



ADVICE & TIPS – LATVIA



Latvia is an emerging economy that has embraced Western business practices, however, the graduate recruitment market is currently quite small.

- *Typical problems encountered:* competition with qualified local professionals will be tough, especially if there are language barriers.
- *How to improve your chances:* professional qualifications may enhance your chances and fluency in Latvian would be advantageous. There is a perceived shortage of highly qualified researchers.
- *Language requirements:* a working knowledge of some European languages would be valuable. The official language is Latvian, and while Russian is the second language, for some it is a first language. Lithuanian and Polish are also spoken. English is used for international communication.

Use any contacts (your network) you might have to find a job in Latvia. Speculative applications to internationally oriented firms can be successful. Do not underestimate the value of taking up volunteer work in Latvia. It will help you build a network and understand what drives the Latvians in their approach towards certain issues. Latvian employers value a good academic background, linguistic and computer skills and an understanding of business.

An important piece of advice is to learn the Latvian language (or some Russian), culture and history; it is an obvious advantage when applying in Latvia. Construction, both building and the restoring of buildings, is the main growth industry in Latvia.

The Application Letter

In general a letter of application should create enough interest to make the potential employer want to look at your application in more detail and hopefully invite you for an interview. Your application letter, however, should not provide too much information about experience and qualifications; this will be provided in your CV.

In Latvia, often, when personal contacts lead to an application, the first phase of having to write an application letter is replaced by less-formal telephone or e-mail contact. Whenever one does write a covering letter in Latvia it should be short and typed. Try to address this letter to a specific person. It is possible to send an application letter without a CV in the initial phase of the process. It is good to elaborate on your experience and skills to convince the employer you possess the qualities and dedication for the job at stake.

The Curriculum Vitae

The key focus of your CV should be to persuade the employer to invite you for an interview. Therefore your CV is a marketing tool, which should be adapted to the market in which you intend to use it. In your Latvian CV, emphasise your education above practical experience. Also mention your English skills on your CV. Languages are considered very important. In Latvia CVs are structured in reverse chronological order. Marital status is usually given under personal details. Skills and extracurricular activities are included too, usually at the bottom of the CV.

Testi ed informazioni tratti da www.eurograduate.com e www.prospects.ac.uk

It's becoming more popular to apply for a job via the internet. Be aware of the fact that an electronic CV does not always look the same as the standard one.

The Application Procedure

Realise that interviews are the most important part of the application procedure in Latvia. (Do you fit in the team?). Always look interested, therefore, ask questions in the interview. It is good to provide examples to prove your achievements.

Remember never to sit until invited in an application interview in Latvia. Do not forget to bring copies of your diplomas and references to the interview and avoid criticising former employers. At last, do not go over the top, but stay calm and stick to the facts.

On-line applications are becoming more common. Latvian employers commonly use (on-line) application forms.

Where can I work?

- Major industries: petrochemicals, automotive, white goods, construction, pharmaceuticals and food processing.
- Recent growth areas: pharmaceuticals, new technology, tourism and higher education.
- Industries in decline: agriculture and heavy industry.
- Shortage occupations: language teachers, all areas of new technology, science-based work, export and marketing.
- Major companies: Grindex Pharmaceuticals, Phillip Morris International, KPMG, Latvenergo (utilities), Lattelekom (telecommunications), Tele2 (telecommunications), AirBaltic (national airline).
- Major cities: Riga (capital and largest), Daugavpils, Liepaja. Other than teaching English it is unlikely that a non-Latvian graduate will find work anywhere but Riga.

What's it like working in Latvia?

- Average working hours: 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday.
- Holidays: ten public holidays a year and up to four weeks' vacation.
- Average graduate starting salary: Graduates earnings are considerably higher than the average of €679 per month, public sector pay is higher than the private sector.
- Tax rates: a flat 22%.
- Working practices and customs: The dress code at work is usually formal except in the IT industry. Business is conducted in a similar way to other EU countries.