



# 10 +1 POINTS

## ABOUT WORKING CULTURE IN LAPLAND

## 10 +1 points about working culture in Lapland

Sarja X. Sarjan nimi xxxxx/2017 (graafinen suunnittelija täydentää)



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## PAGE NAVIGATION:

At the top of each page is a navigation bar that helps you to navigate between chapters.



## VIDEOS:

The document also includes videos.

The Videos are spoken in Finnish with English subtitles, so you have a great opportunity to hear Finnish language flavoured with a hint of Lappish dialect.

The videos are marked with **CLICK! button** that opens the video in a new window on YouTube.



SOME TIPS  
FOR YOU!



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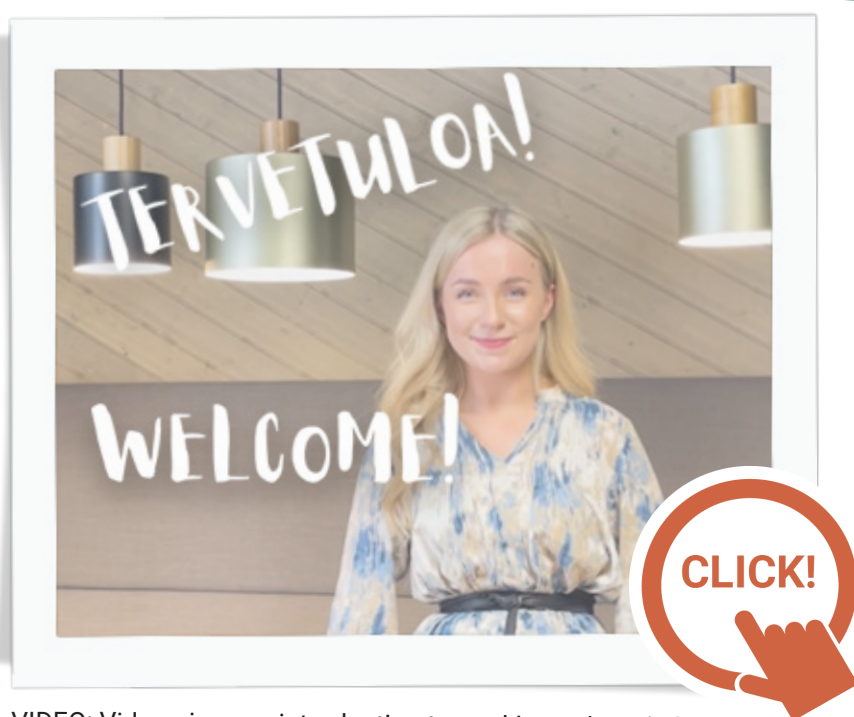
**+1**

**Want to be your own boss?**



# TERVETULOA!

WELCOME!



VIDEO: Video gives an introduction to working culture in Lapland

At the Lapland University of Applied Sciences, we want to encourage our international talents to work and settle in Lapland. Whether you came to Finland for work or education, I hope this guide helps you understand Finland's working culture and its special features, particularly in Lapland. Enjoy your reading!

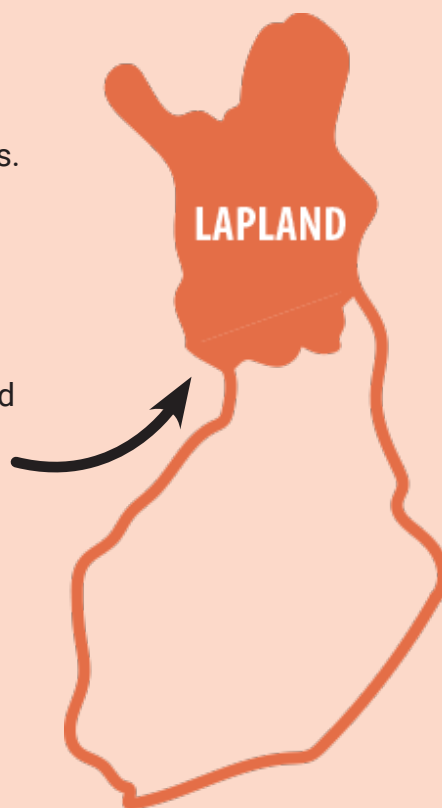


This guide is made as part of the Lapland University of Applied Sciences Talent boost activities.

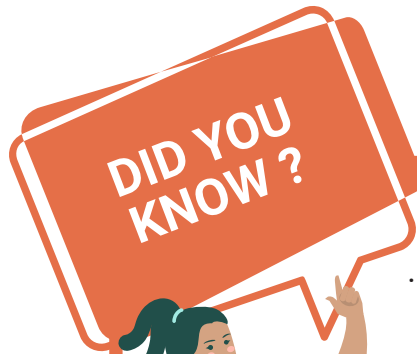


## CONSIDER IT DONE!

We asked company representatives what makes them themselves, what values they have, what working culture in Lapland is really like and if it differs from the rest of Finland? International people working in Lapland also told us how they felt about working in Finland's **LARGEST AND NORTHERNMOST REGION.**







## A FEW FACTS ABOUT LIVELIHOOD IN LAPLAND:

...there were 12,800 enterprises in Lapland (in 2020)

...Industry was the largest field with a turnover of €6,339 million (in 2020)

...Lapland strongly specialises in minerals, tourism and forestry, and the region produces a significant part of Finland's total turnover through them

In Lapland, as elsewhere in Finland, companies may have different customs, but when working in a new country, you should be prepared to face a different way of doing things – in other words, a different working culture.

## BENEFITS OF BEING PREPARED:

- You can avoid misunderstandings
- Adjusting to the work community becomes easier
- Curiosity about other cultures and customs also broadens your view of the world

# 2 EVERYTHING STARTS WITH TRUST

## YOUR OWN-INITIATIVE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Are these self-evident to you? That's great! So you've already grasped one of the most important features of working culture, which we also appreciate here in Lapland. In the Finnish workplace, the supervisor doesn't constantly monitor the activities of their employees. We trust you to be an expert and get the work done.

However, showing initiative doesn't mean you have to cope alone. You should agree tasks with the supervisor and plan the details of the work yourself. This also makes work flexible.

*"We're not the kind of workplace where someone's breathing down your neck all the time to see what you're doing. Instead, we trust our employees a lot."*

- Industrial company, Pello, Lapland

*"Flexibility combined with the opportunity to do things on my own way and my own style of working has given me a lot of freedom to explore, but also be creative and push things forward."*

- International Specialist, Lapland UAS

*"Perhaps the best experience is that I don't always have to report what I'm doing, and why I'm doing it. This kind of independent work and doing things my own way are the best."*

- International Specialist, Lapland UAS



# 3 TIME IS MONEY!

## USE OF TIME/SCHEDULES

“Finnish frankness may well surprise people – when you agree to do something or make a schedule with someone, they are actually kept to relatively well, and decisions are also made quite quickly.”

- Municipality representative, Ranua, Lapland



Punctuality is one of the fundamental values of Finnish working life, and this has also become an important factor here in Lapland:

- Schedules and agreements are held to
- We do what we promise to do
- Reasonable use of time: when your time is well planned, decision making is effective

SO...  
REMEMBER TO BE ON TIME!



# 4 HAPPY, ANTI-SOCIAL, HEAVY METAL CONSUMING PEOPLE?

## STEREOTYPES AND COMMUNICATION CULTURE

There are some stereotypes related to Finnish people in general. Have you been thinking what those stereotypes might be? Well you are not the only one!



Pictures: Google search results of Finnish people  
 Source: Screenshot from Google search, 2022

But let's move on to the **COMMUNICATION CULTURE**.

According to a Finnish proverb, the one who asks doesn't get lost. So don't be on your own in the face of trouble. Our working culture has a low hierarchy, so you can always ask a supervisor if you don't understand what is expected of you, or if you don't have enough time to complete a task. Based on our interviews, the importance of asking cannot be exaggerated, as it shows courage and can also prevent big mistakes.

Different communication cultures can also cause challenges or at least **FUNNY SITUATIONS** at work. As the representative of municipality of Muonio points out, we Finns are quite inexpressive, unassuming, a little stiff and we don't talk just for the sake of talking, we prefer to cut to the chase. An important thing is to remember that it doesn't necessary mean anything negative, it is just our culture, working life and part of the sometimes slow process of getting familiar with each other.

Here are some issues that the international people we interviewed mentioned they had encountered while working in a new working culture:

- **Communication challenges and misunderstandings**
- **Finnish people's reserve, shyness and warming up slowly to new people**
- **Adaptability**

*"If you don't understand something, you should know you can ask again and again so you're not left with uncertainty, because that's the worst thing of all. Even though asking sometimes makes you feel ashamed about not understanding something after asking about it several times, it's still better to ask about something a lot than to assume you're doing the right thing, but doing it wrong... Asking is important."*

*- Industrial company, Pello, Lapland*

*"Finnish people are amazing! Super helpful, little bit shy sometimes, but it is how it is, it's part of the culture is part of them, and I respect that."*

*- International Specialist, Lapland UAS*

*"Finnish people do act like a mirror . When you are open and friendly they are very open and friendly too, when you want to keep the distance they will keep the distance too."*

*- International representative of industrial company, Rovaniemi, Lapland*

SHY  
AND  
RESERVED..?

Yes, it's true that shyness and reservations are common stereotypes that are associated with us Finns,  
**BUT..**

NOPE,  
NOT ALWAYS!

- > **When we WIN something,**  
e.g. ice, hockey world championship or Eurovision song contest
- > **When we CELEBRATE,**  
e.g. The first of May (FIN: Vappu) or Midsummer (FIN: Juhannus)

..you will most likely encounter surprisingly  
**EXTROVERT AND CHEERFUL PEOPLE**  
who hug each other without hesitation!



Ice hockey World Championship  
celebration in 2022  
Picture: Simo Räsänen, 2022

**ALSO** when we win something, we  
have a desire to climb somewhere high.  
**WHY?** We have no idea either. 😊



Lordi's victory of Eurovision song contest  
celebration in 2006  
Picture: Kallu, 2022





# 5 LIKE A BEAR SHOT IN THE ASS!

## THE FINNISH LANGUAGE

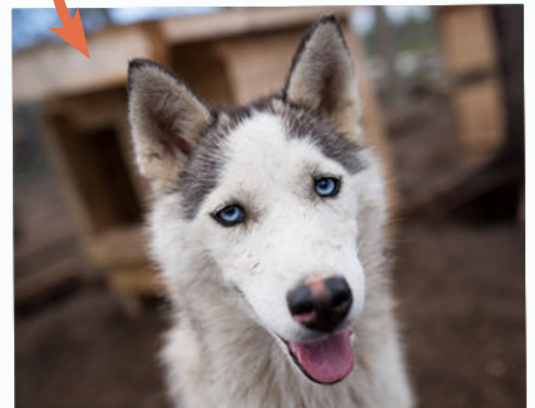
The phrase in the heading is a common Finnish saying which means that a person is in a very bad mood. So remember, learning a new language can be fun and language is also an important part of communication.

**LAPLAND** is a well-known and popular tourist area, so language skills are useful here. Our interviews showed that Finnish language skills are still appreciated, but fluency isn't required, as basic skills are a good start in many business fields. The desire to develop and the courage to use the language even if you only speak it a little are also important. However, there are still business fields where the requirement for fluency in Finnish is higher. The language requirements may also vary between tasks within a company, and in some tasks, the language skills requirement is higher for occupational safety reasons.

*"If the goal is for the employee to learn Finnish, the goal must be to participate. Take a coffee break at the same time and hold on to the communality of the workplace. Accept that you don't speak perfect Finnish. If you want to learn Finnish, you must speak Finnish. At least in our workplace, no one gives you a funny look if the words get a little twisted or corrects you if you don't want to be corrected."*

*- Community planning company, Rovaniemi, Lapland*

The face you make at your first Finnish class..



Picture: Lapland Material bank, Terhi Tuovinen, 2016

## A FEW FACTS ABOUT FINNISH LANGUAGE:

- The national languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish
- Approximately 4.9 million people speak Finnish as their native language
- Spoken Finnish is divided into several dialects
- In Finland, there are speakers of three Sámi languages: North Sámi, Inari Sámi and Skolt Sámi. These languages are spoken approximately 20,000 speakers in Finland, Norway and Sweden





## WHAT DID INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE LIVING IN LAPLAND SAID ABOUT FINNISH LANGUAGE?

- **Regularity in language learning! Use it at work and practise your language skills also outside the workplace e.g. in a shop**  
➡ words are forgotten without regular training
- **Being part of the community and following what is happening in Finland requires language skills, but you can also integrate into Finland without a knowledge of Finnish**
- **It's important to adapt to the living environment, and language skills can support your wellbeing and daily adaptation to the surroundings**

In addition to studying Finnish, you can develop your language skills by talking to Finns, using the region's services like adult education centres and third-sector actors and boldly using even the smallest amount of language skills that you have. You can also use technology like various mobile applications (Duolingo).

**DID YOU  
KNOW ?**

**The longest nonconjugated basic form word in  
Finnish language is**

**PYYHKÄISYELEKTRONIMIKROSKOOPPI**

(EN: Scanning Electron Microscope, SEM)



DID YOU  
KNOW ?

Here you can see the magic that happens with  
Finnish language by just  
**CHANGING COUPLE OF LETTERS:**



**"HURMAAVA KIMALAINEN"**

EN: Charming bumble bee



**"KIRMAAVA HUMALAINEN"**

EN: Running drunk person



6



+



# 6 LUPPOAIKA

## WORK-LIFE BALANCE

“Luppoaika” is a Finnish dialect word for leisure time. Nowadays, “luppoaika” has a positive tone to it, but in the old days, it used to mean the period of crusted snow, when reindeers had to survive by eating lichen (luppo), and people were without work.

Nature is one of the reasons many people travel to Lapland every year. Enjoying nature in Lapland does not require a week-long hike, as nature is close and present in people’s everyday lives.



Lichen hanging on a tree  
Picture: Tiia Monto, 2020

DID YOU  
KNOW ?



...Lapland is proven to have the purest air in the world

...In Lapland we have

- > snow 210 days/year
- > Northern lights 200 days/year
- > Polar Nights and Midnight Sun 2 months/year

Source: Lapland Material Bank



Rap artist Stepa at Arctic weekend in 2018  
 Picture: Lapland Material Bank, Iiro Kerkelä, 2018

But leisure is more than just sitting in a forest. Various events and happenings also make people in Lapland move. For example, **DID YOU KNOW** that Sodankylä hosts an annual film festival, where famous film directors, rising new film stars and an international audience meet under the midnight sun? Or that the Arctic Weekend brings downhill sports enthusiasts together to get excited about the coming season.

**SO THE THING IS,** we value leisure time, and we usually want to spend it with family and friends. Leisureliness is also considered to be reflected in the local working culture, i.e. things are done with the calmness they require.

*“The gentleness of the lifestyle is also shown in the working culture, where everything is done with an attitude of “it’s better to get it out of the way”. And you always help a friend. And when the work is done, you go to the ski tracks to enjoy the spring or hop on a bike to Ounasvaara. In summer, our bodies’ rhythms are nice and mixed when the sun doesn’t set, and you can work a little longer in the autumn darkness if you want. Here we do what is promised, but surrounded by the ever-present nature, we also understand that there’s much more to life than work.”*

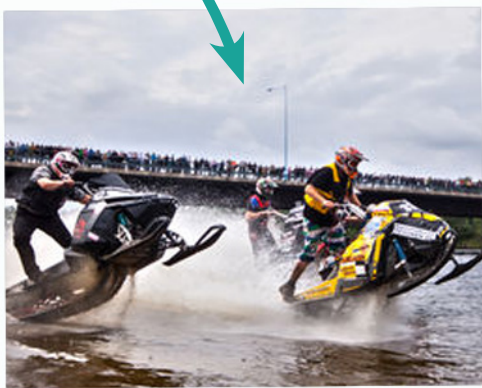
- Representative of City of Rovaniemi, Employment Services

“Have an open mind and be brave in attending leisure activities outside working hours, which can expand your network and circle of friends here. It might not be as easy to get to know Finns, but if you just bravely get involved the trust will gradually build up.”

- Representative Metal industry, Sodankylä, Lapland

We also have special hobbies to enjoy in our free time. Or at least some of us do. Many municipalities offer a variety of hobbies for all ages, and participation in them is a great way to get to know the locals. Local companies also encouraged and emphasised the importance of hobbies.

Water cross with snowmobiles??  
**WHY NOT!**



Picture: Lapland Material Bank, Terhi Tuovinen, 2016

**DID YOU KNOW**..that in Finland we have everyman’s rights, which means that e.g. everyone can pick wild berries, mushrooms and unprotected plants. Learn more about everyman’s rights [HERE](#).

Ice swimming on winter??  
**WHY NOT!**



Picture: Lapland Material Bank, Janne Koskenniemi, 2016



Picture: Lapland Material Bank, Terhi Tuovinen, 2016

# 7 RULES, RULES, RULES

OBEY THE RULES, YES WE DO!

DID YOU KNOW..that Finns are highly law-abiding people. We wait on the sidewalk for the light to turn green even if no cars are on sight. We wait for our turn in line and generally we follow the rules and guidelines. Some people might say we even like the rules and regulations and some people are right! 🤔

Finnish working culture also includes various laws and rules that protect employees' rights. We have different laws regarding equality, safety and annual leave. For example, The Employment Contracts Act lays down fundamental legal provisions concerning working life in Finland.

## EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS ACT (55/2001) REGULATES ALL THESE THINGS:

DID YOU  
KNOW ?



- the conclusion of an employment contract
- the obligations of the employer and the employee
- the equality between workers
- the establishment of minimum terms of employment
- the employee's right to family leave
- the laying-off of an employee
- the termination of an employment contract
- the indemnity liability
- employment contracts of an international nature
- the role of employees' representatives



Although we sometimes have strict rules, both companies and municipalities usually have a low hierarchy so communication with supervisors is easy. A combination of directness and casualness of the working culture in Lapland also came up in our interviews and it was considered a stress-relieving factor.

“In my opinion, the working culture is so direct and relaxed that even a municipal citizen can call the mayor. Perhaps the hierarchies are not as apparent as they are in larger places.”

- Municipality representative, Muonio, Lapland

“I would say that in Finland the work life is very strict, very well organized, and the rights of the employees are protected.”

- International representative of industrial company, Rovaniemi, Lapland

Just look at Mr Claus here!  
Doesn't he look **STRESS-FREE!**



Picture: Lapland Material Bank, Visit Rovaniemi, 2016

Remember: As you enter Finnish work life it's important to know your rights. Do you know them? Are you sure?

**LET'S PLAY A LITTLE GAME:**  
[Do you know your rights at work?](#)



Also we highly recommend you to check [The ABC guide to working in Finland.](#)

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Lapland lives and breathes its natural resources. That's why we in Lapland want to use them sustainably and responsibly. Sustainable development is an integral part of companies' activities, whether it's reindeer husbandry, tourism or industry.

**DID YOU KNOW..**that in 2021, Finland came first in the international comparison of sustainable development?

(Government press release, 14 June 2021)

**DID YOU KNOW..**that Finland's new sustainable development goal is a prosperous and globally responsible Finland that protects the carrying capacity of nature?

(Government press release 257/2022)

**DID YOU KNOW..**that Lapland is the largest region in the world to harvest organic natural products

We at Lapland University of Applied Sciences also operate in accordance with the principles of responsibility and sustainable development. **OUR GOAL** is to be a sustainable, responsible and carbon neutral university of applied sciences by 2030. We also want to develop education so that every graduate can promote sustainable development and combat the negative effects of climate change in society.







# 8 BELIEVE IN YOURSELF!

## TIPS FOR FINDING A JOB

**DID YOU KNOW THAT FUTURE WORKING LIFE SKILLS** according to World Economic Forum are: creativity, critical thinking, problem solving and cooperation skills, emotional intelligence, agility, curiosity and self-directedness (also digital skills are highly appreciated.)



- Don't just list previous jobs, qualifications or titles in your application: tell what you can do, and what you've learned from your previous work or studies
- Forget the traditional clichés about being a team player and a colleague with a sense of humour. Bring your personality into the picture and know your strengths
- If you need help identifying your strengths, check out the Vahto – Strengths Cards from [HERE](#)
- Remember to network! Download LinkedIn and get to know your Finnish colleagues and study friends
- Customise your resumé and make it look like you. Check out our [EXAMPLE CV](#) at the end of this document and create your own e.g. with Canva.com
- Don't forget to look job opportunities from Tuudo or Työmarkkinatori.fi (JobMarket Finland)

# 9 MORE COFFEE, PLEASE?

## COFFEE TABLE DISCUSSION



VIDEO: Video gives an overview to coffee culture in Finland

**COFFEE** is one of the most important cornerstones of Finnish food culture. Finland has long consumed more coffee than anywhere else in the world along with other Nordic countries. Every year, Finns drink almost 10 kg of coffee per person, and Finns have considered themselves to be the world's top coffee drinkers for years.

Taking coffee breaks at the workplace is a Finnish speciality. We're the only country in the world where an eight-hour working day includes two legal breaks for coffee. Coffee breaks are an adhesive that binds employees in the workplace, and those who don't drink coffee will also take a coffee break to chat with colleagues. It's usually the social coffee moments that people miss mostly while working remotely.



## SOME LAPLAND DIALECT WORDS FOR YOU TO TRY AT A COFFEE TABLE DISCUSSION

- **HÖÖLI** = generous, hospitable
- **HÄÄTYÄ** = must
- **HÄÄVI** = not worth much
- **KEHATA** = daring to do something
- **KERITÄ** = make it, be in time
- **KLÄPPI** = child
- **(K)RANTTU** = selective
- **LUPPOAIKA** = idle time
- **(P)RAATATA** = talk
- **(P)RUUKATA** = have a habit
- **SINNI** = sisu, endurance
- **SORTTI** = type
- **VASITEN** = especially, for that very purpose
- **VISTO** = ugly, disgusting, horrible, scary
- **VISU** = takes good care of money

"Nyt **HÄÄTYY** lähteä!"  
EN: "Now I must go"

"No onpa **VISTO!**"  
EN: "That's just ugly/horrible/disgusting/scary!"

"**SINNILLÄ** etiäppäin!"  
EN: "You can do it!"

"**RUUKAAKSIE**  
juua kahvia?"  
EN: "Do you drink coffee?"

"Onko sinulla  
**LUPPOAIKAA?**"  
EN: "Do you have some spare time?"

Source: Mehtonen, Yle, 2017

**BUT** the most useful word in Finnish language is "**NO NIIN**". (EN: Well then) If you don't believe us, check what the Finnish comedian Ismo has to say about it from [HERE](#).



# 10 LET'S BE DIFFERENT TOGETHER!

## IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY

The idea of a diverse workplace is that you can be yourself and bring your own culture to enrich our world of work. Diverse – the term applies to all employees, regardless of their differences or backgrounds. Diversity is reflected in our attitudes, ways of thinking, experiences and skills.

### REASONS FOR PURSUING A DIVERSE WORKPLACE:

- Diversity also benefits companies. A company with employees from different ethnic groups and genders is also more economically profitable
- Internationalisation and targeting global markets
- Positive impact on wellbeing at work
- Improving the attractiveness of the company

*"You really add value by bringing a different country's perspective, and when you try to think out of the box, so don't be afraid to be yourself. I think that's the added value that you bring to an organisation – you always see things from a different context, different points of view, and you have to be bold about this."*

- International Specialist, Lapland UAS

# + 1 WANT TO BE YOUR OWN BOSS?

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS AN OPTION

Lapland is a great place to do business. Getting started is easy and **ENTREPRENEURSHIP** can be a strong alternative to competing in the job market. The best part is that you get to be your own boss! Remember, you don't have to be ready made entrepreneur, there are lots of different services and courses to get you started. Ask your teacher or study counselor for more information.

Here you can see some Finnish Tax Administration tips on how to get started.

FINNISH COMPANIES – [Start-up checklist](#)

FOREIGN COMPANIES – [Start-up checklist](#)

Great, you have reached the ending!  
Hopefully, this has made you a little more familiar with our working culture characteristics and peculiarities.

Hopefully, the guide has also inspired you to reflect on the differences between working cultures, and perhaps you also found some similarities.

**ENJOY FINNISH WORKING LIFE!**



VIDEO: Last words video

# EXAMPLE CV



**First name**  
**Last name**

**CURRENT JOB TITTLE OR  
HIGHEST DEGREE HERE**

Write here short self introduction: **It should include the most essential details about who you are and what is your professional standing. More help from [HERE](#)**

Contact information here:

Phone number:

email:

## **WORK EXPERIENCE**

(Experience from newest to oldest OR the most relevant to the job your applying )

### **JOB TITLE**

Company name| e.g 2019 - present

- **Describe main duties and responsibilities e.g.**
  - Designed and coded
  - Optimized home and landing pages
  - Designed and developed email campaigns

### **JOB TITLE**

Company name | e.g 2017 - 2018

- **Describe main duties and responsibilities e.g.**
  - Designed and coded
  - Optimized home and landing pages
  - Designed and developed email campaigns

## **EDUCATION**

(from newest to oldest here)

### **DEGREE TITLE e.g Bachelor of Design**

Place of study | Starting year - Ending year or ongoing

## **SKILLS**

(related to work)

- Special IT -skills or programs
- Language skills
- Own strengths
- Remember to check VAHTO cards for more skills and strengts you can use!

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This **10 +1 POINTS ABOUT WORKING CULTURE IN LAPLAND** -guide is made for international students studying in Lapland as part of Lapland University of Applied Sciences Talent Boost actions. The aim of this guide is to help you to get to know our work culture here in Lapland and also make you feel at home here. This guide has been made by interviewing company and municipality representatives from Lapland and also international people working in Lapland.

