living in your home country) to ask whether there are any issues to be taken into account when considering working in Finland.

Permanent residency

An EU citizen automatically has the right to permanent residency in Finland after living there for an uninterrupted period of five years. They may receive a certificate of the right to permanent residence.

Help in an emergency

The [British Embassy Finland](#) provides help if you get into difficulty in Finland, offering a range of advice and services, including issuing replacement passports, help if you have been a victim of crime and details of local services.

The emergency number, 112, is used for ambulances, the fire brigade, police and emergency social services.

Travel advice

Find the latest travel advice and a travel checklist on the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\)](#) website.

Country overview

Geography

- **Full country name:** Republic of Finland.
- **Population:** 5.4 million (Finnfacts, 2012)
- **Border countries:** Sweden, Norway and Russia.
- **Climate:** Cold winters and relatively warm summers. In summer, temperatures may rise above 20°C, with the south and east seeing the highest temperatures. In winter, temperatures of -20°C are not uncommon.
- **Terrain:** Lakes and low hills, with flat to rolling plains. 10% of the country is covered by water and 69% by forest.
- **Natural hazards:** None, except problems associated with heavy snowfall.

Living in Finland

- **Cost of living:** About the same as the UK. The Finnish standard of living is one of the highest in the world.
- **Internet domain:** .fi
- **Health:** The standard of healthcare in Finland is high. EU citizens who are temporarily in Finland should get a [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#) to be able to access the healthcare system. Those who are residing permanently in Finland, or who are employed in a job lasting more than four months, are within the scope of health insurance and are issued with a [Kela card](#). This reimburses part of the cost of medication, private doctor's fees and costs of tests and treatments.
- **Laws and customs:** The use, possession or dealing of drugs is against the law and carries heavy penalties. Visit the [Finnish Police](#) website for information.

Economy and finance

- **Currency:** Euro (€)
- **Type of economy:** Capitalist, Western
- **Health of economy:** Finland has a highly industrialised, largely free-market economy, with per capita output that roughly equals the individual outputs of Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden.
- **Unemployment rate:** 7.5% (Eurostat, 2012)
- **Main exports:** paper and pulp, timber, electronics, metal products, machinery and chemicals.

Culture

- **People:** The majority of the population is Finnish (just over 93%), while almost 6% are Swedish.
- **Major religion:** Lutheran
- **History:** See [BBC Timeline: Finland](#).

Politics

- **Type of government:** Parliamentary democracy with a republican constitution.
- **Major political parties:** The National Coalition Party, the Centre Party of Finland, the Social Democratic Party of Finland, the Christian Democrats, the Left Alliance and the Green League.

More information

- [British Embassy Finland](#)
- [BBC Country Profile - Finland](#)
- [The World Factbook](#)
- [XE Universal Currency Converter](#)

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