



GUIDE FOR JOB SEARCH

Job search guide adapted to the specific needs and characteristics of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Developed under..

WOTICS Project

E-Learning Platform for the Development of Social-Work skills in people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)





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Introduction

Job loss is something no one would want, especially when the effects of the economic crisis have led to a decrease in the number of jobs, an expansion of the range of candidates available and an increase in the demands of employers in relation to employees. The competition for a job is getting fiercer.

This guide is for you!

For you that are looking for a job for the first time, or are in a job position and would like to make the best out of it or even change your position.

This guide will navigate you through all relevant aspects for getting ready for a job, from motivation, finding your own strengths, writing your curriculum vitae, searching for opportunities, applying for a position, preparing for the interview and successfully staying in the job while balancing relations and tasks.

So finding the best possible job requires time, patience and effort. It is absolutely necessary that when choosing a job, you take into account all aspects contained in this guide.

Start getting organised and ready for diving into this adventure that will help you in successfully navigating the process.

pen
thoughts

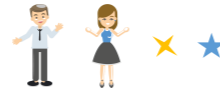


Introduction

Getting ready for the job



Tap your
Potential



Getting ready for the job

What do I want?

This big question is essential. It will lead you into a reflection process necessary to find answers that will **orient yourself for becoming adequate and consequently successful** in searching and getting a job.

While reflecting and answering, consider:

- ⇒ Avoiding the answer “whatever”: it is not a professional goal, it does not bring you closer to your dream job and it does not allow you to focus your efforts.
- ⇒ Asking yourself this question: where would I like to be working in 5 years? Think realistically, of course. This will guide you towards your goal.
- ⇒ Listing the companies that you already know that fit the profile of the company you are looking for.
- ⇒ Identifying the close contacts you have that you can take advantage of.
- ⇒ That companies are looking for professionals, and as such, you must be. So how will you present yourself to companies?
- ⇒ Taking additional training, if needed.



What can I offer?

Everybody has much to offer, you should never forget that you always have something that could be interesting for other.

Tick your strenghts

for sure you have some of them!



- Attention to detail: thoroughness, accuracy.
- Deep focus: concentration, freedom from distraction.
- Observational skills: listen, look, learn approach. Fact-finding.
- Absorb and retain facts: excellent long term memory, superior recall.
- Visual skills: visual learning and recall, detail-focused.
- Expertise: in-depth knowledge, high level of skills.
- Methodical approach: analytical, spotting, patterns, repetition.
- Novel approaches: unique thought processes, innovative solutions.
- Creativity: distinctive imagination, expression of ideas.
- Tenacity and resilience: determination, challenge opinions.
- Accepting of difference: less likely to judge other, may question norms.
- Integrity: honesty, loyalty, commitment.



Taking care of my emotional resources

You may feel insecure and uncertain in applying for a job position for the first time or in attending an interview for a job you really would like to get. **This is absolutely normal and it happens to each of us.**

Being able to **manage and regulate your emotions is very important** and a key factor for your success in your professional and personal life.

Do you know that negative experiences are remembered easier than successful experiences? This is because your brain is designed to help you avoid risks. However **remembering positive experiences is what gives you great confidence and trust** in yourself.

In order to remember positive experiences, **you can carry a small object that reminds you of the experience** and just by touching it or looking at it, bring you back to the positive memory and feeling. You can also **associate the positive memory** to a special smell. If you like essential oils, you can use any citrus (lemon, orange, grapefruit or bergamot) that have a very positive effect on your mood and they enhance your serotonin level, the happiness hormone.

Relaxation techniques, breathing exercises or mindfulness meditation are of great help to support you in finding inner peace and stability that nurture confidence and self-esteem. I suggest you look into the Insight Timer app, where you can find suggestions in all languages and for all situations.

<https://insighttimer.com/>



mplication

**The labor
market**

The labor market

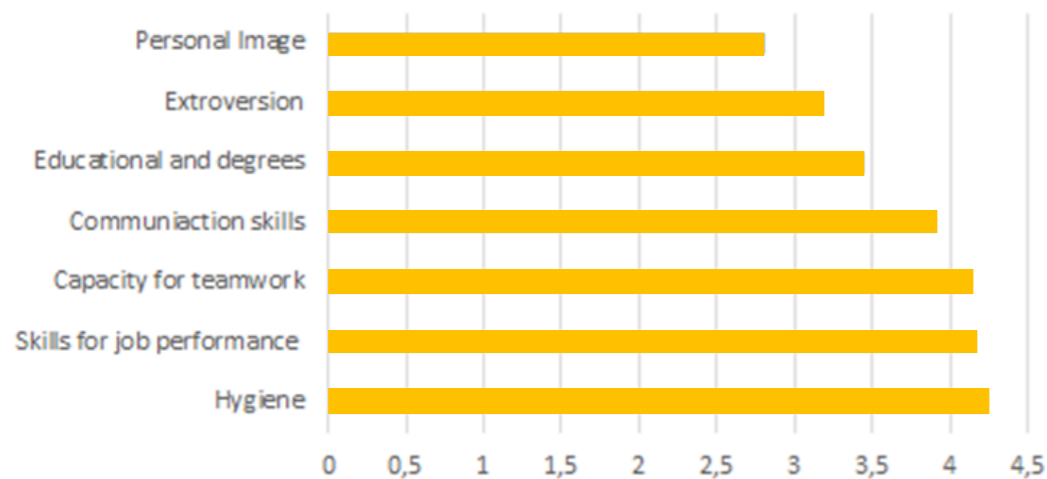
Brief summary of general market situation

The general situation of the market depends a lot on the actual circumstances in any given society.

However, most companies are willing to hire someone with Autism Spectrum Disorder - like you - as long as you **meet the profile requested and by pairing you with a tutor to help you adapt well**. Please consider that most companies lack correct information on functional diversity for labor inclusion.

Look at what companies value when hiring someone and check what may be difficult for you and what can be a winning point.

Aptitudes, capacities and qualities important to hire someone



Where to look

When looking for a job, or reinventing yourself at a professional level, there are **several channels offered by** new technologies, online platforms, specialized job search engines, etc.

Public resources

Check the website of the Employment Ministry to find a national employment office near to you. Ask for a meeting to get info about how to register you officially as a job seeker. This way, you can be included in some specific programs for people who have not been working for a long time. You can also benefit from free vocational or employment guidance. And if they manage job offers, they could even notify you when your profile fits.

Check where in your town there is an employment local department promoting employment and local employment agencies that act as intermediation between companies and workers, and offer courses and orientation.

Come to these offices every time you need to update your information or find out about new developments.

The European Union runs a program called The Youth Guarantee. It ensures that all young people under the age of 25 years (30 for people with disability) receive good quality special offers of employment, education, apprenticeship and traineeship. You have to be unemployed or leave formal education to enter this programme.

You can ask for this program in your employment office or find out more general information in: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/home.jsp> or by the public employment services (websites and offices).

If you are interested, have the possibility and the skills, you can try to search for a job around Europe, through EURES, a European cooperation network of employment services, designed to facilitate the free movement of workers. Consult the EURES website: <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/en/homepage>

Visit our website to find more public resources, available in your language.

Non-governmental organisations

There are non-governmental organizations helping people with Autism Spectrum Disorder through employment services. The specialized professionals can help you in knowing your strengths and difficulties for creating an individualised job path.

Most of these organizations have agreements or specialized programs to promote employment in their community. For example, there are organizations or companies, known as protected employment companies, which employ just people with disabilities or with difficulties. They prepare them and then introduce them in the labor market with adequate support.

Consult an asperger association, autism association, youth association or other type of organizations where you can fit and get help and support.

Temporary employment agencies

When companies don't have time, possibility or knowledge for staff selection, they ask specialised recruitment companies.

Look for temporary Employment Agencies or collocation agencies if you wish to work for a limited time, for events or a summer job. Usually, being in their databases is free of charge. Especially big and middle companies use this method to hire people nowadays.

A temporary job gives you experience and the opportunity to know how the labor world functions. You can start as a temporary worker and then become a candidate for a long term job.

How to apply for a job



Determination
&

perseverance

e



How to apply for a job

It is important to **differentiate yourself from the rest of the candidates** when you apply for a job, from writing your CV, the letter of intent, or when you participate in an interview.

First think:

- What makes you unique?
- What differentiates you from other candidates applying for the same position?
- What can you offer and other candidates can't?
- What is the sole reason why the employer should choose you and not another candidate?

Remember: **it is not the strongest who wins, but the one who adapts better!**

Creating my CV

When you apply for a job, the employer needs a minimum of information about you that you compile in the Curriculum Vitae, a short biography about yourself that becomes your business card, on which the employer makes a first impression. Most often, the right to appear for an interview is earned this way.



General recommendations for compiling a CV:

Present your qualifications, skills and competencies clearly and logically so that personal attributes are highlighted.

Pay close attention to every relevant detail, both in substance and form!

A good resume depends not only on what you write; how you present what you say is just as important.

Your CV **is good when:**

- ⇒ It is short and does not contain grammatical or expression errors.
- ⇒ It contains a clear and easy-to-follow text, with a generally pleasant and attractive appearance.
- ⇒ The font chosen is sober and not too small, but not too big. Paragraphs are not too long (difficult to follow); and the information should be arranged in a logical order, following a chronological, functional or oriented criterion.
- ⇒ It contains keywords appropriate to the job.
- ⇒ It does not contain disturbing repetitions.
- ⇒ It would be desirable to use action-indicating verbs such as “develop” or “lead” to emphasize achievements and not declarative sentences such as “I participated”, “I assisted at”, and on the other hand, to avoid passive constructions, such as “I was responsible for...”



At the next page you have a **standard structure of a professional CV to follow**. Just copy it and fill it in with your personal data.

Curriculum Vitae



PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name [Name and surname]
Phone [Phone number]
E-mail [e-mail address]
Date of birth [dd/mm/yy]

THE PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Mention each professional experience in turn:
 - Period (from - to)
 - Name and address of employer
 - Type of activity or sector of activity
 - Position or position held and main activities and responsibilities)
 Example:
 Example professional experience:
 Happy Work Space, IT-Consultancy (Working street 120, 1111 Vienna)
 from 1.7.2020 to 30.8.2020

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Describe separately each form of education and vocational training program followed:
 - Period (from - to)
 - Name and type of educational institution and professional organization
 - Field studied / occupational skills
 - Type of qualification / diploma obtained

PERSONAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

Mother tongue Ability to: read / write / talk and foreign language

Foreign languages

Artistic skills and competences

Social skills and competences

[Example: Living and working with other people, in a multicultural environment, occupying a position where communication is important, or carrying out an activity in which teamwork is essential]

Technical skills and competences

[Use of computer, certain types of equipment, machines, etc.]

Driver's license

[If there is]

Other skills and competences

[Skills not mentioned above]

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Indicate other useful information that has not been mentioned, such as contacts, references, etc.]

ANNEXES

[List the documents attached to the CV, if applicable]

Letter of intent

A letter of intent communicates to the employer who you are and why you are applying for the job.



It completes a CV, it does not duplicate it. The letter of intent must be personalized for each position. It can make the difference between getting an interview and ignoring your resume, so it's very important to pay close attention to how you write your cover letters.

Structure of the letter of intent:

1. Section with your contact details (top right).
2. Place and date.
3. Employer contact information (if available): Name; Title; Company; Address;
4. Greeting formula.
5. The actual content of the letter of intent must stimulate the interest of the employer and lead him to read your CV attached to it. It should not exceed one page, 3-4 short and concise paragraphs are sufficient: information on why you are writing. Mention the position you are applying for and where you found out about it. Include the name of a common contact who can give references. The next section of the letter of intent should describe what you have to offer the employer. Mention explicitly how your qualifications match the job you are applying for.
Conclude the letter of intent by thanking the employer for considering your application. Include information about how you can be contacted for an interview or meeting or what you intend to do next.
6. Conclusion-Signature.

@ Email

When you send your application via email, remember:

1. The subject of the email should be formulated clearly and precisely, so that the CV and the motivation letter reach the email box of the person in charge of recruitment.
2. Attached files (CV, letter of intent):
CV and letter of intent should be in PDF format with a name that reflects your name and have either CV or letter of intent in the name. Avoid special characters. Be aware of not exceeding 500kb.

Online application



Some organisations have an **online database where you can put in all your data** and then generate an automatic CV.

Tipp: It is recommended that you prepare the content first in a Word document and then upload the different parts into the online application

Recruitment process

S

elf-
confidence





Recruitment Process

Types of selection

Personnel selection is a decision making process operated by a company in order to **select a person among a broader group** of candidates.

At a theoretical level, you should expect that the more the job position is ambitious, the longer will be the process and there is not a common framework to perform the task of personnel selection.

The types of selection methods can be summarized as follows:

1. **Interview:** it is the process of exchange between the interviewer(s) and the candidate. Usually the duration of the interview ranges between 20 and 45 minutes. Some interviews can be totally structured, others can be unstructured and evolve based on the answers given. Most of the interviewers use semi-structured interviews, including a minimum set of questions done to all candidates, and a variable part with personalized questions.
2. **Personality tests:** it has the goal to understand what are the personality traits of the candidate. The assumption is that the company will appreciate most profiles with a specific personality.
3. **Job knowledge tests:** this test determines your knowledge in a particular field of intervention.



4. **Job situational tests:** during this test, the candidate has to imagine how he/she would behave in a set of situations presented by the evaluator orally or in written form.
5. **Work samples:** these are simulations of tasks requested by the job position. The assumption is to study a sample of real behavior in response to a common job situation.
6. **Reference checks** and biodata.

Job interview

The job interview is the most common method of personnel selection, applied by all companies. For this reason **you should expect at least one interview during the job selection**. It can be done in person, through phone/skype or with a video presentation.

Interviews may vary on the number of participants, as follows:

- ⇒ **Number of interviewers:** in most cases, only one interviewer will be present. Anyhow, especially if it's expected to have a long interview, you may meet more than one interviewer at the same time. In most cases their goal is different, one interviewer may be more technical and the other focused on the soft skills. In other cases you will have separate dedicated interviews exploring different aspects in different times.
- ⇒ **Number of the interviewees:** you can face individual interviews and/or group interviews.

The duration of a single interview generally varies between 20 and 45 minutes. If it lasts longer, do not get anxious, on the contrary, it means that the interviewer is considering your profile relevant, otherwise he would not spend a long time with you.

The job interview is composed of:



Technical part

Including questions related to the technical tasks and their performance.

Advices for the technical part

- Study the job profile requested.
- Analyze the website of the company.
- Find information related to the job position in forums, facebook groups (identify common aspects, how professionals solve frustrations, problems, learn the language used by professionals in the field, income expected).
- Interview people working in that position.
- List your previous activities related to the field of intervention.
- List the best cases in which you performed positively to activities similar to the tasks performed by the job position.



Psychological and relational part

Including questions related to soft skills and relation. The interviewer will make some inferences and deductions about your personal profile during the process of the interview.

Advices relational part

The effect of your communication on others is based on two elements:

- Verbal content: the words you say to others, the content.
- Non verbal communication: gesture, posture, facial expression, characteristics of the voice etc.

Despite the verbal content being the most important and meaningful part of the communication, most of the effect on social image and impression is determined by nonverbal communication.

General suggestion to **make a good impression** are:

- Use a moderate eye contact (around 25-30% of the interaction).
- Do not cross the arms. To close the arms is interpreted by many as a sign revealing lack of interest or communication.
- Do not touch the face and do fluid and continuous arm movement. Excessive movements would be perceived as a sign of anxiety
- Prepare yourself with relaxation exercises, so you also will appear more relaxed and this will be beneficial for the final evaluation.
- Do not lean backwards. This is often evaluated as a sign revealing lack of interest.
- Take care of your dress: moderate elegant dress is usually well accepted. Ask feedback to others about your outfit and check with others how to improve your presentation.
- Respect always the turn of conversation. It is better to do a little pause before to answer to the question
- Reduce the non-words sound (“aah”, “eeh” sounds) because they would make you appear more uncertain.
- Repeat the answers to the common questions before you go at the interview.
- If you are blocked in giving an answer, fill the time by saying “This question is very important to me”.
- Prepare your questions before, less improvisation will help you to gain confidence and to answer faster during the live interview
- Use a mirror to study how you appear when giving the answers.



Suggestions for a correct virtual interview



Look at the webcam. When we work at the computer our habit is to look at the screen. The resulting effect is to show you are looking down, and this reduce the efficacy.

Check the WiFi. Test the video-call functionalities with your friends. Test more than once in order to be sure to have a good connection. Despite interviewers understanding that WiFi problems may occur in any case and it's not your fault, this would hinder the quality of the interview.



Often underestimated, It is the quality of the audio is very important for many reasons. Is the audio quality that will improve the understanding of the content you present. Use a headset.

Select a relevant background (ie library) or a neutral background. A background with too many stimuli would distract the evaluator from the content.



Typical questions for a job interview

Question 1

What are your strengths and weaknesses? Name at least three strengths and weaknesses

Suggestion to answer to this question

1. Say the truth.
2. Do not use very common words. Many people say "I am a team leader", "I am flexible" "I like to communicate" "I am dynamic", "I am accurate". Instead of saying "I am honest", which is very common as a definition, use a more specific word, this will help to make memorable your answer for the interviewer. For example, you may say "I am a transparent person".
3. Use situations and real events to highlight your strengths
4. Connect your strengths and qualities in relation to the job position requested. Answer to the question, how my strengths can be helpful for the job position and I can contribute to reach the organisation's goals.
5. When you discuss your weaknesses, present it as your "human aspect", "human difficulties". Say the truth. Explain what you are doing for work on your weaknesses.
6. Make a broader list of your strengths and select the 3 most appropriate strengths relevant for that job position.
7. Call a friend and ask him his point of view on your strengths and weaknesses. It is important to know an external point of view.

For the situational questions: use the model STAR (which is actually a model used by some interviewer), including in your answer at least the following elements:



Introduce yourself

Question 2

It is good to **prepare your introduction**. Consider that this may happen in person, in group.

- Talk about your professional life.
- Explain 3 important moments of your career.

Teamgroup questions like “Do you like to work in groups?”

Question 3

During the interview, it is very common to discuss the **abilities to work in groups**. Anyhow, considering that this is a common quality requested by companies and often discussed by interviews it is very important for you to discuss it.

A Yes/No answer would be not enough for the interviewer to understand. And also, it would be a false answer, considering that the possibility for somebody to work in groups is related also to the structure of the group, on the organizational culture and other aspects.

Make your answer broader. Answer to these additional questions to give a full answer:

What is the contribution you can give to groups?

In what groups do you work better?

What characteristics of a group are important to you?

Instead of saying: I don't like to work in groups or I prefer to work individually, **highlight some aspects which are important for you**, like:

I like to study into details aspects to present in groups.

I prepare a lot myself before to go into teamgroup situations.

I like to give my contribution in teamwork.

Question 4

Why should we choose you instead of somebody else?

List a **set of reason** and not only one.

Make reference to the specifics of that company. Based on the information you have, **list your strengths and past experience**.

Show your problem solving qualities in relation to the tasks requested.

Question 5

What is your goal to reach in the next 5 years?

Answer to **professional aspects**.

Answer basing on what are the **expectation of that group**.

Explain goals to reach in short time and on the long term.

Understand what are the expectations of the company. They are searching for a person working in the same position, or somebody wanting to be the next manager?

Question 6

What are the characteristics of your ideal boss/group? What motivates you?

Have clear feedback. Help them to understand how to make you work better.

**Tell me about a difficult situation.
What is the last error you've made?
Why have you been fired?**

Question 7

Use the STAR,



Explain very well about what you learned from that situation and how you changed your behaviour based on that situation. **Explain how you solved it.**

**I see you don't have experience
in this field - or - I see you didn't
worked last year**

Question 8

If there are unclear parts in the curriculum or "empty spaces" it's much probable that the interviewer will ask. You may think:

- ⇒ If it's clear that I don't have experience in the field, why they ask me?
- ⇒ If it's clear that I didn't work last year, why do they highlight this?

There is a positive side in this question, if you are there at the interview, it means that **they took time to make the interview** despite you having this empty space. If they consider this a too big weakness, probably they wouldn't invite you.

Explain what you studied in that year, and what you've done to improve yourself during that year.

How to get ready (rehearsal, visualising, finding good energies...)

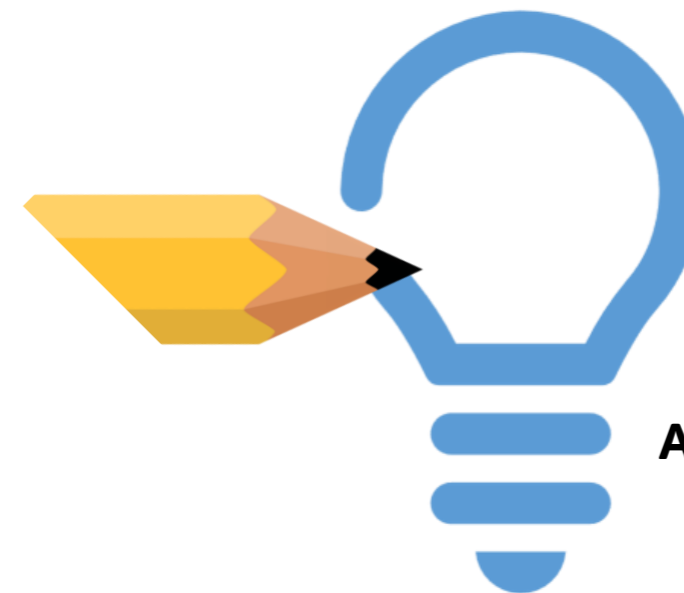
**Imagination of
the job selection**



**Try and repeat
the answers with
a mirror**



**Utilise Relaxation
techniques**



And remember

- Arrive on time
- Respect the dress code
- Review your CV
- Repeat the common question
- Never talk badly about people, situation, previous bosses, work condition, etc.
- Ask feedback to friends

Shar



**Successfully
staying in a job**

Successfully staying in a job

My first day in the workplace

The first day of work is usually a day of uncertainty. So it is essential that you **prepare it well starting from the beginning**. You should sleep a minimum of 8 hours in order to be rested and have a strong breakfast. Leaving your clothes ready can help you save time to avoid being late on your first day. Bringing some pocket money and / or an easy-to-transport lunch (a sandwich, fruit, etc.) will be necessary if your workday exceeds 5 hours.

It is important to know in advance **where the company is located and keep a small notebook where you can write down the most important information**. Remember that the usual thing on the first day in a new job is to sign documentation, see the facilities, meet the colleagues (if there are many you can write their names in the notebook to remember them the next day) and above all, it is a good time to clear up our first job questions. Write your main questions in advance.

In a first introduction, it is usual to comment on topics related to your training, courses, professional experience, hobbies, etc. Remember that the most private aspects of your life (family, personal or sensitive issues such as religion, politics, etc.) should not be addressed in a work environment.

Trial period: tasks and responsibilities

All contracts include a trial period. **You can see the duration of your trial period in your contract or ask about it**. After this period, the company will decide if you are the worker they were looking for, or if they want to break the employment relationship that was started. If you want to know more information on this matter, you can get advice on your rights and duties as a worker by contacting experts on labor issues.

Normally, many companies use the **first days to explain what is the working method to be used**. It is important to respect the way of doing things in the company and try to learn as soon as possible about your work routine. If you have any recommendation or suggestion you must first wait to get to know your job well before doing it.

Also is important to be able to request help. In the workplace **you will usually need to ask for help**. It is important to clarify with your company the first day who is the person to whom you should contact, and at what time of the day you can make inquiries.

It is especially important to write down the passwords, the most important instructions, etc.

Professional image

To maintain a good professional image, you must do the following things every day: take a shower, use clean clothes and shoes and use a deodorant. Your hair must be well combed and your nails well cut and clean. If you use makeup, do it in a natural way. If you have a beard, it has to present a good aspect. **You have to give an external image according to the demands of each company**, so take care of the uniforms, wear it as indicated in the company rules, and pay attention and care that it is clean. It is recommended to have two uniforms, minimum.

Social contacts and informal times

Work colleagues are very important people to any worker. A positive relationship with them will help you feel better. **Be polite with your team**: it is important to say “hello or good morning” when you arrive, to help, to show interest in conversations, ask for things please, say thanks, to listen to suggestions, etc.

But they are colleagues, not friends, **you must try not to discuss sensitive or very personal issues with them**. Avoid adding them to your social networks or chat with them about non-work topics. Remember that WhatsApp work groups are one more formal work tool aimed exclusively at dealing with work issues.

The rest time in each company is variable **but it is very important that you strictly adhere to the rest schedule without exceeding time**. During this time you can stay with the others or be alone. Find out if your company has special facilities for workers to rest. Remember that asking several times how long it takes to rest or looking at the clock several times is a rude gesture.

On the other hand, **knowing the hierarchy is important to understand how the company works and how to manage the conversations**. The people at the top of the hierarchy (managers, coordinators, etc.) are in charge of making decisions, organizing tasks or resolving conflicts, and respect the position to not be affected in this decision in a bad sense.

General recommendations

During your firsts weeks **it is normal to make mistakes**, you must be prepared to accept them and learn from them. Ask your reference person about your doubts or use a notebook to write difficult instructions.

Sometimes people could criticize your work or, in a stressful situation, yourself. **It could be a constructive criticism, to teach you not to hurt you**. If you feel bad, talk with your reference person and try to not argue a lot even if you disagree or it seems unfair. Training your social skills in therapeutic groups will be of great help in dealing with personal and work conflicts.

Learning requires a lot of effort, but it is always worth it. **Find ways to manage the frustration**: go into a quiet place, talking with a reference person who helps you, try to relax, create contrary thoughts about the frustration.

Your absence to work is only justified by medical issues or very important problems. Ask for permission in advance by email or by talking with your coordinator. Call your coordinator as soon as possible if it is a really important emergency. If you have a question about medical absence or your salary, you can always go to the human resources department.



Your next steps

Now that you have come to the end of this guide you may still have questions or you may want to go deeper in some of the contents or suggestions provided.



You may also go back and read it again or part of it.

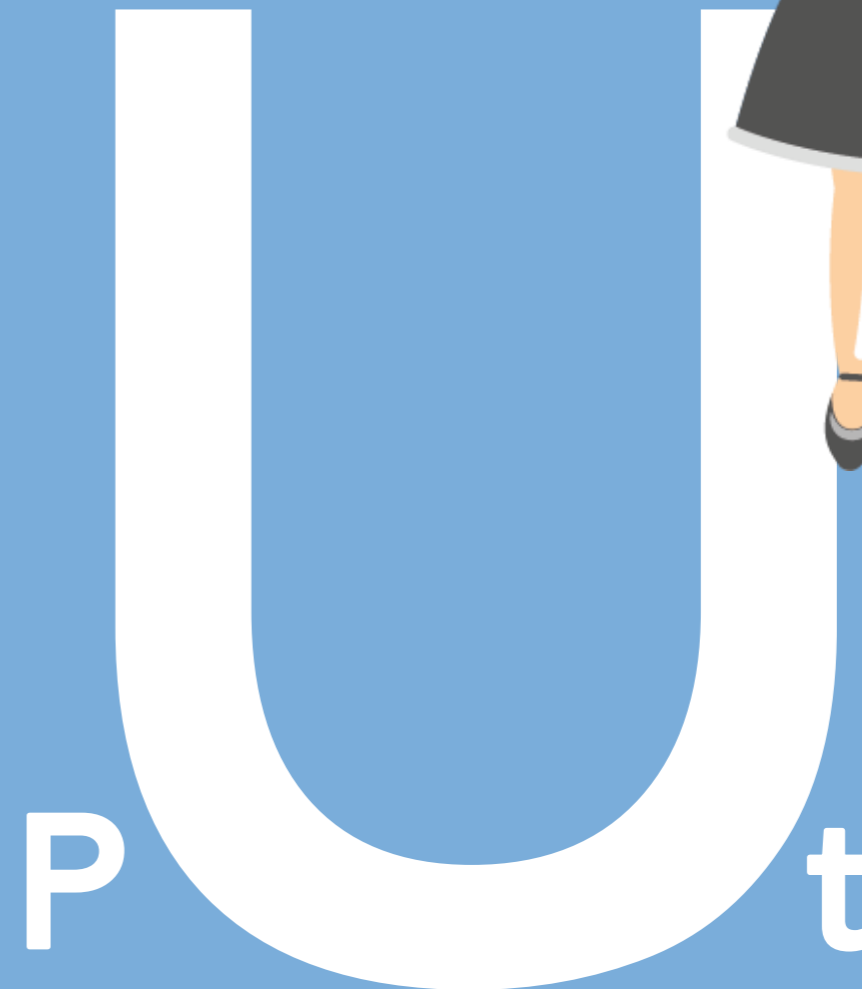


Use it as a companion, write in it, take notes. Make what best serves.



We wish you all the Best in your career.

For more information, visit our website www.wo.tics.eu



into practice!

#WoticsEU



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

PARTNERSHIP:

