

Country Profile - Norway

Job market

The Norwegian authorities are currently trying to make it as easy as possible for foreigners to get work in Norway. There is a shortage of skilled workers in the country, particularly in healthcare and shipping. Norway has a strong economy and a relatively low unemployment rate. If you have some knowledge of Norwegian, your chances of finding a graduate job in Norway are good.

What are my chances of getting a job?

- **Typical problems encountered:** networking and personal recommendations aid job searches in Norway, so it may be more difficult for graduates without Norwegian connections to penetrate the job market. The majority of jobs in Norway require knowledge of the Norwegian language or another Scandinavian language. Some jobs do accept those who just speak English but these are usually seasonal agriculture jobs or roles in hospitality. Not knowing Norwegian will dramatically limit your job options.
- **How to improve your chances:** consider taking on casual work in Norway while you learn Norwegian and build a network of contacts.
- **Language requirements:** English is taught in schools and many Norwegians will have quite good knowledge of the language. However, it is still advisable to learn some Norwegian either before moving to Norway or once you get there. You can find information about learning Norwegian both in Norway and in the UK at [Study in Norway](#) or [Norway](#). Alternatively, if you apply for a postgraduate study course it may be possible to add on a first year of learning Norwegian. Distance learning programmes are available from [EuroTalk](#).

Where can I work?

- **Major industries:** oil and gas, fishing, shipbuilding, metals, chemicals, mining, wood pulp and paper.
- **Recent growth areas:** ICT, biotechnology, tourism.
- **Shortage occupations:** healthcare, shipping, engineering, financial and management professions.
- **Major companies:** Statoil (oil and gas), Norsk Hydro (aluminium and energy), Telenor (telecommunications), Aker (holding company), Orkla (industrial conglomerate), Total E&P Norge, ExxonMobil, Yara International (chemicals), Esso.
- **Search for more companies:** [Kompass](#) is a worldwide business directory searchable by country and product/service. See also the [Norwegian Yellow Pages](#) (in Norwegian), the [British-Norwegian Chamber of Commerce](#) and [Randburg.com - Norway](#).
- **Major cities:** Oslo (capital and largest), Bergen, Trondheim.

What's it like working in Norway?

- **Average working hours:** 40 hours a week. By law, anything exceeding this is classed as overtime.

- **Holidays:** average holiday entitlement is 21-25 days a year, plus public holidays.
 - **Tax rates:** if you work for a Norwegian employer for six months or longer you must pay tax in Norway. You must apply in person for a tax deduction card from the local tax office and they will inform you of how much tax you will have to pay. This is usually around a third of your salary but varies slightly depending on how much you earn. The National Insurance rate is 7.8% and this is included in the tax you pay.
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Applying for jobs

You do not need to be in Norway to find a job, as vacancies are listed on company websites and on the [NAV \(Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service\)](#) website. It is also possible to register your CV on the [EURES Job-search](#) for Norwegian employers to access. Norway also has an informal job market, so being in the country and able to network can sometimes prove advantageous.

The usual method of application is by covering letter and CV, followed by an interview. Employers are usually happy to receive speculative applications.

Most vacancies are advertised in Norwegian and it is preferred that applications are made in Norwegian as well, although some companies accept applications in English.

It is advisable to attach copies of letters of reference, qualification certificates and grade transcripts.

Norwegian CVs should follow a similar format to a UK CV. It is not essential to include a photograph but this may be regarded by employers as a positive. Examples of Norwegian CVs are available (in Norwegian) from the [University of Oslo careers service](#). [Eurograduate - Working in Norway](#) also has a sample Norwegian CV and information on the Norwegian working culture.

Interviews are typically structured and contain set questions. They can range from 45-90 minutes, although if psychometric tests or group exercises are carried out the whole process will take longer.

It is common for there to be between two to five people conducting the interview, who may each ask questions on specific areas. Ensure you have prepared well for the interview and be ready to answer questions about why you have applied and what you can bring to the company. Explain why the skills you have will be beneficial to the role.

Will my UK qualifications be recognised?

Consult [ENIC-NARIC](#) to compare your professional, vocational or technical qualifications with Norwegian qualifications.

The [UK National Europass Centre \(UK NEC\)](#) has information on how to make your skills and qualifications easily understood in Norway.

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

If you are planning to live and work in Norway, check your 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

- [Career in Norway](#)
- [Deltidsjobb](#) (in Norwegian)
- [EURES - European Job Mobility Portal](#) - maintained by the European Commission, provides information about job vacancies, living and working conditions and labour markets in Norway, as well as a CV-posting service for jobseekers.
- [Finn Jobb](#) (in Norwegian)
- [JobbDirekte](#) (in Norwegian)
- [JobNew](#) (in Norwegian)
- [Monster \(Norway\)](#) (in Norwegian)
- [NAV \(Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service\)](#) - lists vacancies as well as general information about living and working in Norway.
- [Stepstone Norway](#)

Recruitment agencies

Agencies are listed in the [Norwegian Yellow Pages](#) - search for 'vikarbyrå' and 'vikarutleie'.

Newspapers

- [Aftenposten](#) (in Norwegian)
- [Dagbladet](#) (in Norwegian)
- [Norway Post](#) (in English)

All Norwegian newspapers can be accessed via [Kidon Media-Link](#).

Other sources

- The [University of Oslo careers service](#) provides links to graduate employers.
- Career events and job fairs are offered at colleges and universities.

Hidden vacancies

Sending speculative applications is a common method of applying for jobs in Norway. Remember to make a follow-up call to the company after you have sent your application.

In some sectors it is not unusual to visit a company unannounced to enquire about a job. Remember to take your CV with references and transcripts and ask to speak to someone in personnel or management.

Work experience

Work placements and internships

- [AIESEC \(Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences Economiques et Commerciales\)](#) - arranges paid and voluntary work placements in various countries.
- [Atlantis Youth Exchange](#) - a Norwegian organisation for 18- to 30-year-olds, offering au pair jobs and work within the farming and tourism industries.
- [IAESTE \(The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience\)](#) - offers placements for science, engineering and technology students.
- The [Leonardo da Vinci Programme](#) arranges vocational training exchanges and work placements with partner organisations in other countries. Contact your university's international office or careers service for more information.

Teaching schemes

Some opportunities as an English language assistant are available, as English is widely taught in schools. The [British Council - Norway](#) will be able to advise. If you have a TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language) qualification, you could teach in a language school - a list is available at [ESL Base](#).

Volunteering

In addition to the usual voluntary organisations, such as [Volunteer Abroad](#), you could consider [The European Voluntary Service \(EVS\)](#) or look at the opportunities available through the [European Youth Portal](#).

Casual work

Much part-time and casual work is seasonal and is available in sectors such as forestry and agriculture. Other jobs you could do if you do not speak Norwegian are similar to those available in the UK and include:

- warehouse work;
- factory/production lines;
- cleaning;
- au pair;
- restaurants/bars.

Summer vacancies can also be found on the [NAV \(Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service\)](#) website by searching for 'sommer' (summer), 'ferie' (holiday) or 'sesong' (seasonal). [Deltidsjobb](#) also advertises part-time work (in Norwegian).

Postgraduate study

How does the higher education system work?

Norway is one of the countries taking part in the [European Higher Education Area \(EHEA\)](#). This means that the higher education system follows the structure of the Bachelors degree, Masters and PhD, which helps with the transferability of qualifications between those countries involved in the Bologna process. In Norway, Bachelors degrees typically take three years, Masters take two and PhDs take three years.

Full information about the Norwegian education system is available at [Study in Norway](#) and the [Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research](#).

Information about Norway's policy regarding the internationalisation of education can be found at the [Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education \(SIU\)](#).

What courses are available?

Norwegian postgraduate study offers many of the same subjects as in the UK, as well as an interesting choice of agricultural science and natural science courses. An online catalogue of courses is available at [Study in Norway](#).

While the main language of teaching is Norwegian, there are an increasing number of Masters courses being offered in English. If you opt for a Norwegian-based course but have little or no prior knowledge of the language, you will need to spend the first year learning Norwegian. Alternatively, summer schools also offer language courses specifically aimed at exchange students.

Where can I study?

There are eight state-run universities in Norway:

- [Norwegian University of Life Sciences \(UMB\)](#)
- [Norwegian University of Science and Technology \(NTNU\)](#)
- [University of Agder](#)
- [University of Bergen](#)
- [University of Nordland](#)
- [University of Oslo](#) (the oldest and largest)
- [University of Stavanger](#)
- [University of Tromsø](#)

There are also nine specialised university institutions, twenty state university colleges, two national institutes of the arts and a number of private colleges.

Links to all the Norwegian universities and institutions of higher education are available at [Study in Norway](#).

Applying for postgraduate study

Application criteria are set by each individual institution but in general they are similar to those found in the UK. Applicants usually must have completed an undergraduate degree, part of which should be relevant to the selected Masters.

Most courses start in August but some begin in January. Contact individual institutions to find out specific application deadlines. Deadlines for foreign students are typically between December and March for courses starting in the following autumn.

Fees and scholarships

Norwegian institutions are publicly funded and as such there are no tuition fees, even for foreign students. A registration fee of around NOK 300-700 per semester is required, however. This grants membership to the student welfare organisation and provides you with a student card which can be used to obtain discounts in a variety of areas.

You should bear in mind the high cost of living in Norway and the fact that international students must prove they have sufficient funding for one year.

Information on scholarships is available from the [Research Council of Norway](#) and [Study in Norway](#).

Are there any exchange programmes?

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

See the [Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education \(SIU\)](#) for more possibilities.

Will my qualification be recognised in the UK?

As Norway is a member state of the [European Higher Education Area \(EHEA\)](#), qualifications will be transferable to the UK. You can also refer to the [UK NARIC \(National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom\)](#) for information on comparing international qualifications.

Visa and travel information

Visa requirements and applications

Norway is not in the European Union (EU) but it is a member of the European Economic Area (EEA), so all EEA nationals are free to stay in Norway without a residence permit for up to three months. You must be able to support yourself financially during this period.

If you are an EEA national and plan to stay in Norway for longer than three months, either to work, carry out training or study on a university course, you must register with the police. You can register online via the [Norwegian Directorate of Immigration \(UDI\)](#) website and then visit a police station. They will then issue a certificate of registration. EEA nationals do not need to apply for a residence permit.

Restrictions apply to nationals of the new EEA member countries, Bulgaria and Romania. Non-EEA nationals may also be required to apply for a residence permit. Check the UDI website for further details.

If you are not a citizen of an EEA country, contact the Norwegian embassy in the country where you are currently residing about how to obtain a residence permit. If you are living in the UK, go to the [Royal Norwegian Embassy](#).

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 Norway.

Permanent residency

The certificate of registration issued to EEA citizens who plan to stay in Norway for longer than three months is valid indefinitely. EEA citizens can apply for a document which certifies permanent residence after they have lived in Norway for a continuous period of at least five years.

Members of non-EEA countries will need to apply for a permanent residence permit. This allows the holder to live and work in Norway indefinitely. To apply for a permanent residence permit you must have stayed in Norway for a continuous period of three years. Applications must be submitted to the police. See the [Norwegian Directorate of Immigration \(UDI\)](#) for more information.

Help in an emergency

British citizens can get help in an emergency from the [British Embassy Norway](#). Check the Embassy website for details of the types of assistance available.

Emergency contact numbers in Norway are:

- 110 - fire department;

- 112 - police;
- 113 - ambulance.

Travel advice

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

Country overview

Geography

- **Full country name:** Kingdom of Norway
- **Population:** 4.7 million (The World Factbook, 2012)
- **Border countries:** Sweden, Finland and Russia
- **Climate:** varies according to location and season, ranging from -20°C in winter to 25°C in summer. Coastal areas enjoy a more temperate climate, whereas the lowlands experience colder winters but warmer summers.
- **Terrain:** Norway is a glaciated and mountainous country featuring rolling hills, forests, fjords, and arctic tundra in the north.
- **Natural hazards:** avalanches and rockslides.

Living in Norway

- **Cost of living:** Norway is among the most expensive countries in the world but salaries are also typically higher. [Student Life - University of Oslo](#) gives a guide to living expenses.
- **Internet domain:** .no
- **Health:** the standard of health and healthcare is extremely high. The health service is mainly public with some private hospitals and practitioners. EEA citizens who are temporarily in Norway should get a [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#) to be able to access the healthcare system. Residents and those who are employed in Norway are entitled to health service benefits through the National Insurance Scheme - see [New in Norway](#) for more information.
- **Laws and customs:** individual lifestyle choices are respected. For example, no stigma is attached to unmarried couples having children, or to homosexuality. There are strict drink-driving laws and a policy of zero tolerance with regard to drug possession and penalties are high.

Economy and finance

- **Currency:** Norwegian krone (NOK)
- **Type of economy:** wealthy mixed economy with private enterprise combined with a substantial public sector and an extensive social welfare system. It features a combination of free market activity and government intervention.
- **Health of economy:** Norway has the second-highest GDP per capita in Europe and its oil and gas resources should ensure prosperity for the foreseeable future.
- **Unemployment rate:** 3.1% (Eurostat, 2012)
- **Main exports:** oil and gas, fish, machinery and equipment, ships, metals, chemicals.

Culture

- **People:** 94% Norwegian (including Sami). Other Europeans make up almost 4% of the population.
- **Major religion:** Christianity
- **History:** See [BBC Timeline: Norway](#).

Politics

- **Type of government:** constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system based on democratic governance and proportional representation. Norway is a member of the European Economic Area (EEA), and power is also distributed geographically at state, county and municipal levels.
- **Major political parties:** Labour Party, Progress Party, Socialist Left Party, Centre Party, Conservative Party, Liberal Party, Christian Democratic Party.

More information

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

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