

# The job search



A job search can be done spontaneously. However, communication and local cultural codes play an important role. It is therefore useful to find out before embarking: it is not enough to have good assets; we need to develop them and express them in the form expected by an employer. There are, to this end, specialized services that can guide me.

Questions to ask:

	YES	NO	
Can I produce the <b>required documents</b> ?			I complete <b>my file</b> : equivalence of diploma, diploma, training certificate, certificates, registration as a jobseeker ...
Can I clearly articulate my <b>career project</b> and my <b>skills</b> ?			I realize a <b>Balance of Skills</b> , for example in the FOREM, in a body of social and professional integration, in a regional center for the integration ...
Do I have a good <b>resume</b> and good <b>motivation letter</b> ? What kind of assets, knowledge and skills do I have? Do they meet the needs of the employer?			
Do I <b>search alone</b> ? Do I have enough information, e.g. to decide if I send unsolicited applications or if I am responding to job offers? Do I know where to <b>find job offers</b> ?			I take <b>advice</b> from the FOREM, a community center, an organization of social and professional integration... or I participate in a job search workshop.
Have I ever had a <b>job interview</b> ? What will I say? How will I introduce myself?			I take advice from an organization that offers the <b>job coaching</b> or I practice in a job search workshop.



The **FOREM** is the public service of employment and vocational training in Wallonia. It is in the FOREM where I register as a jobseeker. On its website [www.leforem.be](http://www.leforem.be), I can use a series of online services: job offers, training, career information, job fairs ... When I am a jobseeker, counselors will follow my file and can direct me.

As a jobseeker, I must complete a series of obligations, including that of actively searching for a work. If I receive a notice to attend, I have an obligation to go there. I make sure to keep tracks of all my steps and inform my counselor of any change in my situation.

Another channel is considered highly effective in finding a job: the **network of relationships** that I weave around me. It is estimated that many of the employment opportunities will drop by word-of-mouth: acquaintances, friends and family are often valuable allies. Many employers tend to have confidence in a personal recommendation.

Among the strategies of integration, weaving the network of relationships of trust is to be placed among the priorities.

**Interim agencies** are also privileged partners for certain sectors of activity. In Belgium, several dozens of companies are present in Wallonia. A temporary worker is hired by an interim agency on behalf of an employer who requires a temporary labor. This type of work is regulated and the temporary worker enjoys the same rights as other workers regarding pensions, holidays, health insurance...

Some agencies have increased awareness of cultural diversity issues.

The **ads** in newspapers, in all boxes and on the Internet is also a classic means to look for a work.

However, I am careful to read the ads, to sport moonlighting or scams. I avoid, for example, to go to a rendezvous in a hotel ... From this point of view, it is preferable to consult the specialized press and publications of FOREM.



When I define my profile, my career project and my skills, I can target employers and send them an **unsolicited application**. As far as research and communication are well targeted, this strategy is considered one of the most effective.

Finally, a lot of **agencies of socio-professional integration** (OISP), various associations, community centers and neighborhood boards offer support services to develop a good job search strategy. If I do not master the complexities of the exercise, I do not hesitate to call upon their skills.

## The equivalence of diplomas

For most foreign degrees, the **equivalence** should be claimed from the Department of Equivalence of the French Community.

Attention, the procedure for equivalence of a diploma is long and requires making up of a detailed file able to meet specific requirements.

 Useful link : [www.equivalences.cfwb.be](http://www.equivalences.cfwb.be) 02 690 86 86

The employment discrimination is prohibited and punishable by the Law. Nevertheless, this is not enough to eradicate the stereotypes and prejudices that characterize certain mentalities. It is therefore prudent to be prepared to confront such situations.

When a discrimination is proven, it may be denounced. UNIA (Interfederal Center for Equal Opportunities) is an independent public service which has a statutory role to promote equality and fight against discrimination. It may act on behalf of a discriminated person. In case of problems, I can take advice from its services: the free Green Line on 0800/12800 or [unia.be](http://unia.be)



# The employment contract



In Belgium, the work is regulated differently in different sectors. We talk in general about a private / a public sector, a commercial sector /a nonprofit sector. In particular, each sector (e.g. a construction sector) is regulated by a "joint commission" which defines the working conditions.

The work therefore implies an employment contract. This is a legal commitment that connects two or more parties and creates rights and obligations. The parts are commonly called "employer" and "worker" (or "employee").

The employment contract entails, for both parties, the obligations (schedule, tasks, wages, holidays ...). The employer and the worker must be respectful and considerate towards each other. They are required to ensure and observe compliance and propriety of morality during the execution of the contract.



There are several types of contracts: full time, part-time, of replacement, of interim (the employer is a temporary employment agency), of a fixed term (CDD = dates of start and end are indicated in the contract), permanent (CDI = contract duration is not specified)...

When the employer or the employee wishes to terminate the contract, a notice period is required by the rules: a minimum delay is observed before leaving work. This delay to respect varies depending on the situation and the type of contract.

Therefore I make sure to always sign an employment contract in due form. For a first experience or when in doubt, I take advice from a union that protects the interests of workers, from the FOREM or a social service.



## The work permit

The employment of foreign workers is moreover regulated by the Act of April 30, 1999 and by the Royal Decree of June 9, 1999 (regarding employees). The rules on access to an employment market for foreign workers, as well as the rules for obtaining a residence permit, are complex.

Since 2019, the residence permit specifies whether I have the right to work or not.

If I can work, my residence permit indicates:

- “Labour market: Limited access”: I have the right to endorse one function for only one employer, the one who obtained the authorization to hire me when I applied for my single permit.

OR

- “Labour market: Unlimited access”: I have the right to work for any employer in any occupation. No additional formalities are required.

If I am not entitled to work, the residence permit says "Labour market: no".

## Useful address

**SPW** – operational DG Economy, Employment and Research

Employment and Vocational Training Department

**Management Employment and Work Permits**

Place de Wallonie, 1 – bâtiment 2

5100 Jambes



To be self-employed (to be one's own boss), any person who does not have Belgian nationality must obtain a business card in a "guichet d'entreprises" (counter for companies).

Certain categories of foreigners are exempted, however:

- the nationals of 25 countries of the European Union and some of their family members who move in with them;
- the recognized refugees and holders of permanent residence;
- the spouse of a Belgian and some members of his family who settle with him;
- the spouses who help their spouses in its self-employment;
- the people on business trips, speakers, journalists, sportsmen and artists if the duration of stay does not exceed three consecutive months;
- the foreign students who do a training course as part of their studies;
- ...

Other conditions must be met: some occupations are regulated.

For an activity requiring registration of trade or craft, you have to prove the management knowledge. If necessary, I can take an exam at the "Service du Jury central" (Central Examinations Board).

Some professions require the proof of **professional competence** and / or diplomas. For most foreign **degrees**, the **equivalence** must be recognized and therefore requested from the Department of Equivalence of the French Community.



Administrative requirements must be met, mainly:

- To join a **social insurance fund** (contributions payable quarterly).
- To request a **business number** in a window of approved companies.
- To request a registration in the **Trade Register**. (except for certain professions: free-market professions, farmers, ...).
- To report the activity to **TVA (VAT)** (to complete a declaration and pay the due amounts each quarter (except for certain activities: actors, singers, models, DJs, free-market professions ...)).
- To open a **specific account number** for the self-employed activity.
- To maintain an accounting **properly**. It is advisable to surround oneself with the services of an accountant.
- To join a **mutual insurance company**.
- To pay **taxes**, based on an annual declaration.

 Useful site : <https://economie.fgov.be/en/themes/enterprises/starting-business/conditions-entering>

# The moonlighting



An undeclared work is called moonlighting. It is a paid, but not declared to public authorities work. It thus escapes all rules of solidarity of Belgian Law (taxes, social contributions ...) and is therefore punishable by Law.

**Example:** My neighbor offers me to come and paint her home and pays me €5 / hour.

When someone moonlights, there is no legal contract of employment. The so-called employer fails to fulfill his social and tax obligations. Many risks are related to this type of work and can cause serious consequences for the employer as well as the employee.

Without a contract of employment, I risk not to be paid in whole or in part (forgot overtime work, for example). Scams and setbacks are common!

I cannot claim any rights as regards the Social Security (disability to work, maternity, invalidity, death, pension and unemployment). In case of accident, I am not at all covered. Therefore there is no insurance or resort.

The employer may require from me what he wants: working below the legal wage, working more than the legal limit, to fire me whenever he wants...

If I receive an unemployment benefit or aid of the CPAS, I can be sanctioned, excluded, even be required to repay improperly received benefits.

The denunciations and controls are frequent, with consequences for fines and other penalties.

The Social Laws Inspection is competent in matters relating to labor laws. It addresses e.g. the issues of compensation, notice, duration and working time. It can carry out checks on the workplace, either on the initiative or the occasion of a complaint, to verify that the labor regulations are respected.

In case of problems, I can go for free to the Social Laws Inspection or the Labour Court. I can also get advice from a union.