



ADVICE & TIPS – NETHERLANDS



Generally, Dutch companies do not recruit graduates for permanent positions. The vast majority of first job offers to graduates are temporary one-year contracts. Graduates are expected to have a degree in a related discipline. Temping agencies (Uitzendbureaus) are significant players in the job market, and companies frequently use them in the pre-selection of new employees.

- *Typical problems encountered:* very competitive job market as available jobs has decreased recently, and unemployment is very low.
- *How to improve your chances:* network with international companies who have a branch in the Netherlands, write speculative applications and, above all, get some work experience.
- *Language requirements:* to work in the Netherlands, a basic level of Dutch is an advantage, even when employed in companies where English is the working language. Learn Dutch provides distance learning courses at various levels.

The Curriculum Vitae

A Dutch CV uses a direct, factual style.

It's written in chronological order, and should be a maximum of two pages in length, but usually one page will do for people with little work experience.

It include personal details, education, work experience and leisure activities in your CV.

The Application Procedure

- Phone in advance to confirm the interview.
- Take copies of your CV, diplomas and employer testimonials to the interview.
- Expect questions about your motivation, your character, strengths and weaknesses, your education and the company itself.
- Be able to give specific examples to illustrate the skills you have and your achievements.
- At the end of an interview in The Netherlands, it is common to ask some questions yourself.

Where can I work?

- Major industries: chemicals, natural gas and oil. The service sector accounts for over 70% of the total Dutch gross domestic product (GDP), with health and welfare the most important areas in this sector, followed by retail, property services, transport, communications and financial services (Fact Monster, 2008).
- Recent growth areas: financial services and the hotel industry.
- Industries in decline: textiles, toy and games industry.
- Shortage occupations: there is a shortage of Dutch graduates in engineering and technical disciplines, meaning that these sectors, along with the financial services sector, are actively recruiting.
- Major companies: ING Group, Royal Dutch/Shell Group, ABN-Amro Holding, Unilever, Fortis, Aegon Insurance Group, Philips, Heineken, Rabobank and Mittal Steel are some of the biggest companies in the Netherlands.

- Major cities: Amsterdam (capital and largest), Rotterdam (largest seaport in Europe), The Hague (Den Haag's Gravenhage - seat of government and residence of the royal family), Utrecht and Eindhoven.

What's it like working in the Netherlands?

- Average working hours: the Dutch working week is, on average, between 33-35 hours, which is slightly less than other EU countries. The working week in the Netherlands begins around Monday lunchtime, although the rest of the week adheres to an 8.30/9am to 5.30/6pm schedule, excluding weekends.
- Holidays: a minimum of 20 days' holiday with most companies offering between 20-25 days per year. Public holidays include New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Monday, Queen's Day (30 April), Ascension Day, Whit Sunday and Monday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.
- Average graduate starting salary: €28,850
- Tax rates: taxes paid in the Netherlands are determined based on your income. The percentages can be quite high, although they have dropped recently. More information about the current tax rates in the Netherlands can be found on Expatax.
- Working practices and customs: dress code is much the same as in the UK with suits for business/banking environments and smart casual for other sectors.