

## Expand your boundaries, find a job abroad!

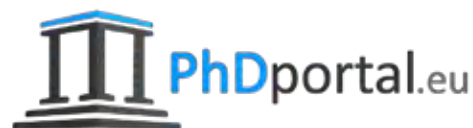
*Work experience in another country can increase your career chances in both industry and academia, especially in the long term. Just a few years abroad will broaden your horizon and increase your growth potential. A lack of foreign experience can be a disadvantage when applying for grants, and some positions will even be out of reach. So expand your boundaries and find a job abroad!*

Some people go to another country because of a romantic idea to start something new; others because they fell in love with a foreigner, but one of the most important motivators are enhanced career chances. Since international collaboration is increasing, the possibility of international mobility is increasing as well. Because the 'Life Sciences' is a main topic in most countries, it is in particular a very international sector. Especially, in more specific industries where qualified personnel on a national level are limited, companies and institutions have become more and more interested in international talent.

### PhD projects differ internationally

If you are looking for a PhD in another European country, visit Studyportals. This website offers thousands of international PhD positions via their PhD portal. According to Joran van Aart, director of student value at Studyportals, there are several elements you should take into account when looking for a PhD position: "In addition to location and subject, you should determine whether the project is open or predefined. In the UK, for instance, PhD positions are often predefined. Within these set programmes, different PhD students work on the same projects. In an open project you are free to choose your own subject. The amount of funding that a PhD candidate has available to run his project differs from institute to institute. In some countries PhD projects are mostly financed, in others it is common to bring your own funding. There is a European code of conduct to ensure that PhD candidates are treated well." Joran

advises to check whether the University you are interested in has signed this code. "Further, it is important to know the status of a PhD candidate in a specific country. The status of student or employee influences your potential granted pension rights or the level of your salary. The duration of the PhD trajectory differs per country and varies from three to four years. As most publications are generated in the last period of the PhD trajectory, this fourth year could benefit your publication rate."



**Joran van Aart**  
Director of student value at Studyportals



**Nannette Ripmeester**  
Expertise on Labour Mobility (ELM)

### Expertise on Labour Mobility

Nannette Ripmeester distributes information on labour mobility all around the world with her company Expertise on Labour Mobility (ELM). Besides advising and training employers to work more internationally, ELM helps (young) professionals to gain international experience. ELM not only shares information on international mobility via their website, they also offer more specific information via various career guides of 40 different countries. These guides inform you on the application rules and sector-specific career perspectives in a specific country. ELM also provides individual career consultancy services and workshops at universities.

### Be knowledgeable about the local customs and language

When thinking about starting a career abroad Nannette Ripmeester, managing director of ELM (see textbox), recommends the following: "To increase your chances for an international career step, make sure you learn the local customs and language. Without any knowledge of the national ways and language, you will be lost. Although some people may talk English perfectly, they often expect you to learn the basics of their language." This however depends on the country and work environment. The academic field for instance, is increasingly international and more and more research groups have English as their standard language.

### Take the specific application customs into account

According to Nannette the biggest mistake people make, is thinking that translating your CV into English is sufficient. "The most important step is getting to know the specific application rules of the country. Even countries with a culture quite similar to ours, have very different application customs." For instance in Belgium, the CVs are far more detailed. Employers expect data of your previous jobs, such as whether you had your own office. "Also the use of a photo on your CV is valued differently per country: in

the US it is forbidden; in France it is hardly used, while in Germany a standard format for your CV photo is specified. The way job interviews are conducted differs a lot as well. In the US you have to be extremely confident and give the impression that if they do not hire you they make a terrible mistake. In Australia on the other hand, that kind of behaviour will not be appreciated. In Europe avoiding eye contact could be seen as a lack of interest or confidence. While in Asia it is considered a way to show respect. In the Netherlands we often mention extra-curricular activities to show our skills. In other countries it may be uncommon to address these activities, especially when they are not related to your studies."

So before you expand your boundaries, make sure you are prepared!

### Relevant websites

**EURAXESS:** [ec.europa.eu/euraxess](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess)  
**Expertise Labour Mobility:** [www.labourmobility.com](http://www.labourmobility.com)  
**Studyportals:** [www.studyportals.eu](http://www.studyportals.eu)