

June 4, 2025

Best Foot Forward: Career opportunities and tips after graduation

Mikko Lilja, D.Sc. (Tech.)

Head of software and algorithm development (Planmed)

Professor of practice (University of Helsinki)

mikko.lilja@planmed.com / mikko.lilja@helsinki.fi



Outline

1. **Some considerations from a recruiter's point of view**
2. When you've already landed a job



The basics

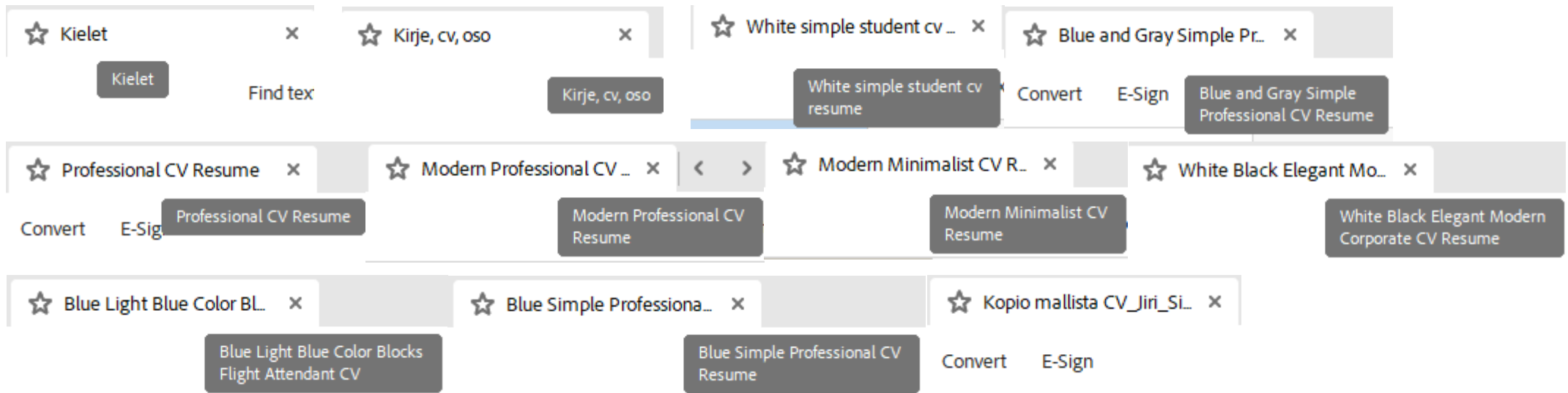
- The (usual) reason there's a job opening: a company has a pain point
 - Can you help them? Is mutual benefit possible?
- Recruitment is a lot of work for the company as well
- Most likely there will be many other applicants (we received over 350 internship applications)
 - How can you stand out and at least make the first cut?
- The Finnish job market is not as transparent as one would hope: the relatively strong legal protection of work contracts decreases the rotation in the job market
 - Some jobs might never even be advertised
 - *Trust is key* (recommendation or previous experience)

How not to get rejected off-hand

- Number one thing: *Try and make life easier for the recruiter*
- Drop the mysticism: keep it compact but complete and self-explanatory → The recruiter can't read your mind
 - *Never assume that you'll get another chance to tell more about yourself*
 - Transcript of study records → Especially w/out previous relevant work experience
 - Resume with job history (if there are gaps, be honest about it)
 - References ("available upon request" doesn't inspire confidence)
 - Coherence and credibility
- Avoid unforced errors
 - Copy-paste mistakes such as addressing the wrong company etc.
 - "AI discontinuities" in the text: don't make it obvious
 - Don't be pushy ("When can I come and tell you more?") unless it's a skill needed in the job

The final touch

- Avoid leaving a template or an obscure title in your PDF files → It's not a deal-breaker, but still



How to stand out?

- Open application → Supply and demand just might meet without competition
- Try and find good fits instead of applying for every job there is
 - Still, an easily tailorable application helps to maximize coverage
- Instead of hollow lists, use concrete real-life examples
 - Every claim should ideally have some backing → Everything should add up
 - Refer to your GitHub account if possible
 - Hobbies → Gives an impression of a can-do person
 - *The more specialized the role is, the more important actual examples are*
- Having a reasonable programming language stack
 - Of course it depends on the job, but having just Matlab is a stretch
 - If possible, taking that extra programming course is likely worthwhile
- Having the “right” salary request
 - Especially when applying for the first job
 - See, e.g., TEK palkkanosturi (TEK recommendations might be optimistic), Glassdoor
 - For expert company positions (with a fresh doctoral degree), 4500—6500 €/month might be a typical range (if you have a dissertation on cutting-edge AI or machine learning, this might not apply..)
- Following up on your application

If you're invited to an interview

- Do your homework: get to know the company and their products
- Address typical concerns and cookie-cutter questions
 - “How will a person with an academic background deal with this and that?” (time pressure, unexpected events, communication)
 - “What are your weaknesses and strengths?”
 - “Why would you be a good fit for this position?”
 - Try and recognize the obvious weak points in your profile and come up with answers beforehand
- Be a good listener
- Ask questions demonstrating your interest and motivation

Examples of entry-level STEM jobs at Planmeca group

- Machine learning specialist
- 3D imaging specialist
- Software designer
- Software tester

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Things to consider after landing a job

- The trial period is very important from the employer's point of view
 - Usually 6 months now
 - Last chance for the employer to see if everything works as assumed (without any malevolence)
 - Sometimes you might also realize that it wasn't a great fit after all
- If it's your first job, it's a good idea to try and stay at least for a couple of years to demonstrate your commitment and longevity
- Stepping up and seizing any opportunity is usually a good idea—you might not get asked twice

Social skills 101

- Unless you're the substantially the ideal expert, they do make a difference
 - Of course, the "assumed level" depends on the job description (researcher vs salesperson)
- When applying: approachability, sense of humor, openness, politeness, persistence
 - *A peculiarity of the Finnish culture: informality is considered more friendly than formality (one can actually come across as stand-offish)*
- When working: collaboration and communication, impulse control, sense of humor, presentation skills, flexibility and adaptability, loyalty and honesty

About the job market

- Right now, it's not a great market for employees → Persistence is important
- Reconnaissance is key: you probably aren't even aware of all the possibilities (this includes myself)
 - Government institutions, hospitals, regulative bodies
 - Startups, consulting firms
 - Freelancing
- For technical experts, the career paths are traditionally limited (this is gradually changing)
 - In the Finnish job culture, management positions are a typical way up
 - Not necessary ideal by any means: a good expert doesn't equal a good supervisor and juggling both isn't easy (tell me about it..)
 - I know technical people who've transitioned to, e.g., HR careers

What else?

- Working life is a momentum game: previous jobs demonstrate that you're "hireable" (I've seen exceptions, though)
- Different kinds positions might make sense at different stages of life (balancing family life etc)
- If you're contacted by a recruiter, keep it in mind that it's not a job offer but just an invitation to apply (from the recruiter hoping to get paid, not the company itself)
- *Don't lose your faith based on rejection or ghosting*