EXPLAINED: How can people overseas get an IT job in Sweden?

So you've got a degree in computer science, data analytics, or something similarly technical, you're a new graduate or someone with a couple of years of work experience under your belt, and you fancy moving to Sweden to work. Where do you begin?

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People sitting in a business meeting in Sweden. Photo: Imagebank Sweden/ Lieselotte van det Meijs

Do I need a work permit to start working in Sweden?

If you're from an EU/EEA country, you do not need a work permit to work in Sweden.

If you're from a country outside the EU/EEA, you will need work and residence permits in hand before you can start your career in Sweden. You must apply for and be granted a work permit before you can enter Sweden – and you shouldn't quit your job as soon as you submit the online application for a work permit, because the application process can be a lengthy one.

The work permit is secured through proof of employment – a signed contract – and so you must find a job before you submit your work permit application.

If you are already in Sweden and have just completed an advanced degree – master's level or higher – then you may apply for a job-seeking visa, which will allow you to look for a job in Sweden without having to leave the country.

How do IT consultants and other tech workers end up getting jobs in Sweden?

Perhaps the majority of IT workers who come from India to work in Sweden initially come to Sweden as employees for the big Indian and global IT consultancies, such as Infosys, TCS, or Wipro, Accenture, Deloitte, or IBM.

Once they are in Sweden, they then get hired by a local Swedish company to work.

Others come to study for Masters degrees in Sweden at universities such as the KTH Royal Institute of Technology, and then get hired at Swedish university job fairs such as the KTH Armada, or by searching for jobs while in Sweden on an after-studies visa.

Finally, more skilled programmers and other skilled workers are hired directly by Swedish employers either from their home country, or while working in another country in the EU.

So, where do I begin my job search?

LinkedIn is a popular job advertising tool in Sweden. Start by brushing up your profile with a new display picture, updating your previous work experience and your various skills and certifications, and write a short and snappy summary for the top of your profile.

Once your profile is up to date, you can use LinkedIn's job search tool to search through the positions being advertised by employers. The website will show you jobs that match keywords on your profile, but you can also customise search parameters to show you openings in specific cities, companies, or job titles.

Often Swedish employers will search LinkedIn for specific programming skills or experience where it is hard to fine employees in Sweden.

"In current trend, companies reach out to eligible candidates through LinkedIn for niche technology requirements," says Prashant Shukla, an IT consultant from India. "In my experience, Swedish employers aren't actively looking for people from a particular nationality, but for the skills required for the companies or projects."

Sometimes the bigger Swedish companies will actively recruit from countries such as India.

"I found my job in IKEA from India without coming to Sweden and we are actively recruiting in India and for relocation as well," said Rajeev Jain," an IT specialist from India.

Ripudaman Singh, an IT specialist at Cap Gemini based in Sweden, said he had recently heard of major accounting firms such as KPMG and Deloitte hiring people directly in India to work in Sweden.

Are there any governmental job search platforms?

Yes! You can continue your search on Platsbanken, the Swedish Public Employment Service's job search platform. Jobs as system developers and programmers seem to be among the most popularly published ones on the platform, giving you plenty of open positions to browse through. The positions will link you to a job post on the employer's website, where you will submit your application.

And according to a list of the most in-demand workers published in March this year by the Migration Agency, data scientists, IT specialists and IT security specialists, software and system developers, and system product analysts and IT architects are all highly sought after.

Where else can I search for jobs?

You can look at the list of jobs on The Local's jobs section for Sweden, which can be found here.

Jobb.blocket lets you browse through jobs listings across Sweden, and you can narrow your search by job title, location, and contract type (full-time/part-time/project-based).

Jobbland boasts more than 75,000 open job listings for you to search through.

Finally, NyTeknik is the place to search for tech jobs. It is owned by NyTeknik, a Swedish tech newspaper, and lists tech openings from all around Sweden.

Can I apply directly to tech companies?

If you have a dream company in mind, you can head to their website to see if they have any job openings listed. If you don't see any openings and your heart is set on working for x company, you can reach out directly to see if they will accept an open application and keep your information on hand for any future openings.

I'm a student – how do I make sure I graduate with a job?

One great way to get your foot in the door is to complete an internship during your studies. This will give an employer an opportunity to get to know you as a potential employee – and ideally, you'll earn some money during your internship as well.

Another option is to do your master's thesis with a company. Lots of large companies in Sweden partner with universities to have students carry out research on their behalf. Your department should alert you of any such opportunities, otherwise "master thesis project" and "*examensarbete*" are useful search terms for tracking down such opportunities. You will be paid for your research, and you may even have a job offer waiting for you when your programme is completed.

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