



ADVICE & TIPS – DENMARK



The Danish economy is primarily based upon services, manufacturing and trade. The Danish labour market is known for its flexibility. International surveys by the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) have for years ranked the Danish labour market as one of the most flexible in the world and allows employers to adjust employees given market demands.

Around 250,000 Danish jobs may be eliminated each year, but at least as many are created. The turnover rate is consequently high. Approximately 800,000 Danes change jobs each year.

The rate of unemployment is historically low and, at the same time, the level of security for employees on the Danish labour market is high.

- *Typical problems encountered:* Employers may prefer Danish citizens as they are often fluent in more than one language.
- *How to improve your chances:* relevant work experience may increase your chances of being hired. It may be a good idea to gain this experience before moving to Denmark.
- *Language requirements:* the majority of the population speak English, but knowledge of Danish is very useful when looking for employment or studying. For some specialised fields, such as science and technology, it may not be essential to speak Danish, but in most others it will almost always be required. Some employers may appoint graduates with relatively little knowledge of Danish, but they will almost certainly expect you to learn Danish once you have arrived.

The Application Letter

A letter of application should create enough interest to make the potential employer want to look at your application more detailed by reading your CV and hopefully invite you for an interview. Your application letter, however, should not provide too much information about personal experiences and qualifications; this will be provided in your CV.

Although the Danes are good at languages, you have to send your application in Danish unless otherwise requested (writing your application in the language of the country concerned also applies to all the other countries, because not knowing the language will put you at real disadvantage from the local job seekers). The style of your covering letter should be formal, clear and comprehensible. The letter has to be typed. In your letter you should explain why you would like to have the job and why you consider yourself, based on your knowledge and experience –the right candidate for it. You can use quite a substantial part of your letter for this, altogether however, your letter should not exceed two pages. Always try to address your cover letter to a specific person. Start your letter not with "Dear Mr/Ms X", but write at the beginning "for the attention of Mr/Ms X". You can also put "Reference: personnel manager of XXX" to ensure you letter lands on the right person's desk. Include your name, address, phone number (including international access code) and e-mail address above.

The Curriculum Vitae

The CV is short and neatly presented, one to maximum two pages, including only the most relevant details. Start your CV with your name and address, include a daytime phone number (with international access code) and e-mail address. Subsequently, you mention in reverse-chronological order education (include relevant supplementary courses), your language and IT skills and positions of responsibility (particularly those displaying leadership positions). Follow with work experience, and mention the main tasks you fulfilled. If you have work experience, emphasize your practical experience. In general, a photo is not expected in Denmark.

The Application Procedure

It is difficult to generalise about the intensity of interviewing. The number of times prospective candidates are interviewed varies a great deal, depending on the company, the position and whether or not tests are involved. However, two to three interviews will usually be held.

During the interview the recruiter will try to assess your professional competence as well as your personality. He or she will want to hear about your previous responsibilities, the size of budgets managed, if applicable and above all, the results obtained. Your previous performance (even a student job or vacation work can be put forward as practical experience, but you have to ensure that you are able to "translate" the skills used, i.e. by working in a pizzeria you might have gained experience with stressful work and have learned to be service orientated) and current motivation are very important during the interviews. Psychological tests are becoming increasingly popular. Larger companies in particular use them. Aptitude tests and job simulation are most frequently used.

On-line applications are nowadays common. In fact, a lot of job agencies, but also employers who publish their vacancies on-line provide the opportunity to complete the job application form on-line

The two most important documents for a job application in Denmark are a Curriculum Vitae (CV) and a job application. To some of you, this might sound quite obvious. But others may be tempted to call these documents a 'resumée' and a 'cover letter'. Danes do not refer to these documents like this! So be sure to label these documents as your CV and your separate job application.

Job interviews in Denmark

In terms of preparing yourself for a job interview in Denmark, there are not too many peculiarities.. The best way is to do some research into the company you are applying to – it's history, current activities and future plans. Your research should be enough to let you respond to questions comfortably and to put you in a position to ask questions that will hopefully impress the interviewer. You should also be able to demonstrate that you are at least a little bit familiar with the Danish way of life, perhaps even using a few phrases of Danish.

The way a business operates will naturally vary between different companies but, as a general rule, the following factors remain the same:

- Punctuality
- Smart dress – men wear a suit and tie, women wear suits or a dress
- Good manners and politeness are extremely important
- Handshakes are the usual way to greet someone

Remember, the Danes work in a very egalitarian environment. They are more impressed by modesty and politeness than by over-confidence and assertiveness.

During the interview, the Danish employer is unlikely to include a lot of 'small-talk'. It is more likely to be a direct, straight to the point affair, so listen carefully from the start. By all means ask questions, but you should never interrupt. You may also have to demonstrate your problem-solving skills on the spot.

It is rather unusual to receive a job offer after your first interview. If you are successful, expect to be invited back for a second and possibly third interview. The first interview is generally for the employer to get to know the applicant, with the second and third interviews being more orientated around matching the applicant to the job in question, perhaps by meeting other members of staff.

Where can I work?

- Major industries: shipping, tourism, brewing.
- Recent growth areas: biotechnology, information technology, computer software, pharmaceutical industries.
- Industries in decline: agriculture.
- Shortage occupations: public sector occupations including labourers in the construction and metal industries as well as occupations in the healthcare sector and hospitals, particularly doctors, nurses, social workers, and nursing auxiliaries/associate professionals.
- Major companies: Mxller- Maersk (transportation), Danske Bank group (banking), TDC Group (telecom services), Novo Nordisk (drugs and biotechnology), Carlsberg (food, drink, tobacco), Jyske Bank (banking), Danisco (food, drink, tobacco), H Lundbeck (drugs and biotechnology), ALK-Abello (drugs and biotechnology), Sydbank (banking), Torm (transportation) (taken from Forbes ranking).
- Major cities: Copenhagen (capital and largest), Aarhus and Odense.

What's it like working in Denmark?

- Average working hours: normally 37 hours a week
- Holidays: five weeks in the private sector and six weeks in the public sector.
- Tax rates: Denmark has a graduated taxation. That means that the more one earns, the more tax one pays. There is, however, a tax ceiling of 59% to state, county and municipality. Key employees and researchers may benefit from a 25% tax band.
- Working practices and customs: Danish working culture is team oriented and the working environment is characterised by open and informal manners. Companies offer good working conditions and most offer continuing education and see the development of qualifications as a high

Personlige data

Navn: Anders Svenson
Adresse: Vestervolde Gade 3
DK-1552 København
Telefon: +458.9.12.34.56
Fødseldato: 19 marts 1981
Civilstand: Bor sammen med min kæreste
Sprog: Engelsk og tysk flydende i skrift og tale. Fransk på mellemniveau.

Uddannelse (education)

1999 Bi fagsstudier i dansk ved Københavns Universitet
1994-1999 Hovedfagsstudier i tysk ved Københavns Universitet
1995-96 Bifagsstudier i engelsk ved Københavns Universitet
1994 Cand. mag. den 10.6.
1994 Pædagogikum ved Københavns Lyceum

Arbejdserfaring (work experience)

1997-2001 Rengøringsarbejde på Rigshospitalet, gennemsnitlig 12 timer pr. uge
1996-1999 Studentermåhjælp i Undervisningsministeriets journal, 20 timer pr. uge
1993-1995 Aftenskoleundervisning ved AOF i København, 14 timer i sæsonen

Arbejde i udlandet (work experience abroad)

2001 -2005 Efter aftjent værnepligt ved CF i Næstved rejste jeg til Belgien og kom til at bo 14 måneder i Bruxelles. Det primære formål var at lære fransk, men for at finansiere aftenstudierne arbejdede jeg indledningsvis som tømrer og tjener. I slutningen af mit ophold var mit fransk nået et niveau, der tillod mig at udarbejde enkelte oversættelsesopgaver for Kommissionen.

Sommer 2000 Inden min start på ESA/Cand.merc.int. arbejdede jeg tre måneder med salg af time share i Spanien. Det var en sjov og udfordrende oplevelse, men udelukkende ment som et midlertidigt job inden min studiestart.

Min persin i øvrigt (personal particulars)

Afslutningsvis vil jeg fremhæve, at jeg betragter mig selv som udadvendt og positiv, analytisk anlagt, Arbejdsomt resultatorienteret og målrettet, og jeg fungerer selvstændigt såvel som i grupper. Dette afspejler sig ligeledes i mit fritidsliv, hvor jeg på den ene side spiller bridge på konkurrenceplan, er spillende holdleder i FC Fredriksberg og i det hele taget er glad for enhver form for aktiv sportsudøvelse. På den anden side hører jeg også til den slags mennesker, der kan lide "at side med fødderne oppe" og læse en god bog.