

Information for graduating students

Congratulations! Soon you will be looking for a job. At last, you will be able to put your accumulated knowledge and skills to optimum use in the workplace. To do this, you will of course need to find a suitable job. This folder contains a number of **tips** and **information** to get you started in your job search. It will help you to use new skills, such as targeted job searches and applying for jobs.

The first step to work...

Register as a **jobseeker** with VDAB. From January of your graduation year you can already register with VDAB as a jobseeker. In any case, do this as soon as you graduate. You will then receive interesting vacancies, you can follow extra (online) workshops or training courses and you can get support in your job search. In addition, your ‘vocational integration time’, in Dutch ‘beroepsinschakelingstijd or BIT’.

If you do not have a job after your vocational integration period, but you have actively looked for work, you can apply for an integration benefit, under certain terms.

Where do I find jobs?

Start a targeted search for jobs that match your talents, values and desired working conditions. There are various job sites, such as VDAB, Step Stone, Indeed, Monster.be, etc.

By completing your VDAB profile on ‘My Career’ you will already receive suitable vacancies.

Get an idea of the corporate culture by looking through the organization’s website or by talking about it during your application.

Be sure to take a look at the databases below. These Dutch databases specifically compile vacancies from employers who are committed to an inclusive culture.

- [Vlaamse overheid](#)
- [Selor \(federale overheid\)](#)
- [Poolstok \(lokale besturen en Vlaamse overheid\)](#)
- [www.kifkif.be](#)
- [www.11.be](#)
- [www.minderhedenforum.be](#)

The Flemish [Flemish](#) and [federal](#) governments are also strongly committed to equal opportunities. This is done by offering reasonable adjustments during the selection process and at work. Reserved jobs are used to increase the intake of people with disabilities and chronic illnesses. You can apply for jobs **reserved** for people with disabilities [here](#).

Open to work

1. Make it **known** that you are looking for a job by engaging and expanding your own network by, for example, creating a profile on LinkedIn or Meetup.
2. Visit **graduation- and job fairs**. There you can expand your network by meeting potential employers, get a view on employment opportunities for your degree and find out about workplace support.
3. Apply [spontaneously](#) when you want to work at a company that currently has no suitable vacancies.

Targeted application

1. Draw up a **resume**. With a curriculum vitae (CV) you show at a glance who you are. Put the most important information on your CV: your personal details, studies, education, experience and skills. With your CV, you try to stand out from the others. The content should be honest, relevant, interesting and **focus on your strengths**. Make sure your CV also looks **attractive**. Employers often already make an initial selection based on CVs.
Here you can find more examples and pointers.
2. Write a letter of motivation in which you emphasize your **strengths** that are most relevant to the job you are applying for. So always make the **link** between your competencies and the **job requirements** from the vacancy. So tailor your letter to the vacancy and the vision of the organization you are applying for.
3. Employers read a lot of letters. Stand out from the others by being **creative** and **describing** very **precisely** what appeals to you in the vacancy and in the company. The aim is to convince the employer that you are the right candidate for the job and that you can add value. After all, you want to be invited for a job interview. **Concrete tips** on how to write such a letter can be found here.
4. Have your CV and cover letter **proofread** before you send them.
This can be done via VDAB or via your educational institution. Many colleges and universities organize information sessions and workshops on applying for jobs in the final year of your course.
5. **Prepare** your interview well. This will show that you are motivated. Look up information about the company, take a good look at the vacancy and think about what questions the employer might ask you.
Try to prepare these questions well.

6. On [watwat.be](https://www.watwat.be) you will find tips on how to score at a job interview. It is then definitely worth practising such an interview beforehand. You can then pay attention to: speaking speed, logical structure, asking questions, etc.

The [frequently asked interview questions](#) are also interesting and, if necessary, you can practice your job interview with a [interview-coach](#). This can be done by telephone or video interview.

Dare to ask for [feedback](#) by telephone or e-mail after a job application so that you can take it with you to your next application.

Talking about your disability or health problem.

In principle, information about your disability or health belongs to your private life. You are not **legally** obliged to mention that you have a disability, unless this disability could jeopardize the safety of yourself or others and if you cannot perform all work tasks.

Being open about your disability or health problem also has several **advantages** such as e.g. taking away prejudices and misconceptions, explaining certain needs, being a role-model for others and, above all, just being yourself.

If you are not yet ready to be open about this and are invited by the **occupational physician**, you do have to disclose your disability or health problem there. A doctor has professional confidentiality and will not give your employer any information about your health or disability. They will, however, decide whether you are suitable for the job.

Even if you do not have to visit for a medical check-up, you can consult the occupational doctor. He knows the working conditions and can help you think about possible adjustments.

In the **self-assessment**, you will find concrete **reflection questions** to scale the impact of your disability or health problem in addition to your talents and pitfalls, to list possible **reasonable adjustments** and to weigh the pros and cons in being open about your disability.

It is not always necessary to name the diagnosis. Sometimes communicating bottlenecks or needs can be enough. From your experiences in your school career (and also internships), you can point out what is possible, and what can help you do the job well.



“At the job interview, I did not mention that I have ADHD. I highlighted my talent for creativity and solution-oriented thinking and also talked about my pitfalls in time management and what tools or handles I need to use for that. When I mentioned that working with intermediate deadlines and one-to-one mentoring works for me, I got back that that could definitely be taken care of.”

Finally, try to get a good **understanding** of the **work context** (e.g. employer expectations, practical organization). This way, you can predict possible difficulties and enter into a dialogue about adjustments or solutions. This way, you let the employer look beyond your disability or health problem and you can focus on your **talents** and **strengths** during the interview.

Reasonable adjustments

As a job seeker or employee with a disability, you are also entitled to reasonable adjustments if you experience certain barriers during the application process or at work.

The employer is obliged to offer the necessary individual measures within reason. They are not a benefit, but they compensate for the obstacles associated with a disability. In this way, persons with disabilities can participate in working life as independently as possible, on an equal footing with other employees.

There is no fixed list of reasonable adjustments. It depends on a number of factors such as the size of the company and the financial capacity of the employer.

Indicate which adjustments you need. We will then consider whether this is reasonable or feasible for the company.

On the Unia website, you will find a step-by-step plan for applying for reasonable adjustments at work.

Many obstacles can be easily overcome by minor adjustments, if people's capabilities are used creatively and if there is room for open communication.



“Providing screens or partitions in collective workspaces creates a quieter and more secluded environment on campus. My need for privacy and de-stimulation is already largely covered by this.”

Supporting employment measurements

You can apply to the VDAB for measures or allowances needed to support you in your employment. You can apply for these if you have an illness or disability by submitting a request for advice.

For this you will have to be able to demonstrate the **necessary documents** such as medical reports, reports from the Flemish Agency for Persons with a Disability, etc. Your **educational institution** may be able to **help** you fill in and submit the application form.

Based on the granted measure, you may be granted an acknowledgement of work restriction.

If you are entitled to this, it may be an added value to inform your employer about this.

The “maatregel individueel maatwerk (IMW)” is a wage premium given to the employer to give you extra support if your work disability has an impact on functioning in your job. Examples include extra familiarization time, extra minutes of break time, adjustments to the task package, more time needed, more frequent absences. If you need extra support at work, a support premium can also be granted. Your employer can use this budget to hire an external coach or support himself.

Deaf or hard-of-hearing people can avail of a free number of hours each year for an interpreter Flemish sign language, writing interpreter or oral interpreter. You can apply for this if you are looking for work or as part of your student job.

- VDAB give an allowance for workstation adaptations including work tools and clothing. Examples include magnification software, orthopedic safety shoes, a ramp, adapted sanitary facilities, a stair lift.

- VDAB provides an allowance for travel expenses if, due to your work restriction, you need a companion or adapted transport to go to work. For example, if you can prove that you cannot use public transport but can use your own, you will receive compensation for this

Health problem and no job

If you are struggling to find a job because of an illness or disability, a VDAB mediator can work with you to see what you need in your job search and guide you free of charge. VDAB works with specialized partners to make this happen.

This may involve job orientation, company work placements, taking extra training courses or checking together what allowances you are entitled to. More information about who is entitled to these and how to apply can be found here.

Thinking of starting your own business? Then contact Vlaio (het agentschap innoveren en ondernemen) a.k.a. the agency for innovation and enterprise or VDAB.

Support at work

Even when you are at work, it is important to keep communicating what you need.

Good preparation will allow you to estimate and request many of the adjustments in advance. Some other things will only become clear once you are at work. Even then, you can still request reasonable adjustments.

Who can help you?

- Direct your requests for adjustments to your supervisor, the **human resources department**, the **labor doctor** or the **union**.
- Trough VDAB you can list for free **job-and language coaching** if you are working less than a year with your current employer. They will help you settle in within the team so you can deliver quality work or look at how you can continue working if things get a bit more difficult.
- Are you working at your current employer for **more than a year** and would like support because of a health problem or disability? Then specialised jobcoaching may be for you.
- If you feel your rights are not being respected you can turn to Unia for **information** and **mediation**.

Getting started yourself

SIHO developed a self-assessment ‘**transition to an inclusive workplace**’ with supporting questions, tips and a lot of good practices for student to prepare for the transition to work.

These allow you to think about your talents, competences, desired work environment, possible obstacles and support needs. You can translate the latter into reasonable tailor-made adjustments.

A good understanding of your capabilities and needs will make you self-confident when applying for a job and better inform a future employer.

Good luck!