



**SEARCHING FOR A JOB,
APPLYING FOR A JOB
AND PARTICIPATING IN
JOB INTERVIEW**

CONTENTS:

Searching for a job, applying for a job and participating in job interview	3
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Searching for a job	4
2.1 Know your options: types of work	4
2.2. Where to look for a job: smart search strategies	5
2.3. How to read a job ad (without getting overwhelmed).....	7
3. Applying for a job	9
3.1. Writing a CV (when you think you don't have much to say)	10
3.2. Writing a cover letter: why it still matters	13
3.3. Your digital footprint: employers will Google you	16
3.4. Email etiquette: the silent filter	17
4. Preparing for the job interview.....	18
4.1. Types of interviews	18
4.2. Research before the interview	19
4.3. What to wear and bring	19
4.4. Quick Interview Prep Tips	20
5. During the interview and after the interview	19
5.1. Answering tricky questions	21
5.2. Questions you should ask the employer	21
5.3. Following up after the interview	21
5.4. Reflecting on how it went	21
6. What to do if you don't get the job.....	23
7. What to do if you do get the job!.....	24
8. Conclusion	25
6. References	25
6. Glossary	26

1. INTRODUCTION

Whether you're finishing school, looking for your first serious job, or changing direction after a false start, entering the job market can feel confusing and sometimes overwhelming. You might be asking: Where do I begin? Where can I find jobs for me? How do I write a CV when I don't have much experience? What if I mess up the interview?

These are normal questions. The truth is, most young people aren't taught how to search, apply, or act during an interview. That's why this module exists and is designed to give you the tools to navigate this process with confidence and clarity. It could also be used by **youth workers, career coaches, and educators** when offering guidance and talking points to support young people on their career path.

In this module, we will walk through the key stages of finding and securing a job:

- **Searching for a job**
 - Learn where to look, how to identify real opportunities, and how networking (yes, even as a young person) plays a crucial role.
- **Applying for a job**
 - Understand how to write a clear, tailored CV and cover letter even with limited experience and how your online presence (especially social media) can help or hurt your chances.
- **Preparing for interviews**
 - Discover how to research employers, anticipate questions, and present yourself with confidence, both online and in-person.
- **During and after the interview**
 - Learn how to make a great impression, what to ask the employer, and how to follow up professionally.
- **If you don't get the job**
 - Rejection is tough—but it's part of the journey. You'll learn how to stay motivated and build experience in the meantime.
- **If you do get the job**
 - Understand your basic rights, what to expect in a contract, and how to avoid unfair or exploitative conditions.

Why this matters? Many young people make avoidable mistakes: sending the same CV everywhere, underestimating the power of networking, or freezing up in interviews. Others don't know their rights or fall for job scams. These missteps aren't due to laziness they're usually the result of **inexperience and lack of guidance**. This module helps you avoid those pitfalls and start your career journey on the right foot.

Let's begin

You don't need to have all the answers today. You just need the right tools, the right mindset, and a willingness to learn. Whether you're a job seeker or someone guiding others, this module will help you take that next step smarter and stronger.

Ready? Let's get started.

2. SEARCHING FOR A JOB

Where do I even start?

Before you can apply for a job or prepare for an interview, you have to find the right opportunities. This step is often underestimated but it's one of the most important. Job searching isn't just about scrolling through listings of job listings. It's about knowing what kind of work you're looking for, where to look for it (if you haven't already, please refer to *Topic 3: Recognizing Personal Competencies and Potential*). Another important point is knowing how to read between the lines of job ads and what the information included in them actually means. Let's go over some important terms you will encounter on your job searching journey.

2.1. Know your options: types of work

Start by understanding the different types of employment available:

- **Part-time jobs:** Good for students or those balancing other commitments. Often hourly work with flexible hours.
- **Full-time jobs:** Typically 35–40 hours per week and come with legal benefits (paid leave, contracts, etc.).
- **Internships:** Short-term roles designed for learning. Some are paid others are not. Internships can be a gateway to full-time work, for some career internships may even be mandatory.

- **Freelance/Project work:** You work independently for clients or companies. This offers flexibility but may lack stability.
- **Seasonal or temporary work:** Limited-time roles- common in retail, tourism, agriculture, etc.

Knowing what fits your situation and what fulfils your needs will help you target your search more effectively.

2.2. Where to look for a job: smart search strategies

Here are some key places to explore:

Job search engines

Websites like Indeed, Glassdoor, and LinkedIn are packed with job listings for all types of roles and industries. These platforms let you search by location, job type (such as full-time, part-time, internship), and your experience level.

Every country also has its own local job websites, so it's worth doing a quick search for popular platforms in your region. For example, in Bulgaria, **Jobs.bg** and **Zaplatomer.bg** are commonly used. For Poland popular job platforms are **Pracuj.pl** and **Jobs.pl**. Find out which platforms are most trusted in your area and make those part of your routine.

→ **Tip:** Set up email alerts for new jobs matching your interests, if that is a possibility. That way, you won't miss out on new opportunities and the jobs will come to you

Company websites

Have a favorite brand or organization you'd love to work for? Go straight to the source. Many companies have a "Careers" or "Jobs" section on their websites, where they post openings that might not be listed anywhere else. This shows initiative on your part and also helps you learn more about the company culture before applying.

Make a list of companies that interest you and check their websites regularly. Some even let you submit a general application if no current roles fit.

University or career center boards

If you're still studying or have recently graduated, your university's career center is a great place to check. These centers often partner with companies looking specifically for students and recent grads. You'll likely find internships, part-time roles, and entry-level jobs there. Plus, career centers often offer extra support like resume feedback and interview tips.

Even if you're not enrolled in school right now, some local youth centers or non-profits also share job opportunities targeted at young people.

Social media

Yes, your favorite social apps can also help you get a job. Platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) are full of recruiters, career coaches, and companies sharing openings. Start by following companies you're interested in and keep an eye on hashtags like #hiring, #internship, or #careers.

It's also a good idea to make your social media profiles presentable, especially on LinkedIn, where recruiters might look you up. You never know when a casual scroll might lead to a great opportunity.

Word of mouth & networking

Not all jobs are posted online. In fact, many are filled through personal recommendations and conversations this is known as the hidden job market. That's why talking to people you know is important. Let friends, family members, teachers, and former classmates know you're job hunting. They might hear about something and pass your name along.

You can also join community events, workshops, or local meetups related to your interests. These informal conversations often lead to surprising opportunities.

→ **Tip:** You don't need to have a huge network to get started. Just start talking to people and asking questions. Curiosity can open doors.

2.3. How to read a job ad (without getting overwhelmed)

Job ads can sometimes feel like a confusing puzzle. They're often packed with buzzwords, long lists of qualifications, and vague or sometimes even unrealistic expectations. But don't let that scare you away! Once you know how to read between the lines, you'll feel more confident figuring out whether a job is a good fit and whether it's worth applying.

Here's a breakdown of the key parts of most job ads, and what to look for:

- **Job title:** Different companies use different names for the same role. For example, one company might call it "Customer Experience Specialist," while another says "Customer Service Agent." Don't get stuck on the title read the description to see what the job actually involves.
- **Responsibilities:** This section explains what you'll be doing on a day-to-day basis. Think of it as a snapshot of your future work life. Will you be answering emails, talking to customers, creating content, or organizing events? Ask yourself: "Can I already do this, or can I learn it with a bit of training or support?". If the answer is yes, even if you're not an expert, you might be more qualified than you think.
- **Required qualifications:** These are the must-haves, those could be anything like a driver's license, a proficiency in a specific language, specific software skills etc. If you don't have one of these, it may be harder to get the job, but not always impossible.
- **Preferred qualifications:** These are the nice-to-haves. They're often listed to describe the "ideal" candidate, but they're not deal-breakers. You can still apply if you don't have all of them. In fact, most people don't! Think of this list as a bonus section. If you tick some of the boxes, great. If not, focus on your strengths and your willingness to learn.
- **Benefits:** This part tells you what the company offers you and it's just as important as what you offer them. Benefits can make a big difference in how happy you are in a job, so don't skip this section.

Don't get discouraged by long lists of qualifications. Employers often describe their "**dream candidate**". If you meet around 60–70% of the listed qualifications, go ahead and apply especially if you're enthusiastic and willing to learn. *You don't have to be perfect to be a great fit. Employers often value motivation, problem-solving, and a positive attitude just as much as hard skills.*

TOPIC 4

www.hirefireproject.eu

JOB AD - DISSECTED

Titles vary!
"Assistant" might mean different things at different companies.
Tip: Look at the responsibilities more than the title.

What you'll actually do

- Social media posting
- Email campaigns
- Reports using analytics
- Brainstorming ideas

Ask yourself:
"Can I do this with some training?" or "Have I done something similar?"

Must-haves
If you don't meet one of these, it might be a deal-breaker – but some employers are flexible.

Nice-to-Haves
Don't panic if you don't have these! These are bonuses, not requirements.

Exciting Job Opening at Our Company

Join our amazing team today!

JOB TITLE: JUNIOR MARKETING ASSISTANT
LOCATION: HYBRID (2 DAYS REMOTE, 3 DAYS IN OUR LONDON OFFICE)
JOB TYPE: FULL-TIME, ENTRY-LEVEL
SALARY: £24,000-£26,000 PER YEAR + BENEFITS

ABOUT US:
BRIGHTSPARK MEDIA IS A FAST-GROWING DIGITAL MARKETING AGENCY WORKING WITH START-UPS AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES. WE'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION, AND HELPING OUR CLIENTS SHINE ONLINE.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- SUPPORT THE MARKETING TEAM IN PLANNING AND EXECUTING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS
- CREATE AND SCHEDULE POSTS USING TOOLS LIKE BUFFER OR HOOTSUITE
- ASSIST WITH EMAIL MARKETING CAMPAIGNS AND NEWSLETTER CREATION
- MONITOR AND REPORT ON CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE USING GOOGLE ANALYTICS
- PARTICIPATE IN BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS AND CONTRIBUTE CREATIVE IDEAS

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

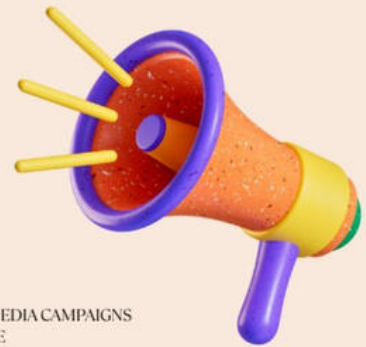
- STRONG WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- FAMILIARITY WITH INSTAGRAM, LINKEDIN, AND TIKTOK
- COMFORTABLE USING MICROSOFT OFFICE OR GOOGLE WORKSPACE
- RIGHT TO WORK IN THE UK

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- EXPERIENCE WITH GRAPHIC DESIGN TOOLS (E.G., CANVA OR ADOBE EXPRESS)
- BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF SEO OR DIGITAL ADVERTISING
- RELEVANT COURSEWORK OR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE IN MARKETING OR COMMUNICATIONS

BENEFITS:

- 25 DAYS OF PAID HOLIDAY + BANK HOLIDAYS
- FLEXIBLE START/END TIMES
- OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW WITHIN THE COMPANY



HOW TO APPLY:
SEND YOUR CV AND A SHORT COVER LETTER TO
CAREERS@BRIGHTSPARKMEDIA.CO.UK
BY JUNE 30TH.

Application instructions
"Send your CV and a short cover letter..."
Always follow these exactly. It shows attention to detail.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

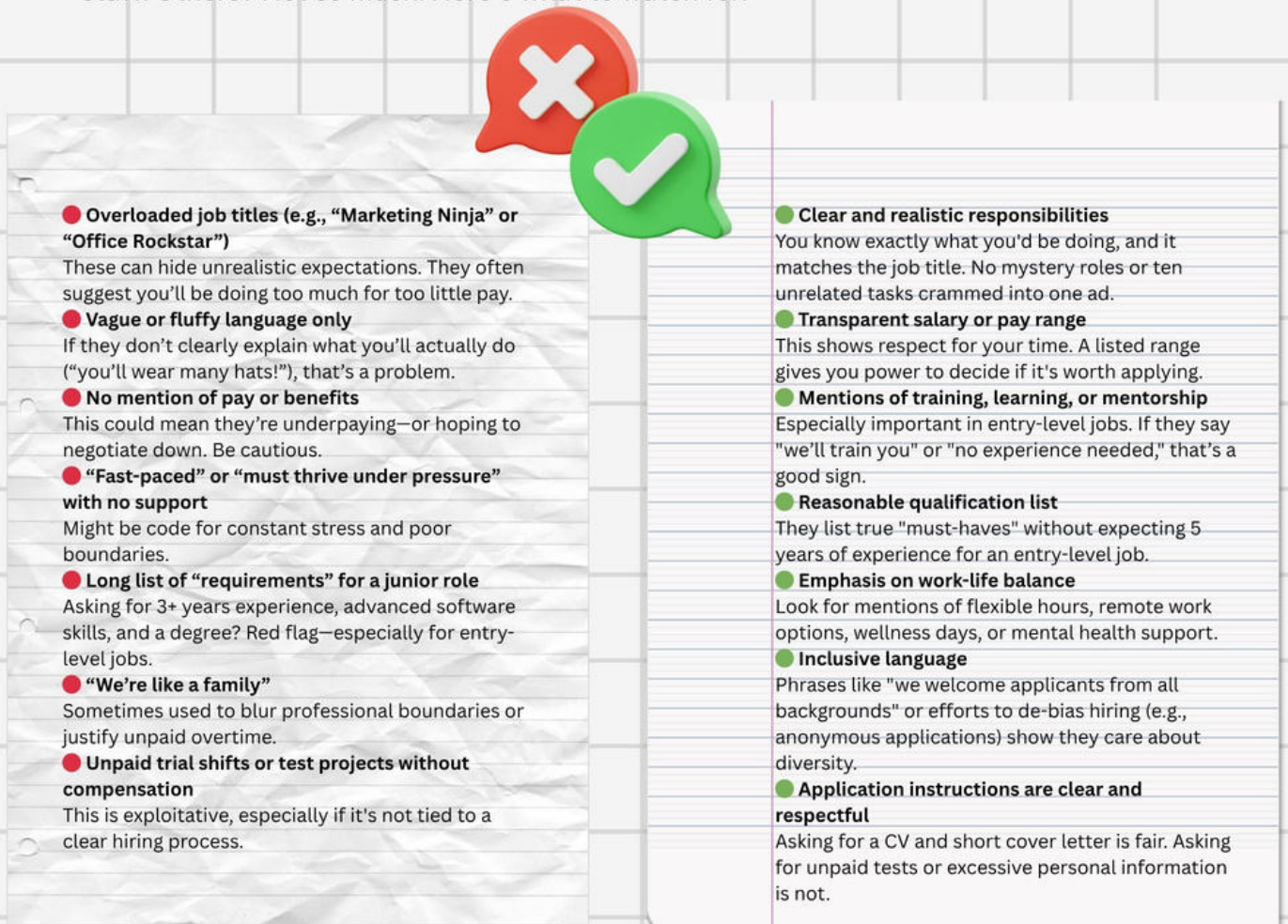
Figure 1 Two infographics we have created for you – Job add – “Dissection” and Red flags/Green flags of job ads.

TOPIC 4

www.hirefireproject.eu

JOB ADS RED FLAG / GREEN FLAG

Not all job ads are created equal. Some signs tell you the employer values and supports staff. Others? Not so much. Here's what to watch for.



- **Overloaded job titles (e.g., “Marketing Ninja” or “Office Rockstar”)**
These can hide unrealistic expectations. They often suggest you’ll be doing too much for too little pay.
- **Vague or fluffy language only**
If they don’t clearly explain what you’ll actually do (“you’ll wear many hats!”), that’s a problem.
- **No mention of pay or benefits**
This could mean they’re underpaying—or hoping to negotiate down. Be cautious.
- **“Fast-paced” or “must thrive under pressure” with no support**
Might be code for constant stress and poor boundaries.
- **Long list of “requirements” for a junior role**
Asking for 3+ years experience, advanced software skills, and a degree? Red flag—especially for entry-level jobs.
- **“We’re like a family”**
Sometimes used to blur professional boundaries or justify unpaid overtime.
- **Unpaid trial shifts or test projects without compensation**
This is exploitative, especially if it's not tied to a clear hiring process.

- **Clear and realistic responsibilities**
You know exactly what you'd be doing, and it matches the job title. No mystery roles or ten unrelated tasks crammed into one ad.
- **Transparent salary or pay range**
This shows respect for your time. A listed range gives you power to decide if it's worth applying.
- **Mentions of training, learning, or mentorship**
Especially important in entry-level jobs. If they say "we'll train you" or "no experience needed," that's a good sign.
- **Reasonable qualification list**
They list true "must-haves" without expecting 5 years of experience for an entry-level job.
- **Emphasis on work-life balance**
Look for mentions of flexible hours, remote work options, wellness days, or mental health support.
- **Inclusive language**
Phrases like "we welcome applicants from all backgrounds" or efforts to de-bias hiring (e.g., anonymous applications) show they care about diversity.
- **Application instructions are clear and respectful**
Asking for a CV and short cover letter is fair. Asking for unpaid tests or excessive personal information is not.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Figure 1 Two infographics we have created for you – Job add – “Dissection” and Red flags/Green flags of job ads.

3. APPLYING FOR A JOB

First impressions count

You've found a job you're interested in and now it's time to introduce yourself. This step can feel intimidating, especially if you think, "I don't have much experience." But applying for a job isn't about pretending to be someone you're not it's about clearly and confidently showing what you bring to the table.

Most employers will form an impression of you based on three things:

1. Your **CV or résumé**
2. Your **cover letter** (if required) if not **your email**
3. Your **online presence and communication**

Done well, these tools make the difference between being ignored and getting called for an interview. Let's begin with the first point – your CV.

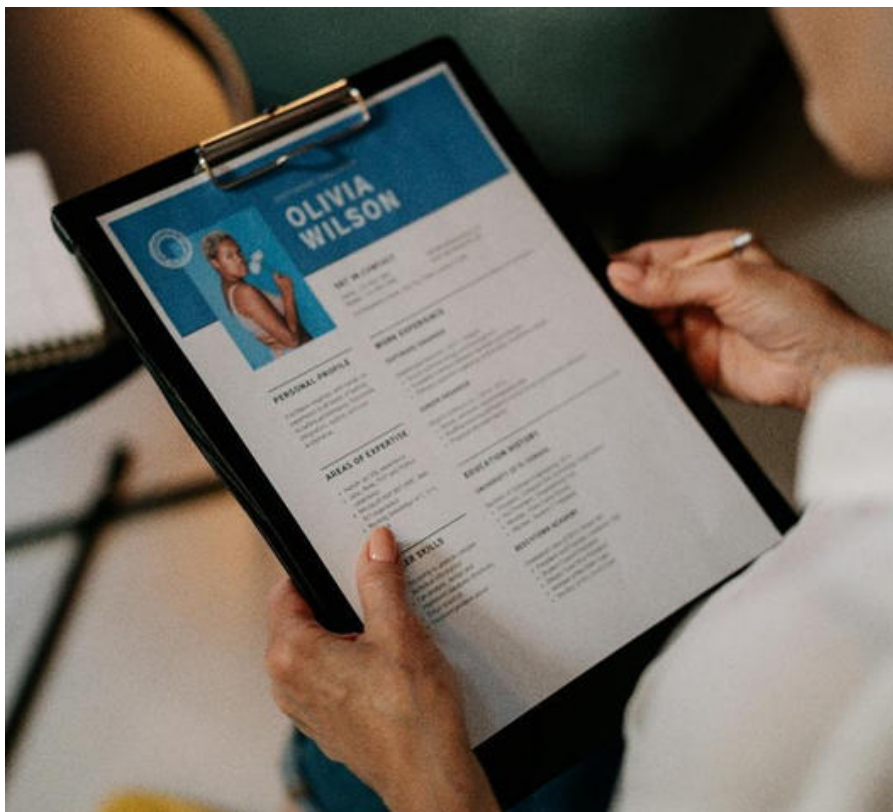


Figure 2 CV, image source: pexels, royalty free image

3.1. Writing a CV (when you think you don't have much to say)

Your **CV (curriculum vitae)** is a 1–2 page summary of your education, skills, and experience. Even if you've never had a formal job, you still have something to include. Think broadly about your experiences.


Basic sections of a CV:


- Contact information (full name, phone, email, LinkedIn)
- Personal profile (2–3 sentences about who you are and what you're looking for)
- Education (include school/university, qualifications and the dates)
- Experience – This can include:
 - Part-time jobs
 - Volunteering
 - School projects
 - Extracurricular activities
- Skills (languages, IT tools, communication, teamwork)
- Hobbies/interests (optional—but choose ones that show positive qualities)

Tips:

- Keep the layout clean and simple.
- Use bullet points for clarity.
- Tailor it to the job: emphasize the experiences and skills most relevant to the position.

Don't be misleading on your CV. If you don't have direct experience, highlight transferable skills (like time management from school, communication from group work, or responsibility from caring for siblings).





John Doe

Date of birth: 01/01/2004 | **Place of birth:** Warsaw, Poland | **Nationality:** Polish | **Gender:** Male |

Phone number: (+48) 123123123 (Mobile) | **Email address:** john.doe@email.com | **Website:** www.johndoeportfolio.com | **Instagram:** JohnDoe | **Address:** Warsaw, Poland (Home)

ABOUT ME

Creative and detail-oriented **Graphic Designer** with **2 years of experience** in visual design, branding, and digital media. Skilled in Adobe Creative Suite, layout design, and visual storytelling. Educated in Amsterdam and passionate about creating impactful visuals. Seeking a new, exciting opportunity to contribute to innovative design projects.

WORK EXPERIENCE

CREATIVE STUDIO - WARSAW, POLAND

JUNIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER - 01/01/2023 - CURRENT

Designed marketing materials for digital and print (ads, brochures, social media). Collaborated with developers and copywriters to produce brand-consistent campaigns. Contributed to rebranding projects for local startups and small businesses.

DESIGNCOMPANY - AMSTERDAM

GRAPHIC DESIGN INTERN - 01/06/2021 - 31/12/2022

Supported the design team in creating website layouts and visual content. Assisted with photo editing and infographic design. Participated in creative brainstorming sessions with clients.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2018 - 2021 Netherlands

BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN GRAPHIC DESIGN Amsterdam University of the Arts

SKILLS

Skills

- Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign
- Branding & Identity Design
- Typography & Layout
- Social Media Graphics
- Web Design (Figma, basic HTML/CSS)
- Team collaboration & communication

CREATIVE WORKS

Portfolio of creative works

Here you can explore some of my creative projects

Link www.johndoeportfolio.com


LANGUAGE SKILLS

Mother tongue(s): **POLISH**

Other language(s):

	UNDERSTANDING		SPEAKING	
	Listening	Reading	Spoken production	Spoken interaction
ENGLISH	C1	C1	C1	C1
DUTCH	B2	B2	B2	B2

Levels: A1 and A2: Basic user; B1 and B2: Independent user; C1 and C2: Proficient user



John Doe

Date of birth: 01/01/2004
Place of birth: Warsaw, Poland
Nationality: Polish
Gender: Male

CONTACT

Location: Warsaw, Poland (Home)

Email: john.doe@email.com

Phone: (+48) 123123123

Website: www.johndoeportfolio.com

Instagram: JohnDoe

Here are two CV designs that we created with Europass.

ABOUT ME

Creative and detail-oriented **Graphic Designer** with **2 years of experience** in visual design, branding, and digital media. Skilled in Adobe Creative Suite, layout design, and visual storytelling. Educated in Amsterdam and passionate about creating impactful visuals. Seeking a new, exciting opportunity to contribute to innovative design projects.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Creative Studio Warsaw, Poland

Junior Graphic Designer

01/01/2023 - Current

Designed marketing materials for digital and print (ads, brochures, social media). Collaborated with developers and copywriters to produce brand-consistent campaigns. Contributed to rebranding projects for local startups and small businesses.

DesignCompany Amsterdam

Graphic Design Intern

01/06/2021 - 31/12/2022

Supported the design team in creating website layouts and visual content. Assisted with photo editing and infographic design. Participated in creative brainstorming sessions with clients.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2018 - 2021 Netherlands

Bachelor's Degree in Graphic Design Amsterdam University of the Arts

SKILLS

Skills

- Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign
- Branding & Identity Design
- Typography & Layout
- Social Media Graphics
- Web Design (Figma, basic HTML/CSS)
- Team collaboration & communication

CREATIVE WORKS

Portfolio of creative works

Here you can explore some of my creative projects

Link www.johndoeportfolio.com

LANGUAGE SKILLS

MOTHER TONGUE(S): Polish

Other language(s):

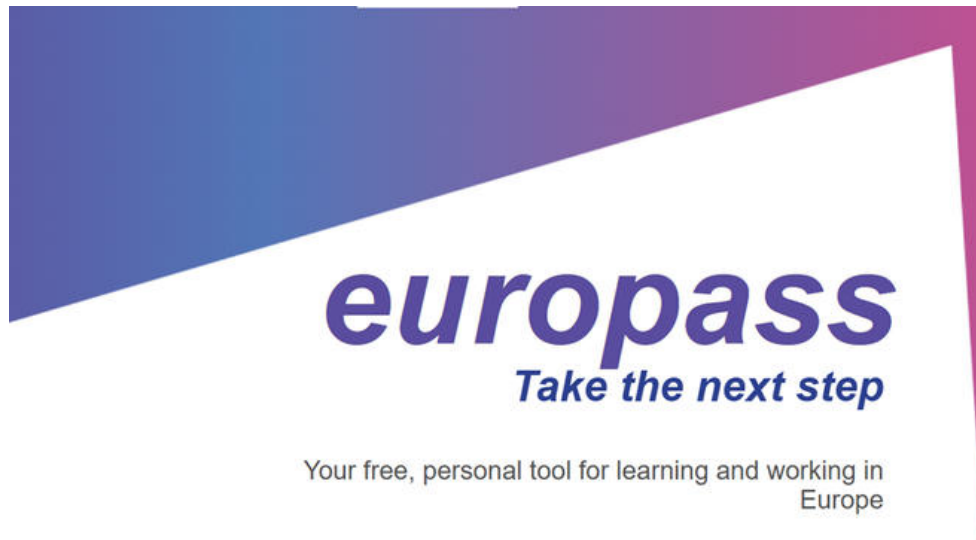
English

Listening C1	Spoken production C1
Reading C1	Spoken interaction C1
Writing C1	

Dutch

Listening B2	Spoken production B2
Reading B2	Spoken interaction B2
Writing B1	

Levels: A1 and A2: Basic user; B1 and B2: Independent user; C1 and C2: Proficient user



If you're not sure where to start or if you want to make sure your CV looks clear and professional we recommend using the [Europass CV builder](#)! It's a free online tool developed by the European Union and used all across Europe. It's very **beginner-friendly** and includes step-by-step prompts to help you fill in everything you need, even if you don't have much experience yet. Your CV will be automatically formatted in a clean, readable design that employers are familiar with. You can even create your CV in several languages, which is helpful if you're applying for international opportunities. At the end, you can save your CV and come back to update it as you gain more experience.

Video to embed in the LMS Europass tutorial -
[https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-193054?
lg=EN&sublg=SE&tout=NaN](https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-193054?lg=EN&sublg=SE&tout=NaN)

Do not rush to send your CV. Always check it carefully, make sure there are no typos or missing information. A document with grammatical mistakes, typos or careless formatting can leave a very bad impression in the recruiters. Make sure to double-check before hitting the "Send" button.

So what's the takeaway? While AI can be a powerful tool in the hiring process, it's not perfect. The best approach is to **understand how AI works**, use available tools to your advantage, and make sure your application materials are **clear, tailored, and keyword-friendly**. At the same time, it's important to prepare for human interaction, because in most cases, a real person will still make the final decision.

AI is here to stay in recruitment, but so is the need for empathy, clarity, and good communication. Knowing how to work with both machines and people is the key to standing out.

3.2. Writing a cover letter: why it still matters

Some job listings will ask you to provide a cover letter (sometimes called motivational letter). What is a cover letter anyway? It is a short, formal letter that you send with your CV when applying for a job. Its purpose is to introduce yourself to the employer, explain why you're interested in the job, and highlight why you're a strong candidate.

A common question we get is regarding the **format of the cover letter**: "Is the cover letter and e-mail or a separate docx/pdf?" - It depends.

When to attach the cover letter as a separate Word or PDF document:

- If you're uploading your application through a job portal or company website.
- If the job ad says: "Upload your CV and cover letter."
- If you're sending both documents by email as attachments.

→ Tip: Format

Use PDF (preferred) or Word (.docx) format. Name the file clearly:
Firstname_Lastname_Cover_Letter.pdf

When to write the cover letter in the body of an email

- If you're emailing your application directly to a hiring manager or recruiter.
- In that case, **your email is the cover letter**, and your CV is attached.

Some young job seekers skip cover letters or send the same one to every job. This is a big mistake. A good cover letter explains why you're interested in the role and how you fit the company's needs. Your cover letter is your chance to speak directly to the employer and explain **why** you're a great fit. When done well, it can make the difference between getting called for an interview or getting overlooked.

Regardless of the format here is a simple structure you could follow:

1. Introduction: Who you are and what you're applying for. Example: "My name is [two names] , and I'm writing to apply for the position of Marketing Assistant at [Company Name].". Make sure to mention the company by name, this will draw attention and show that you are detail-oriented.

2. Why this job: Show that you've done a little research. Mention what attracts you to the company or the role. Example: "I've been following your brand for some time and admire your creative campaigns that engage young audiences."

3. Why you: Highlight strengths that match the role. Choose one or two things like skills, experiences, personal qualities that match the job description. Be specific. Example: "Last year, I organized a student project that reached over 2,000 people online, which gave me hands-on experience in content planning and social media."

4. Conclusion: Close on a positive note. Say thank you, and express interest in hearing from them. Example: "Thank you for considering my application. I'd love the opportunity to contribute to your team and learn more about the role."

Common mistakes to avoid:

- Using generic phrases like "I am a hardworking individual."
- Repeating your entire CV in the cover letter.
- Copy-pasting the same cover letter for every job.

→ Tip:

Personalization shows effort and effort matters. It tells the employer you care about this specific role, not just any job.

John Doe

✉ johnd@gmail.com

To

Mr. Dave Johnson
BestDesign
Warsaw , Poland

Warsaw, 10/04/2025

Subject: Vacancy for graphic designer

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I am writing to express my interest in the Graphic Designer position at BestDesign. With two years of hands-on experience in both digital and print design, and a strong academic background in visual arts from Amsterdam University of the Arts, I am excited about the opportunity to bring my creative skills to your innovative team.

In my current role at CreativeLab Studio in Warsaw, I've worked on a variety of branding and marketing projects — from social media campaigns to full-scale rebranding initiatives. I specialize in Adobe Creative Suite and have a particular passion for combining clean, modern design with strategic communication. I was especially drawn to BestDesign's portfolio and your reputation for bold, concept-driven work that pushes visual boundaries — it's exactly the kind of environment where I thrive.

I am confident that my eye for detail, collaborative mindset, and eagerness to grow make me a strong match for your team. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how I can contribute to your upcoming projects and creative goals.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the possibility of speaking with you further.

Kind regards
John Doe

If you want to create a professional looking pdf doc for cover letter, Europass comes to the rescue again with their Cover Letter tool – [explore it here.](#)

3.3. Your digital footprint: employers will Google you

Whether you realize it or not, you already have an online presence and employers are likely to check it before inviting you to an interview. Make sure what they see supports your application.

What to do:

- Google yourself. Type your name into a search engine and see what comes up. Is there anything that could make a negative impression?
- Update your LinkedIn profile. It doesn't have to be perfect, but it should reflect your CV, your goals, and any experiences you're proud of.
- Clean up your social media. Hide or delete posts that are inappropriate, offensive, or just don't show your best self.
- Your online image should tell the same story as your CV: responsible, thoughtful, and ready to work.

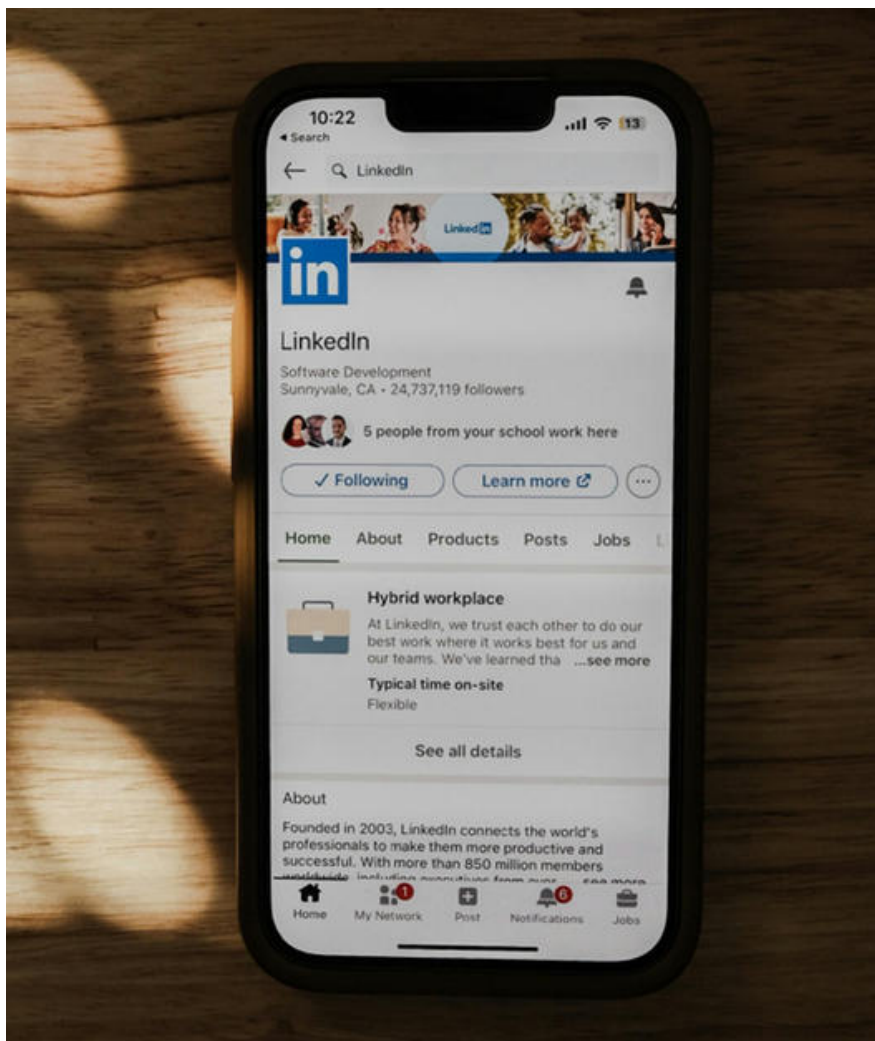


Figure 3 LinkedIn, pexels

3.4. Email etiquette: the silent filter

Before anyone reads your CV, they'll see your email. And yes, how you write that email matters. It gives a first impression of your communication skills and professionalism. **A good email includes:**

- A clear subject line (e.g., "Application for Marketing Intern – [Your Name]")
- A greeting ("Dear [Name]")
- A the core message or messages ("Please find my CV and cover letter attached for your consideration.")
- A professional closing ("Best regards, [Your Name]")

Avoid casual messages like:

"Hey, I saw your ad. Is the job still available?"

Applying for a job isn't about being perfect, it's about showing up professionally, honestly, and thoughtfully. A good CV, a short, personalized cover letter and a clean digital presence are your ticket to the next stage: the interview. No one expects you to have years of experience. What employers do expect is a willingness to try, to communicate clearly, and to care about the opportunity. That's something anyone can do with the right support. Let's go the the next step - the job interview.

4. PREPARING FOR THE JOB INTERVIEW

4.1. Types of interviews

Not all interviews look the same, and knowing what format to expect can help you feel more confident and prepared. Here are some of the most common types of interviews you might encounter

- In-person interviews: This is the classic format: a face-to-face conversation, usually at the company's office. These can range from short chats to longer meetings involving multiple interviewers. Arrive a little early, greet people politely, and make sure to bring everything you need (printed CV, possibly portfolio for certain positions etc.).
- Phone interviews: Often used as an initial screening step, phone interviews are usually shorter. The goal is to check your basic qualifications and interest in the role. Even though you are not visible, be sure to speak clearly, avoid distractions.
- Video interviews: More common now, especially for remote jobs or first-round interviews. These are usually done through platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Meet. Make sure you test your technology beforehand. Check your internet connection, camera, and microphone. Choose a quiet, tidy background with good lighting.
- Group interviews: In this format, several candidates are interviewed at the same time. You may be asked to participate in discussions, activities, or role-plays. It can feel a bit competitive but try to stay calm and cooperative. Listen to others, contribute respectfully, and show that you work well with different people.



Figure 4 Face-to-face interview and Online interview, pexels.

4.2. Research before the interview

Doing some background research before an interview is a great way to show genuine interest and stand out. Start by exploring the company's website to understand what they do, their values, and any recent projects or news. Check their social media pages for updates, and reread the job description to identify key responsibilities and required skills, then think about how your own experience, including school projects or volunteer work, aligns with them.

If you know who will be interviewing you, looking them up on LinkedIn can help you better understand their role and prepare more personalized responses. It can also ease your nerves by making the conversation feel more human. Taking a few notes ahead of time will help you feel more confident and in control during the interview.

4.3. What to wear and bring

First impressions matter, and the way you dress shows how seriously you're taking the opportunity. Choose clean, neat clothing that suits the company and the role. When in doubt, it's better to be slightly overdressed than too casual. Avoid outfits with loud slogans or anything too revealing. Well-groomed hair and comfortable, tidy shoes also help you look polished and prepared.

Appearance matter during the job interview because first impressions carry significant weight and can strongly influence a recruiter's perception. Presenting yourself neatly signals that you take the opportunity seriously and respect the person who is going to interview you. It immediately communicates that you are able to understand the professional environment and that you are capable of representing yourself and, by extension, the organization, in a positive manner. It goes without saying, but make sure to be on time for the agreed interview as well.

For in-person interviews, bring a printed copy of your CV, any recommendation letters or references, a notebook with a pen, and a list of questions to ask the employer. For video interviews, keep these items within reach and make sure your space is quiet, well-lit, and free from distractions. shows maturity, professionalism, and leadership in today's digital world.

4.4. Quick Interview Prep Tips

Even if you are nervous, the right preparation can help you feel more confident. Here are a few things you can do to get ready:

Practice common interview questions

Questions like “Tell me about yourself,” “Why do you want this job?” or “What are your strengths and weaknesses?” come up often. Practice your answers out loud and try to keep them clear and to the point.

Use real examples

Show your skills through experiences. You can talk about things you have done in school, group projects, volunteering, hobbies, or part-time work. What matters most is showing that you can take responsibility and solve problems.

Watch your body language

Sit up straight, make eye contact, smile, and avoid crossing your arms. These small details can make a big difference in how confident and approachable you seem.

Be honest and stay positive

If you do not know something, it is okay to admit it just show that you are willing to learn. Employers often value attitude just as much as experience.

Use AI to help you prepare for the interview, it could come up with a list of questions that the employer may ask you in regard to the specific role. Use them to prepare beforehand.

→ **Remember:** Interviews are not just about testing you. They are also a chance for you to learn more about the company and decide if it is a place where you want to work.

5. DURING THE INTERVIEW AND AFTER THE INTERVIEW

How you present yourself, both in appearance and behavior matters from the moment you walk in. Greet your interviewer with a smile, firm handshake (if appropriate), and eye contact. Be polite, respectful, and enthusiastic to show genuine interest in the role and the company.

5.1. Answering tricky questions

Interviews often include challenging questions to see how you think and react. Here are some common tricky questions and how to handle them:

- “Tell me about yourself”: Give a brief summary focused on your education, skills, and what you want from the job.
- “What is your greatest weakness?”: Be honest but show how you’re working to improve it.
- “Why should we hire you?”: Highlight your strengths and how they fit the role.
- “Tell me about a time you faced a challenge”: Use real examples from school, volunteering, or part-time work. Describe the situation, your actions, and the outcome.

It is good to have a general idea of what you could answer to such questions beforehand.

5.2. Questions you should ask the employer

Interviews are a two-way street. Asking good questions shows interest and helps you decide if the job is right for you. Examples:

- What does a typical day look like in this role?
- What skills or qualities do you value most in employees?
- How is success measured here?
- What opportunities are there for training or advancement?

Avoid questions about salary or benefits until you have a job offer, unless the employer brings it up first. The question of the salary is important, but it should not be the first topic of discussion or you

5.3. Following up after the interview

Send a short thank-you email within 24 hours. Thank the interviewer for their time, mention something specific you enjoyed discussing, and restate your interest in the position. This small step leaves a strong final impression.

5.4. Reflecting on how it went

After the interview, take a few minutes to reflect on your performance. Ask yourself: Did I answer questions clearly? Was I confident and relaxed? Did I prepare enough? What would I do differently next time? Every interview is a chance to learn and improve. Even if it didn't go perfectly, treat it as valuable practice for the next opportunity.

6. WHAT TO DO IF YOU DON'T GET THE JOB

Rejection is tough but it's not the end

Getting a rejection after an interview or application can be disappointing, but it's a normal part of the job search process. Even the most successful professionals have faced rejection many times. Try to view it not as failure, but as feedback and an opportunity to reflect, grow, and improve.

Do not forget that you can ask for feedback after a rejection, as long as you keep the tone respectfully and professionally. Typically, you should wait until you have received the official rejection notice and then reach out with a concise and polite message, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to interview and asking if the interviewer could provide any feedback on your application or performance. Framing it this way shows genuine interest in self-improvement rather than frustration or entitlement.

It's important to keep in mind that not all recruiters or companies provide detailed feedback, often due to time constraints or legal concerns. However, some are willing to share constructive insights that can help you understand areas for improvement, whether it's in your CV, interview skills, or alignment with the role. When feedback is offered, take it as a learning opportunity rather than criticism, and use it to strengthen your approach for future applications.

Stay motivated

Rejection doesn't define your value. Hiring decisions often involve many factors beyond your control, so don't take it personally. Keep your goals in sight: What kind of work are you looking for? Why is this important to you? Celebrate small wins, like landing an interview or improving your CV. And don't keep it bottled up, talk things through with a friend, mentor, or career coach to stay grounded.

Build your skills and experience

While you continue your job search, use the time to grow. Volunteering, internships, or freelance work can help you gain valuable experience and expand your portfolio. You can also take free or affordable online courses through platforms like Coursera, Khan Academy, or LinkedIn Learning. Check what is available in your local training centers as well as training courses and workshops offered in your area. These steps not only boost your confidence, they also strengthen your applications and perhaps even help you with networking.

Reflect and improve

After each application or interview, take a moment to reflect. Did you tailor your CV and cover letter to the role? Was your online presence professional? Were you well prepared for the interview, and how did you handle tough questions? Honest self-assessment will help you make adjustments and come back stronger next time.

Keep trying - your job is out there

The job search can be challenging, but persistence pays off. Every step you take brings you closer to the right opportunity. Stay patient, stay resilient, and keep going your next success might be just around the corner.

7. WHAT TO DO IF YOU DO GET THE JOB!

Congratulations! Now what?

Getting a job offer is exciting and well-deserved, but before we dedicate ourselves to celebration, it's important to understand your rights and responsibilities. Knowing what to expect will help you start your new role with confidence and avoid unwanted surprises.

Understand your employment contract

Your contract is a legal agreement that outlines the terms of your job. It should include details like your job title, duties, working hours, salary, payment schedule, probation period (if any), leave entitlements, and notice period for ending the job. Read it carefully before signing, and if anything is unclear, don't hesitate to ask for clarification. Get consultation with a career counselor if needed.

Watch out for red flags

Not all job offers are legitimate, so stay alert. Be cautious if you're asked to pay money upfront (for training, uniforms, or equipment), if the job sounds too good to be true, or if you're pushed to start immediately without any formal paperwork. A legitimate employer should always provide a written contract, if they don't, it's a red flag. If something feels off again, seek advice from a trusted adult, career advisor, or labor rights group.

Know where to get help or advice

If you run into any issues or simply have questions, support is available. You can speak to your HR department, reach out to local career or youth centers, or contact labor unions or employee rights organizations. There are also many online resources specific to your country's employment laws.

Tips for success on the job

Starting strong in your new role means more than just showing up. Be punctual, communicate openly, and be willing to learn. Ask for feedback and use it to grow. Balance your work and personal life, and always know who to talk to if a problem arises. You've made it this far and now it's time to thrive.

Now we can celebrate!

8. CONCLUSION

Searching for a job, applying, and participating in interviews are key steps in building a successful career. While the process can seem overwhelming, understanding each stage from where to look for jobs, crafting a clear CV and cover letter, to preparing for and following up after interviews, makes a big difference. Remember, mistakes and setbacks, like rejection, are normal parts of this journey and valuable learning opportunities. Building skills, staying motivated, and maintaining a professional digital presence will strengthen your chances. When you do get a job, knowing your rights and responsibilities helps you start confidently and avoid pitfalls. This module aims to empower you with practical knowledge and tools to navigate the job market more effectively. Keep practicing, stay positive, and use every experience as a step forward. Your career is a journey, be patient, stay curious, and keep growing.

REFERENCES

- National Careers Service. (n.d.). How to Write a CV. UK Government. Retrieved 2025, June 9, from <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-cv>
- Indeed Editorial Team. (n.d.). Job Interview Tips. Indeed Career Guide. Retrieved 2025, June 9, from <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/interview-tips>
- Donohue, K. (2022). How to Prepare for a Job Interview. The Balance Careers. Retrieved 2025, June 9, from <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-to-prepare-for-a-job-interview-2061362>
- DigitalLearn.org. (n.d.). Managing Your Digital Footprint. Retrieved 2025, June 9, from <https://www.digitallearn.org/digital-footprint>
- Glassdoor Team. (2023). What To Do After a Job Interview. Glassdoor Blog. Retrieved 2025, June 9, from <https://www.glassdoor.com/blog/guide/what-to-do-after-an-interview/>
<https://europass.europa.eu/en>

GLOSSARY

CV (Curriculum Vitae) – A document summarizing your education, skills, and experience used to apply for jobs.

Cover Letter – A personalized letter sent with your CV explaining why you are interested in and suitable for a specific job.

Digital Footprint – The information about you available online, including social media profiles and search results.

Interview Types – Different formats for job interviews such as in-person, phone, video, or group interviews.

Probation Period – An initial trial period during a job where the employer and employee assess if the job is a good fit.

Job Application – The process of formally expressing interest in a job by submitting required documents like a CV and cover letter.

Networking – Building professional relationships that can help you discover job opportunities and gain career advice.

References – People who can vouch for your skills, experience, and character, usually contacted by employers during the hiring process.

Rejection – When a job application or interview does not lead to an offer; a common part of the job search.

Employee Rights – Legal protections and entitlements workers have regarding pay, working hours, contracts, and workplace conditions.

HIRE-FIRE. AVOIDING FAILURES IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

This e-book has been developed by the HIRE-FIRE project team of youth workers, educators, career advisors, and young people, who teamed up to assist you in avoiding the common mistakes at the beginning of your professional journey.

To be able to support you, we are working on:

- Learning platform, offering a course on how to avoid the common mistakes in navigation on the labor market .
- Short informative videos offering solutions to the main problems and mistakes presented in this e-book.

Follow our website: <https://hirefireproject.eu>

Project partners:



Brainstream



This e-book is available on a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0) license. Its full text can be found at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Co-Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE). Neither the European Union nor FRSE can be held responsible for them.

**This publication is available free of charge
Designed in Canva Pro**