Application Guide
for ETH students and doctoral students
Believing that the dots will connect down the road will give you the confidence to follow your heart.
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Introduction
The transition from university to professional life

Your imminent graduation or doctorate and the search for your first “real” job mark the beginning of a new and significant stage in your life.

The transition to professional life is a bit like learning to surf. It is a process you have to go through until you learn to ride the perfect wave or slice through the water with the wind in your sail. First you have to get in touch with your body, sense of balance and strength, and get a feel for the wind and waves. You need to learn about the proper technique and good equipment, and decide what waters are best for you before you can go out and get your feet wet.

If we apply this analogy to your transition to professional life, it means you need to first get in touch with yourself and in tune with the job market before your applications can succeed. Regardless of what the situation on the job market may be, it is important that you gain clarity about what you want and what skills you can bring to your future job. Finally, you need to know the rules and techniques to polish your application materials to perfection and make a persuasive impression in interviews.

This application guide is here to help you to make the most of every situation on the job market and get off to a good start. It provides advice and encouragement on how to assess your current situation and your professional opportunities, and offers plenty of tips on the application process.
How to use this guide

This is a workbook designed to guide you through the four stages of the application process (see graphic to the right):

If you are just beginning to consider your career prospects, we recommend that you start with the chapter entitled Analysis. If you already have an idea of your personal strengths and interests, but find it challenging to identify industry sectors, companies and jobs that could suite you, then we recommend that you focus on the chapter entitled Exploration. If you are already know which industries, companies and fields of activity appeal to you, feel free to dive right into the Focusing and Application chapters.

1 — Analysis: Know yourself.
2 — Exploration: Discover industries, companies and fields of activity.
3 — Focusing: Take the right approach when looking for a job.
4 — Application: Present the best you – in your application documents and in interviews.
The ETH Career Center

Set up in 2010, ETH Zurich’s Career Center consists of a team of dedicated experts with HR, recruiting and coaching experience in various industries. We are well-versed in the labour market, keep up with the latest trends in recruiting, and constantly strive to improve our services to help you be well-prepared for the transition to professional life.

Alongside this guide, the Career Center offers comprehensive services for the four stages of the application process. We provide one-on-one and small-group counselling to ease your transition into the working world. This is backed up by relevant information you gain through opportunities to connect with valuable contacts in person, at special events, and in workshops. To this end, we collaborate closely with other ETH organisations and keep up a spirited dialogue with industry and with the career services of other universities at home and abroad.

More information about our services is to be found at the end of each chapter of this guide and on our website at \[\text{www.careercenter.ethz.ch.}\]

We look forward to helping you make your next big move and wish you every success!

Your ETH Career Center Team
Feedback from students, doctoral students and alumni

“I participated in different ‘soft skills’ seminars, but I never experienced that level of competence, confidence, expertise and care I experienced from the staff during the Career Management Seminar.”

“I really appreciated the time and expertise of the counsellor. For a while the job search was tough and it felt good to get positive feedback and encouragement.”

“Really helpful, fantastic advice!”

“I found this service one of the best that ETH offers. Thank you to the people working there!”

“This career event was exceptional and I had a lot of fun meeting the companies in this setting.”

“Great presenters and well-selected panellists from different companies. I really appreciated the honest answers.”

“Great presenters and well-selected panellists from different companies. I really appreciated the honest answers.”
1 — ANALYSIS

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The three crucial questions

Careful assessment of where you stand is the first step in the application process. It is your launch pad for exploring career options, for focusing on specific sectors and companies, and for the application itself. A rigorous self-analysis will help you focus on organisations and career opportunities that match your personality and abilities. It will also enable you to project competence and confidence when you meet prospective employers.

This assessment is all about you getting a clear picture of your interests, skills, values and needs:

– What is important to me?
– What am I good at?
– What do I need?

On the following pages you will find a variety of questionnaires and exercises that will help you to get to know yourself better. They are meant to encourage you to reflect on and to identify your interests, competencies and values.

Take as much time as you need for this self-analysis. Find a quiet spot, free from distractions, where you can make the most of this exercise.
What is important to me?
My interests

Our lives revolve around our interests – at play and at work. These interests can guide our career choices; they are key motivational factors that influence our job satisfaction. The more we enjoy what we do, the more motivated we will be to engage and excel.

What are your main interests and what motivates you? Take your time answering the following questions to help you identify your interests.
1. What are your main interests? Write down the three topics that immediately come to mind.

2. What were you doing the last time you felt, “this is really interesting”?

3. What do you like to do in your free time?

4. What do you like to read and talk about?

5. What are/were your favourite subjects at university/school?

6. What social issues or problems do you frequently have on your mind?
7. In what activities do you become so deeply absorbed that you lose all track of time?

8. Which successes are you particularly proud of?

9. What kind of people do you prefer to work or share company with?

10. Of all the people in the world, whose job would you like most?

How did it go answering these questions? Was it easy to reflect on yourself like this? Did you perhaps discover something you were not aware of before now?

If you can, discuss your answers with your family or friends and ask them how they see these things.
Another way to explore your interests is to learn more about your preferences. There are **four fundamental preferences** to address:

- **People** – an interest in teaching, counselling, selling, service, etc.
- **Data** – an interest in working with facts, figures, statistics, etc.
- **Things** – an interest in working with plants, machines, buildings, etc.
- **Ideas** – an interest to design, model, invent, etc.

Professions and job functions are usually based on one or a combination of two of these dimensions.

The following questionnaire can help you determine your fundamental preferences.

Source: https://collegecareerlife.net/career-interests
If you scored high in the people section, you may feel comfortable in a service-oriented environment or a people-oriented function, or teamwork may be particularly important to you. You should bear these things in mind when applying for jobs.

If your score for the data section is high, you are likely to prefer a job that involves analysing and applying data to develop new ideas or proposals.

People who like to work outdoors or with animals, plants, tools and materials are interested in things. A high score in this section means that you are likely to feel less comfortable in a job where you sit at a computer all day, working with heavy topics and abstract ideas. A job that involves a lot of hands-on work will probably be most satisfying in this case.
Ideas are becoming increasingly important with advancing technology and globalisation, and they can set us apart from the competition. If you achieved a high score for the ideas section, you will probably feel most comfortable in a creative and innovative environment where you can work on new solutions, for example, pursuing an entrepreneurial venture or discovering and developing new medicines or materials.

When reflecting on these four fundamental preferences, do you have any further interests that are not mentioned above? List them in the box below.

To summarize, review your answers (pages 14 – 18) and note your three main areas of interest.

The three areas that interest me most:

1. 
2. 
3. 

How do you see your areas of interest being part of your job?
World of Work
The “World of Work” map graphically shows how occupations relate to each other based on work tasks and preferences. Use it to explore possible job areas in relation to your interests and preferences.

Source:
http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/multimedia/wwmap/world.html
My values

When we assess ourselves to determine our career options, we tend to focus on identifying skills and qualifications rather than taking enough time to reflect on our core values and how they relate to our skills. If you factor your values into this assessment, this can help you identify the employers and positions that are not only the best match for your skills, but are also the best fit for those deeply held beliefs that motivate you most.

Your values are priorities that guide your decisions in life; they help you put your experiences into perspective and lend them meaning. Your core values are the things that you see as being your mission in life.

The more in line your professional life is with your values, the greater the chances of you finding success and satisfaction in your job. Work situations that run counter to your fundamental values can trigger internal conflicts.
Many men go fishing all of their lives without knowing that it is not fish that they are after.
It is hard to identify your core values without a self-analysis to see where you stand. The following questions are aimed to get you thinking about the values that guide you through the day and matter to you most. Take your time answering these questions and be sure to consider as many aspects of your life as you can.

1. Who do you admire? List three admirable qualities of this person.

2. What did you love to do as a child? Describe this activity (or these activities) and what you liked about it.

3. Call to mind a significant moment in your life; an experience that stood out. What happened at that moment? What values mattered to you most at that time?

4. Call to mind a situation where you were angry, frustrated or sad. What triggered it? Now turn your thoughts in the other direction: What values were being suppressed at that moment?

5. What does success mean to you?
6. At what moments did you feel fulfilled in your life?

7. What three fundamental values would you convey to your children and why?

8. If we lived in a perfect world, how would people behave differently than they do today?

Reading through your answers above, do you detect a pattern? Can you list the fundamental values that guide you through life? There is no need for concern if this exercise seems a bit challenging at first. It may take some time before you can come up with answers and see a pattern. The important thing is that you start becoming aware of your values and putting them into words.

Please note that a job does not have to – and cannot – honour all of our values. We can also express our values outside of work. So think about this: What values does your job have to honour to keep you motivated? And are there any values that you want to express only in your private life and on your own time?

The following exercise serves to help you identify the values that are important to you on the job. Rate these values from 1 to 4, with 1 being “not important” and 4 being “very important”.

ETH Application Guide 2018
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advancement</strong></td>
<td>Be able to get ahead rapidly, gaining opportunities for growth and seniority from work well-done.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adventure / risk-taking</strong></td>
<td>Have duties which involve frequent physical, financial or social risk-taking.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aesthetics</strong></td>
<td>Be involved in studying or appreciating the beauty of things, ideas, etc.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Altruism</strong></td>
<td>Do something to contribute to the betterment of the world or a greater good.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance</strong></td>
<td>Have a job that allows room and time for other passions, leisure, family, etc.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenge</strong></td>
<td>Work with complex questions and on demanding tasks, troubleshooting and problem-solving.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change and variety</strong></td>
<td>Have a wide range of work responsibilities, frequently changing in content, setting, people and/or activities.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competition</strong></td>
<td>Engage in activities that measure my abilities against others.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creativity / innovation</strong></td>
<td>Be able to contribute and work with my creative ideas.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competence</strong></td>
<td>Tasks that allow me to demonstrate a high degree of expertise and mastery of job skills and knowledge.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fast pace / time pressure</strong></td>
<td>Work in circumstances where work is done rapidly and/or there is little room for error.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flexibility</strong></td>
<td>Work according to my own time schedule.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friendships</strong></td>
<td>A good working atmosphere and an environment in which I can build good, personal relationships with people.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fun</strong></td>
<td>Have opportunities to be playful and humorous at work.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harmony / tranquillity</strong></td>
<td>Avoid pressures and stress in job role and work setting, and seek harmonious relationships.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Help others</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be involved in helping or being of service to people, either individually or in groups.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Income / financial reward</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earn a larger than average amount of income.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Independence / autonomy</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be in a position with little direction or instructions from others; few regulations and room to make my own decisions.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Influence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be in a position to influence attitudes or opinions of other people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Make decisions / power</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make decisions regarding courses of action, strategies or the work activities of others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moral / spiritual fulfilment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel that my work is consistent with my ideals or moral code.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal growth</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have work which enables me to grow as a person.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recognition</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get positive feedback and public credit for work well done.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Security</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a stable work environment and reasonable financial reward.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a work routine and job duties that are largely predictable and not likely to change over a long period of time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status / prestige</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain the respect of friends, family and of the community by the nature and/or level of responsibility of my work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teamwork</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have close working relations with my colleagues; work as team towards common goals.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work alone</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do projects largely by myself, with little contact with others.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: University of Denver*
Select the five values that are most important to you. Then prioritise them in order of importance.

My five most important values:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

How would you like to see your top five values expressed in your occupation? What corresponding expectations do you have towards your job and employer?
Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.

ARISTOTLE
What am I good at?

The second step of the analysis is to clarify where your abilities and skills lie. We all tend to take our abilities for granted. Usually we are capable of a lot more than we realise. It is important to know what you are good at when you start applying for jobs. In every application and every job interview, you have to be able to demonstrate your technical and social strengths and know what your weaknesses are.

**Technical skills** are reflected in specialised or applied knowledge. This is the knowledge that you acquired at ETH, at school or in further education programs. It can easily be substantiated with grades and certificates. However, this technical knowledge can very quickly become dated as technology and science make strides. That is why it is important to keep refreshing and expanding this knowledge in pursuit of life-long learning.

Recruiters seeking ideal candidates are looking not only for technical skills, specialised knowledge and research expertise. They are actively searching for a broader skill-set that applicants can bring to the organisation. Examples include the ability to work in a team, leadership and communication skills, and the like.

Many employers think that if you are able to use a skill in one situation, you should be able to use that skill in another job – even if the work appears to be unrelated. These are called **transferable skills**. You acquired these abilities in the course of your life, at play, at home, at work and during your studies or perhaps an internship or other extracurricular activities. And you can transfer them other situations and jobs. You put these skills to daily use.
My technical skills

Technical skills acquired at ETH include, for example, your knowledge in mathematics, physics or chemistry. Other examples of technical skills include a knowledge of processes, methods, manufacturing, materials, business management and norms, and a command of computational tools, databases and simulation software.

Making use of all your school and university certificates, employment references and language qualifications, list all of your technical skills in the following table. Confirmations of internships, vacation jobs and voluntary activities may also substantiate special qualifications.

Drawing up a list of your skills is not only the key to determining where you stand. This also helps you analyse job offers and write your CV (see the chapter Focusing → Job advertisement).
### My technical skills acquired at ETH or other schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University/school</th>
<th>My strongest subject</th>
<th>Subjects that I am/was weaker in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. ETH</td>
<td>e.g. nano systems</td>
<td>e.g. chemical analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### My technical skills gained in internships, part-time jobs, hobbies and other engagements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of internship, jobs, etc.</th>
<th>Technical knowledge that I successfully applied and expanded</th>
<th>Technical knowledge that I found harder to apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. internship at Appway</td>
<td>e.g. using PowerPoint for company presentations</td>
<td>e.g. using C++</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My character strengths

Each of us has certain personality traits that make us unique and enhance our ability to perform various tasks well. Identifying these character strengths before you start looking for a job can help you discover what kind of corporate culture and team you want to work in. The more a corporate and team culture matches your personality and values, the more motivated and engaged you will be.

The questionnaire on the following pages serves to help you identify your character strengths. Take a few minutes to read through it and then rank yourself for each trait on a scale of 1 (I hardly ever exhibit this trait) to 4 (I often exhibit this trait). Then give the list to a friend or family member and ask them to rank you on each trait.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character strengths</th>
<th>Me</th>
<th>Friend</th>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achiever</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambitious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Astute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athletic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authentic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brave</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheerful</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compassionate</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conciliatory</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Considerate</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delicate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Diplomatic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character strengths</th>
<th>Me</th>
<th>Friend</th>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathetic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fastidious</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fault-finding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focused</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forgiving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generous</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Go-getter</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good listener</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hardworking</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealistic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Character strengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Me</th>
<th>Friend</th>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Imaginative
- Independent
- Inspirable
- Interested
- Inventive
- Knowledgeable
- Leader
- Level-headed
- Logical
- Mediating
- Modest
- Nonchalant
- Open
- Organised
- Original
- Outgoing
- Patient
- Political
- Positive
- Practically inclined
- Proactive

### Character strengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Me</th>
<th>Friend</th>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Productive
- Professional
- Quality-conscious
- Rebellious
- Responsible
- Results-oriented
- Self-reliant
- Selfless
- Sensitive
- Sensual
- Sincere
- Skilful
- Social
- Stable
- Strong
- Thoughtful
- Trustworthy
- Understanding
- Warm-hearted
- Well-adjusted
- Well-read
How does your assessment compare to others’ assessment? Do they match? Or are there hidden strengths (e.g. traits where others gave you a higher score than you gave yourself)? Or are there blind spots (e.g. traits where you ranked yourself higher than others did)? List them here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character strengths</th>
<th>Confirmed strengths</th>
<th>Hidden strengths</th>
<th>Blind spots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(My assessment agrees with that of others)</td>
<td>(Others’ assessment was higher than mine)</td>
<td>(My assessment was higher than others’)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NB:**

**Hidden strengths** – Traits where you ranked yourself lower than others did. Perhaps you are unaware of these strengths and therefore less likely to put them to use. You may avoid situations where you could put them to use because you lack confidence in this trait. This can prevent you from reaching your full potential.

**Blind spots** – Traits where you ranked yourself higher than others did. Perhaps you are unaware of certain weaknesses in these areas and therefore tend to play down their importance or avoid opportunities to develop these qualities. Do not be upset if you have blind spots – we all have them! The important thing is that you are aware of them and start looking for opportunities to develop these qualities – especially if they are essential to the job you seek.
As mentioned before, transferable skills are acquired through experiences in and outside the university at campus activities, internships, part-time jobs, sports, etc. These are skills that you can transfer to other situations and jobs. Typical examples include communication, leadership and organisational skills. You may or may or not have work experience, but you surely have more transferable skills than you think.

Listed below are some transferable skills that employers often seek. Take a minute to read through the list and then rank yourself for each ability on a scale of 1 (I hardly ever exhibit this ability) to 4 (I often exhibit this ability). Be as honest with yourself as you can. The goal is not to attain a 4 for every ability. Then give the list to a friend or family member and ask them to evaluate you for each skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transferable skills</th>
<th>Me</th>
<th>Friend</th>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysing and critical thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solving complex problems and managing data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and researching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating and innovating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulating concepts and strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning, organising and coordinating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following instructions and directions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting and adapting to change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping with pressure and setbacks, not giving up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving personal goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial and commercial thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing and making decisions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How does your assessment compare to others’ assessment? Do they match? Or are there hidden strengths (e.g. abilities where others gave you a higher score than you gave yourself)? Or are there blind spots (e.g. abilities where you ranked yourself higher than others did)? List them here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transferable skills</th>
<th>Me</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Me</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Me</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taking action</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Taking responsibility and getting things done</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service-mindedness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading, managing and supervising</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to collaborate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networking and establishing relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persuading and influencing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicating and presenting information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing and reporting</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: SHL competency framework, Future of Jobs Report WEF, Knackonomics
Evidence of my skills

Citing specific examples of where and how you acquired and applied your technical and transferable skills will make your CV more compelling. It will also add credibility to the answers you give to questions during the interview, as prospective employers also want to hear about activities where you acquired, applied and expanded your skills.

To do this, take the list of your identified skills and look for specific examples of situations in which you put them to good use. Make sure you can illustrate each example using the STAR method:

- **Situation:** What was the situation? Describe the example’s context and background.
- **Task:** Describe the task and challenge you faced at the time.
- **Activity:** Explain what you did and how you did it.
- **Results:** Show the outcome, including feedback, benefits, rewards, etc.

### Skill: Coping with pressure and change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Example of how I put it to use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situation:</strong></td>
<td>Starting my internship, I was told that I would be using a computer program I knew well. However, many of my job tasks soon changed when the company was restructured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task:</strong></td>
<td>Now I had to use an unfamiliar computer program, and my supervisor expected me to know what to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity:</strong></td>
<td>I was not going to let this unexpected change throw me off, so I decided to see my supervisor to talk about the new computer program. I told him that I could quickly familiarise myself with it, but I would need time to learn how to use it properly. I got the training I needed very soon after our talk, which made the job less stressful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Results:</strong></td>
<td>I was able to learn the new program very quickly with some practice and extra evening effort. My supervisor let me know he was very pleased: I had told him straightaway what I needed to be successful rather than hiding the fact that I was unfamiliar with the program. He said that he would surely be assigning challenging tasks to me in the future because I had shown the ability to take the initiative and ask for support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill</td>
<td>Example of how I put it to use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Example of how I put it to use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Situation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Example of how I put it to use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Situation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Example of how I put it to use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Situation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do I need?
My needs and expectations

There are a few additional criteria you need to consider before you start looking for a job.

Ideally, the job you want will suit your needs. However, bear in mind that you may need to be a little more flexible with your expectations depending on the situation on the job market.

Further needs and expectations
Do you have specific expectations of your working conditions (e.g. holidays, benefits, workplace equipment, etc.)?

### My mobility and availability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Would you be willing to move for your preferred job?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Would you be willing to travel as part of your job?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What percentage of the time would you be willing to travel?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 – 20 %</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20 – 30 %</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30 – 40 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 50 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 50 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where would you be willing to move or travel to?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zurich area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-western Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mittelland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French-speaking Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German speaking parts of Europe/DACH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-eastern Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Would you like to work full-time or part-time? [Please note that finding a part-time job is not easy.]</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**My mobility and availability**

Would you be willing to work not only during the day, but also at other times (such as evenings)?

- Daytime
- Evenings
- Nights
- Weekends
- Irregular working hours

**Compromises**

What compromises would you make to get your dream job – or any job?

The lists of your interests, skills, values and needs that you drew up in this chapter provide the compass points for the next steps in the application process. Your values have an impact on your selection of potential employers. Alongside your interests and skills, they will flow into your application documents and interviews.

### Summary – my analysis

**My interests**

- •
- •
- •
- •
- •

**My values**

- •
- •
- •

**My needs and expectations**

- •
- •
- •
- •
- •

---

### Summary – my analysis

**My strongest technical skills...**

- •
- •
- •
- •

**... and where I have demonstrated them**

- •
- •
- •

**My strongest transferable skills...**

- •
- •
- •

**... and where I have demonstrated them**

- •
- •
- •
Tips: Analysis

- Compare the results of the analysis with your personal development: Pay special attention to your strengths and try to maintain and build on them. Determine how relevant the identified weak spots are and if they need to be improved.
- Take every opportunity to explore, try out and apply your interests, skills and values. Talking to colleagues, taking part in clubs, and analysing potential are great ways to do this.
- Bear the results of your analysis in mind throughout the application process. Before each application, remind yourself of what is important to you, what you are good at, and what you need.

ETH Career Center Service: Analysis

- Individual counselling to determine your interests, skills and values
- Resource library with books, magazines and brochures covering all aspects of applying for a job
- Career Management Seminar for doctoral students

Information
www.careercenter.ethz.ch – for students and doctoral students
You cannot discover new oceans unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore.
2 — EXPLORATION

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  Companies and potential employers 52
  Fields of activity 54

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  Real-world examples 57

Entry-level positions 94

Networking 96
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  ETH networks on LinkedIn 107

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My job market

Exploration is all about getting a good picture of your career options. There are so many different career paths to choose from – more than many ETH graduates realise.

Before you apply to a company or an institution, you should have a clear idea about the sector you want to work in, the companies in the various sectors, and the type of activity you wish to pursue. That means you need to explore “your” job market. Your interests (see the chapter entitled *Analysis → My interests*), fields of study, and the topic of your bachelor’s or master’s thesis should steer you in the right general direction.

But there are many other channels that can help you get a clearer picture of your career options. Check out career events at the ETH, company trade fairs, business associations, industry networks, personal contacts, and professional online networks (see also the *Exploration → Networking* section in this chapter).
Perhaps your interests or an internship experience have planted the seed of an idea in your mind about the sectors that appeal to you most. You can learn more about prospective companies acting in those sectors through industry associations and then explore potential fields of activity in these companies via their websites and LinkedIn.

Perhaps you already have some wishes or ideas about what you want to do and what the job should do for you, but have yet to find companies and sectors that offer these opportunities. In that case, try reversing the order of your exploration. Search for desired fields of activity on Xing or LinkedIn using keywords, find profiles of people at specific companies, and then look at their jobs to learn more about the sectors.

So you can start identifying your potential job market either by exploring sectors first (top-down), or by exploring fields of activity first (bottom-up) – it works both ways. The important thing is to start exploring!
Overview of industry sectors

The following tables provide an overview of private sector industries and public institutions usually looking for ETH graduates.

Mark and prioritize the sectors that interest you most.

**NB:**
The following list provides a detailed but not exhaustive overview. The procedure described in the opening paragraphs of this chapter is one way of identifying other sectors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public institutions and non-profit companies (examples)</th>
<th>1st priority</th>
<th>2nd priority</th>
<th>3rd priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural advisory service</td>
<td>■</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associations</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Development cooperation / NGOs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government and public administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power companies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public transport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research institutes</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools, technical colleges and universities</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private-sector industries (examples)</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; priority</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; priority</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; priority</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerospace</td>
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<td>■</td>
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<tr>
<td>Architectural services</td>
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<td>Automotive</td>
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<td>Banking, finance, insurance</td>
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<td>Biomechanics, biotechnology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biomedical industry</td>
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<td>Chemical and process engineering</td>
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<td>Computer and information sciences</td>
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<td>Construction</td>
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<td>Consumer goods</td>
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<td>Drive and control technology</td>
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<td>Electronics and consumer electronics</td>
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<td>Engineering, planning and surveying</td>
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<td>Extractive industry</td>
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<td>Fertilizer, feed, and crop protection industry</td>
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<th>Private-sector industries (examples)</th>
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<td>Food industry</td>
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<td>Healthcare</td>
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<td>Machine engineering</td>
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<td>Media, journalism</td>
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<td>Medical technology</td>
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<td>Metalworking</td>
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<td>Packaging industry</td>
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<td>Pharmaceuticals</td>
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<td>Plant engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power generation, transmission and distribution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Production and automation engineering</td>
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<td>Semiconductor, micro and nanotechnology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports, fitness, wellness</td>
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<td>Telecommunications</td>
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<td>Textiles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watch-making</td>
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Companies and potential employers

As a next step, you need to consider what is important to you in a future employer. You have already taken the first step by analysing your values and needs.

The following table lists additional criteria that may also matter to you when choosing an employer.

Consider each of these qualities and determine if it is important to you in a future employer and job. Rate them from 1 to 4, with 1 being “not important” and 4 being “very important”. Are there other points you need to consider?

This list of your requirements will be useful later, especially when you are assessing different job advertisements or even job offers. Use it as a tool to decide which jobs best meet your requirements or even to help you prepare for job interviews (see chapter Application → Interview).
### What is important to me in an employer?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em><em>Size (large corporation, SME, startups, ETH spinoff</em>)</em>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>National or multinational operation</td>
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<td>Business offering (products, services)</td>
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<td>Stability (financial situation, competition)</td>
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<td>Organizational structure (flat, hierarchical)</td>
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<td>Corporate culture (dynamic, traditional, conservative)</td>
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<td>People development (entry-level positions, training programs, career prospects)</td>
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<td>Location</td>
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<td>Work/family life balance</td>
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<td>Job security</td>
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<td>Pay package (salary, fringe benefits)</td>
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<td>Flexible working hours</td>
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<td>Other criteria:</td>
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<td>Other criteria:</td>
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### Tips: Exploration

**Where can I learn more about potential employers?**

- Company websites (annual reports, organizational charts, press releases, career pages)
- Chambers of commerce and industry and other professional associations
- Business sections of daily and weekly newspapers and trade magazines (information about company and management)
- Other online sources such as Xing or LinkedIn and employer rating platforms such as Kununu and Glassdoor
- Conversations with people in your extended network
- Career events (see chapter *Exploration → Networking*)

*ETH startups and spinoffs can also be a great career gateway for graduates. The tips in this application guide apply to these companies as well.*
Fields of activity

Now that you have a better picture of the sectors and potential employers that interest you, you can start thinking about what kind of job you would like to find there. When you choose a specific line of work, you are setting an initial course for your future career. That decision has to work for you now. However, the option of changing directions will still be open to you later.

The table on the next pages gives you a big-picture look at potential fields of activity or jobs. Checkmark and prioritize the options that interest you most.

If these fields of activity seem vague to you, or if you don’t know what lies behind them, the following sources can help you learn more about them as well as about specific job descriptions:
The ETH website lists fields of activities for all study programs (in German only: ETH Zürich/Studium/Bachelor/Studienangebot/Studiengang/Berufswelt). Some study programs discuss specific job profiles in their brochures.

Some ETH departments provide brochures with specific job profiles in PDF format. Available online, they can be found using the following search terms:

- D-BAUG: Bauingenieur, Bauingenieurin, Der Beruf
- D-MAVT: Berufe für kreative Köpfe, Maschineningenieure haben Zukunft
- D-PHYS: Job-Universum Physik, Einblicke in die Vielfalt der Berufsmöglichkeiten
- D-ERDW: Perspektiven, Berufe in Erdwissenschaften
- D-USYS: Perspektiven, Berufe in Umwelt-naturwissenschaften
- D-HEST: Range of Motion, Berufsfelder der Bewegungswissenschaften

The Schweizerische Dienstleistungszentrum für Berufsbildung, Berufs-, Studien- und Laufbahnberatung has posted fields of activities for all kinds of study programs on its website at www.berufsberatung.ch (professions/career opportunities after university studies).

You can also find fields of activities that interest you on Xing and LinkedIn and via job ad searches in online job portals using general key words such as “physics” or “environment”.

ETH alumni are also good sources of first-hand information on jobs. Take advantage of opportunities to talk to them about their current activities or careers by reaching out to them at ETH Career Center and ETH Alumni events and via private channels.
### Fields of activity (examples)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fields of activity</th>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; priority</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; priority</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; priority</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accounting and controlling</td>
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<td>Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compliance, legal, corporate affairs</td>
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<td>Consulting, planning and strategy</td>
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<td>Customer service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
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<td>Human resources, training</td>
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<td>Information technology and software</td>
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<td>Infrastructure and real estate</td>
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<td>Logistics and transport</td>
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<td>Management</td>
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<td>Manufacturing and commissioning</td>
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<td>Marketing and communication</td>
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<td>Media and design</td>
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<td>Process management</td>
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<td>Project management</td>
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### Fields of activity (examples)

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<tr>
<td>Purchasing and procurement</td>
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<td>Quality assurance</td>
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<td>Research and development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sales, distribution and account management</td>
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<td>Other fields of activity</td>
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<td>Other fields of activity</td>
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**NB:**
This list provides a broad but not exhaustive overview of potential fields of activity.
Job profiles
Real-world examples

In this next section of the ETH Application Guide you can read about various and diverse jobs that former ETH students are now performing. Explore them to get a better idea of different job profiles and potential employers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABB</th>
<th>Oerlikon</th>
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<tr>
<td>Axpo</td>
<td>Pakka</td>
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<td>BCG</td>
<td>PwC</td>
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<td>cinfo</td>
<td>Roche</td>
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<td>Federal Administration</td>
<td>SBB</td>
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<td>Helbling Technik</td>
<td>Sensirion</td>
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<td>Losinger Marazzi</td>
<td>Siemens</td>
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<td>McKinsey</td>
<td>Swisscom</td>
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<td>Novartis</td>
<td>Tiefbauamt Zürich</td>
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</table>
Jasmin Bernasconi, 31  
MSc ETH in Management, Technology and Economics  
Product Manager Service Agreements at ABB

How did you find your job?  
Due to the Femtec program, an international career building program for women in engineering, I was able to make contact with companies such as ABB. On the company day “Femtec.Network meets”, ABB convinced me as a modern company and I decided to apply for the trainee program. My current position I got thanks to the contacts from the trainee program.

What influenced your decision to join ABB?  
I have always known that I would like to work for an international company. ABB offers a lot of exciting jobs and supports its employees in their personal development. As a global player, ABB gives you the opportunity to go abroad and collaborate with international colleagues.

What does a typical working day at ABB look like?  
In the After-Sales department of the division Industrial Automation I am responsible for the portfolio management of our maintenance contracts. This includes, for example, the setting up of new service contract types with subsequent global implementation and handover to the sales department. My job is really diverse. I am in constant contact with customers and internal stakeholders.

What in particular do you like about your job at ABB?  
From the beginning I felt very supported and could directly take on responsibility. I was fully integrated into my team and had the opportunity to work with people from different departments and countries. This was very exciting and helped me to build up a huge network.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?  
Think about the environment in which you would like to work. ETH offers so many opportunities to get to know companies – use them. Go well prepared to career fairs, ask company representatives specific questions and do not forget to write down their names and phone numbers.
Achievement begins with you.

Get to know more about Jasmin, Manager Service Agreements, and her career here: you.abb.ch
Philipp Lütolf, 27  
MSc ETH in Information Technology and Electrical Engineering  
Trainee at Axpo

Wie haben Sie Ihre Stelle gefunden?  

Warum haben Sie sich für Axpo entschieden?  

Was schätzen Sie besonders an Ihrer Tätigkeit bei Axpo?  

Was empfehlen Sie Studierenden für ihren Karriereeinstieg?  

Wie sieht Ihr Arbeitsalltag bei Axpo aus?  

60 ETH Application Guide 2018
Schon heute stellt Axpo die Weichen für die Stromversorgung von morgen. Denn wir arbeiten stetig daran, noch bessere Produkte und Dienstleistungen für unsere Kunden zu entwickeln. Zu einer erfolgreichen Gestaltung der Energiezukunft gehören für uns Investitionen in die Forschung ebenso wie der Ausbau neuer Technologien und die Förderung unserer Mitarbeiter. Erfahren Sie, was Innovation noch für uns bedeutet: www.axpo.com
Lorenz Kunze, 28  
MSc ETH in Management, Technology and Economics  
Project Leader at The Boston Consulting Group

**How did you find your job?**  
I first got in touch with BCG during a recruiting workshop in Lisbon. We simulated a real BCG telecommunications project. During these three days I was able to learn a lot and realized how important a great team and an enjoyable work environment are to me. Afterwards I did an internship that ended with an offer for a full-time position.

**What influenced your decision to join BCG?**  
Two things were key to my decision: being given the best-possible development opportunities, including individual trainings, personal mentoring, or the option to get insights into various industries. Second, I wanted to work with a young and motivated team that shares the same values and goals.

**What does a typical working day at BCG look like?**  
No two days are the same. We support leading companies with solving their toughest challenges. So far I have had the chance to work for clients from the health-care or automobile sector and for software developers. As we develop solutions together with the client, the focus is on the people. Communication and interaction are therefore as important to our work as the strategic conceptional aspect.

**What in particular do you like about your job at BCG?**  
Having the opportunity to meet inspiring personalities (at clients and within BCG), to get insights into diverse industries, and to solve complex challenges in projects all over the world. And experiencing all of this together within a great team that constantly supports and motivates each other.

**What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?**  
At the end of your studies, there are a lot possibilities. I can only encourage everyone to look into as many directions as possible at an early stage. Workshops and internships are an ideal opportunity to find out more about your own priorities and different company cultures.
Take this opportunity to fast track your way to a successful career with us. Join our team as a Visiting Associate and experience management consulting at its best. Work alongside and be coached by diverse and ambitious team members, while you gain experience on a real client case. Curious?

WWW.BCG.CH/INTERNSHIPS
Beat Geiser, 57  
Dipl. Forstingenieur ETH  
Consultant and Trainer in International Cooperation

Wie haben Sie Ihre Stelle gefunden?  

Warum haben Sie sich für cinfo entschieden?  

Wie sieht Ihr Arbeitsalltag bei cinfo aus?  
Berater und Trainer bei cinfo heisst Berufssleute, die in der IZA arbeiten oder den Einstieg suchen, beraten und coachen bezüglich ihrer Laufbahn und anderen Themen, Workshops zu verschiedenen Themen zu moderieren und diesen spezifischen Arbeitsmarkt zu beobachten.

Was schätzen Sie besonders an Ihrer Tätigkeit bei cinfo?  
Es war noch nie langweilig. Ich bin in viele andere Tätigkeiten involviert, wie z.B. Veranstaltungen und Rekrutierungsaufräge. Ich schätze auch die Autonomie und die Stimmung im Team. Der Weiterentwicklung der Mitarbeitenden wird viel Beachtung geschenkt.

Was empfehlen Sie Studierenden für ihren Karriereeinstieg?  
Suche in deinen ersten Stellen Lernerfahrungen und nicht die kleine Version deines Fernzieles. Mit der Zeit wirst du selbst spüren, ob du nahe bei deinem Fach bleiben willst, oder ob dir andere Aufgaben und Themen genau so gut oder besser liegen. Für die IZA: Suche ein Maximum an Auslandserfahrung, bleibe offen für Neues und pflege ein Netzwerk von Kontakten. Nutze, was cinfo an Information, Beratung und anderen Dienstleistungen anbietet.
All you need for your career in international cooperation

Jobs portal & job application support
Find jobs with NGOs, the UN, international financial institutions (IFIs), the Swiss government, etc. We prepare you for your application and job interview.

Field-relevant training
Our courses help you develop competencies in leadership, remote management and cross-cultural communication.

Information & networking events
Meet and exchange with employers, training institutions and experts (e.g. Forum cinfo, events with UN or IFIs).

Peace promotion and human security

Economic cooperation and development

Counselling & career orientation
We help you address, deal with and resolve complex or challenging work situations. We support you in achieving specific career goals – at all stages of your professional life.

Connect with us
www.cinfo.ch
Dr. Orlando Mani, 38  
MSc ETH in Biology  
Toxicologist, risk evaluation of chemicals at the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH)

How did you find your job?  
Via the ETH platform Telejob.

What influenced your decision to join the FOPH?  
After my Doctorate I worked at the university for five years as a postdoc in research. After that I had to decide if I wanted to pursue an academic career, a career in industry or in the administration. When I saw the advertisement for my current position I immediately knew that this job matched my experiences. It sounded diversified, interesting and offered continuing education and great working conditions.

What does a typical working day at the FOPH look like?  
My main task is the safety evaluation of everyday chemicals. Our team answers inquiries about the safety of chemicals and provides information material to the population. At the FOPH we edit parliamentary proposals or furnish scientific reports. Moreover we initiate and support research projects and operate in international committees, therefore we travel frequently.

What in particular do you like about your job at the FOPH?  
Besides scientific topics and technical tasks I get an insight into the world of law and politics. That way I can exploit my potential in a versatile manner. I also find the participation in international discussions interesting. As a federal employee I work for the common good, which in turn makes me feel good.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?  
Scientists should deal with the question of pursuing a university career or not as early as possible and they should make a decision at the latest after the first five years as a postdoc. If you want to work in industry you should join right after the Master’s degree because later it will be more difficult to gain a foothold. Entering the federal administration is possible anytime if a suitable position is available. Note that you have to master two national languages if you want to work for the federal administration.
Nathanael Wettstein, 31  
MSc ETH in Robotics, Systems and Control  
Data Analyst and Systems Engineer at Helbling Technik AG

How did you find your job?
I came across a job advertisement from Helbling Technik Berne which I liked very much. I didn’t want to go to Berne, so I applied to Helbling Technik Wil on my own initiative.

What influenced your decision to join Helbling Technik AG?
I was able to choose between a young company in Technopark and Helbling Technik AG. I chose Helbling because I was sure to experience more variety in different industries and projects.

What does a typical working day at Helbling Technik AG look like?
I work with modern tools (currently python/pandas) and procure new ones if they are not yet available in the company. In each project there are new roles (e. g. system design, software development, data analysis). Project teams are between 2 and 20 people, projects last 3 weeks to 3 years.

What in particular do you like about your job at Helbling Technik AG?
Every day is different. We work quickly, very systematically and always as a team. I particularly appreciate how initiative is rewarded and promoted. For a good idea I get free space (design, time, money) and so I can push internal projects forward.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?
Talk to a lot of people. With ETH graduates, start-up founders, aunts and professors. Ask them what they value about their job and what is bugging them. And if they would take the same job again. Look beyond the horizon. Do internships and temporary jobs, e. g. as an H&M helper, as a cleaner, on the construction site, in Japan.
Success through innovation: Our path for your career.

As a competent innovation partner, we are always there to give customers our full support. We take a good hard look at the challenges and let our visionary thinking carry us far beyond the usual ready-made solutions. With state-of-the-art technical expertise, realistic creativity and the right sensitivity, we show our customers new ways to achieve competitive advantage and gain market share. For many years now leading companies from a broad variety of industries have entrusted us with major innovation projects. That's why our team is constantly growing.

Would you like to be a part of this exciting effort? We look forward to receiving your application soon. www.helbling.ch/htk/jobs
Yasmine Zemp, 33
MSc ETH in Architecture
Architect at Losinger Marazzi

Wie haben Sie Ihre Stelle gefunden?

Warum haben Sie sich für Losinger Marazzi entschieden?

Wie sieht Ihr Arbeitsalltag bei Losinger Marazzi aus?

Was schätzen Sie besonders an Ihrer Tätigkeit bei Losinger Marazzi?
In meiner Tätigkeit schätze ich besonders, dass ich neben einem Bauprojekt auch das Spitalwesen kennenlernen darf. So stehe ich beispielsweise mit Nutzern, der Spitalleitung, Fachplanern, Subunternehmern oder auch internen Mitarbeitenden in Verbindung, was mir einen abwechslungsreichen und vielfältigen Arbeitsalltag gestaltet.

Was empfehlen Sie Studierenden für ihren Karriereeinstieg?
Seid stets neugierig und offen für Neues. Traut euch, etwas zu wagen!
Formen wir die Zukunft
Gemeinsam Neues entwickeln


losinger-marazzi.ch
Alessa Perotti, 23  
MSc ETH in Food Science  
Fellow Analyst at McKinsey & Company

**How did you find your job?**  
It was at Polymesse that I first heard about consulting as a career track. After talking to a couple of consultants and hearing about their diverse work experiences, I participated in a multi-day McKinsey workshop for students from a non-business background, called DIVE. This experience convinced me to apply for an internship. Here I had the opportunity to travel to China as part of a study on the circular economy, which was a great experience and inspired me to join McKinsey full-time.

**What influenced your decision to join McKinsey?**  
I’m passionate about being able to work internationally! I also love broadening my horizons and working across different industries, and McKinsey is a fantastic place to learn from a huge network of globally respected experts. Last but not least, the people that I have met along my journey have been great.

**What does a typical working day at McKinsey look like?**  
It really depends on the project. On a typical project, the team, consisting of around 3–4 consultants, is at the client site from Monday to Thursday, while on Fridays we are usually in the office. The day-to-day involves everything from interviewing clients and building Excel models to observing client processes and doing team problem-solving sessions (group discussions about challenging situations and ways to move forward).

**What in particular do you like about your job at McKinsey?**  
I really love the diversity of the projects and the insights that are uncovered. The people at McKinsey are great and I have been able to grow so much in such a short period of time – both personally and professionally. I have also been impressed to see how even the most junior team members are crucial to the team’s output.

**What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?**  
My advice to you is to come and participate in company events! Talk to people and be open to the different opportunities. McKinsey is a fantastic place to start your career – come and meet us.
Don’t just come to work. Come to change.

There isn’t a more exciting time than right now to put your talents to work – or a better place to take on interesting projects that will make a difference.

www.mckinsey.ch
Claudio Thoma, 38
Dr. sc. ETH in Cell/Cellular and Molecular Biology
Laboratory Head at Novartis Institute of Biomedical Research (NIBR)

How did you find your job?
A friend from my PostDoc network in Boston drew my attention to the job posting on the Novartis Careers website.

What influenced your decision to join Novartis?
Novartis has a strong focus on research with the Novartis Institute of Biomedical Research (NIBR). The strong patient focus and size of NIBR provide an optimal environment for researchers to contribute to impactful drug discovery projects for medicines that help patients.

What does a typical working day at Novartis look like?
I am running a lab with three scientists, a postdoc and master student. With the lab I am involved in oncology drug discovery teams and global initiatives, where I represent the lab’s expertise to contribute to drug discovery together with other lab head colleagues. A typical Novartis working day for me is a mixture of discussing and planning experiments with my lab members as well as meeting colleagues to share results and discussing strategies for drug discovery.

What in particular do you like about your job at Novartis?
Novartis is one of the best places to do patient-centric cutting-edge science. Being part of a high-performing team and collaboratively reach ambitious goals is most rewarding. Scientifically there are almost no limits within NIBR, for every unconventional innovative idea there is someone to discuss as well as expertise for any aspect in the drug discovery process. Navigating and collaborating as well as celebrating success within this matrix is to me one of the best parts and advantages of doing research at Novartis.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?
Always be aware that there are other people around you following the same path and having similar skills, being a great collaborator and team player and acknowledging the others contribution will pay off on the long run.
Changing the practice of medicine

At Novartis, we harness the innovation power of science to address some of society’s most challenging healthcare issues. We are passionate about discovering new ways to improve and extend people’s lives.
How did you find your job?
After completing my MSc at ETH Zurich in 2007, I applied to Oerlikon Metco in Wohlen AG, where there was an open position for a Project Manager in the Coating Solution Center, which also provided the opportunity to become a Surface Technology Expert in Thermal Spray. I jumped at the offer!

What influenced your decision to join Oerlikon Metco?
The broad array of industries that Metco serves (aviation, power generation, auto, medical, etc) really convinced me that Metco was my chance to be active in more than a single industry field. I was able to become an expert in specialized surface technologies. Of course, added benefits was having a job close to home and friends in Zurich and the salary was attractive.

What does a typical working day at Oerlikon Metco look like?
I often find myself on the shop floor of the Spray Department, working with the spray process operators, even going fully “hands-on” myself to coat parts in the spray systems. Today, I’m a team leader, which means more managing people and processes and less “shop floor time”.

What in particular do you like about your job at Oerlikon Metco?
One of the most interesting things about my job is traveling to “far-away places”. I stay closely connected with a very diverse group of people – including our sales team and, of course, our customers. It really feels like being a part of an international family!

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?
Always be open to the unexpected and don’t worry about stepping outside your “comfort zone” because what you may find can surprise and delight you.
Every day, we are getting smarter in how we use resources. Think of the objects that surround us: cars, airplanes, computers – they are continuously improving their performance while consuming less and less. A key driver behind this is the development of better materials and of new ways to make them into objects and give them purpose.

This is what Oerlikon does. We engineer and process materials to give surfaces better functions. By doing so, we help planes or cars use less fuel, tools last longer, or our body accept implants better. In short, our technology lets products do things they simply couldn’t do before.

Oerlikon is a market leader in advanced material and surface solutions, with the broadest technology portfolio, the widest global reach and trusted customer relations in key industries such as aerospace, automotive, energy, tooling or medical. Every day, we are working on new alloys, new coating technologies, or new component manufacturing solutions to meet tomorrow’s expectations.
Balz Strasser, 44
MSc ETH in Agricultural Science
Managing Director, Co-Founder at Pakka AG

How did you find your job?
After my studies at ETH, and a PhD at the University of Zurich, I worked for an NGO. During my evenings and the weekend I was however busy trading fairtrade and organic cashew nuts from India. After some time I had to take the decision to quit the NGO work and start my own company. Together with my business partner Ueli Baruffol we founded Pakka AG, and thus created our own jobs.

What influenced your decision to join Pakka?
I was simply overwhelmed by the idea to promote sustainable trade with countries in the global South through an entrepreneurial approach. However, to do this besides a full time employment was not realistic on the long term. But it took some time to decide to quit my secure job, and start my own venture.

What does a typical working day at Pakka look like?
The daily job of a founder is extremely diverse, decisions need to be taken in all areas, from purchase to quality management, branding, marketing, sales, HR, and many more. Regular travels to visit our farmers in the South were also part of the job. After some years we needed funds so we had to start interesting negotiations with investors.

What in particular do you like about your job at Pakka?
The entrepreneurial freedom is unique, you can (and have to) take decisions about all business aspects. I appreciated the learning-on-the-job, but it was also challenging, and sometimes really hard. The promotion of fairer trade with organic food products presented however a unique opportunity to change the world our own way, this gave us a lot of satisfaction. We knew every single day why we were working.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?
It is important to have some long-term career goals in your mind, but the way to achieve those is often very different than you may think. During the first years after the studies it is important to gather job experiences, it is the best time to work in different fields and companies according to your wishes. A country like Switzerland offers great opportunities for starting a career.
Mit einer nachhaltigen Wertschöpfungskette von Bio und Fairtrade Nüssen sorgen wir für Impact im Ursprung.

www.pakka.ch
Anastasia Gavrilova, 27  
MSc ETH in Mathematics  
Consultant Data & Analytics at PwC Switzerland

How did you find your job?  
Through a classical job application portal. The idea to apply at PwC came from my visit at their corner at the Long Night of the Career at the ETH Zurich. In the meantime I am working in the same team with the colleague who encouraged me to apply!

What made you choose PwC?  
Coming straight from ETH without any work experience, I was curious about any possibilities the job market had to offer. I chose PwC because I knew it would allow me to broaden my horizons by being able to gather experiences in very different projects. I also loved the easy-going atmosphere and the overall flexibility concerning working conditions.

What does a typical working day at PwC look like?  
I used to work mostly on innovation projects during my first year, comparable to research work at a university. My day was structured very freely, due to the flexibility of the annual working time. I presented my ideas to clients or during internal meetings. Despite working mostly on my own, I still kept in close contact with my colleagues discussing ideas and further steps or asking them for help whenever I got stuck. Later I was assigned to a data management project at an international client in Basel. This allowed me to connect with people all over the world and as well get to know the classical consulting business. The dynamic way of working with many internal and external meetings is quite different from the work at innovation projects, and a good collaboration within the team is crucial for success.

What do you particularly like about your work at PwC?  
The ability to work independently but still be professionally guided. I love that my team is a small family within a big company, everyone is willing to help out and also to share any experiences unrelated to work. We have a great deal of fun!

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?  
Be open to new experiences. Being willing and eager to learn is the key to professional success!
Are you passionate and ready to shape the future?

Then you’ve got what it takes to reimagine the possible.

Apply now at www.pwc.ch/careers
Georges Hankov, 29  
Dr. sc. ETH in Information Technology and Electrical Engineering  
Business Development Associate at Roche

**How did you find your job?**
While I was doing my Ph.D. at ETH, I was involved in a collaboration project with Roche. I used this opportunity to learn what others were doing within Roche and to expand my network. During these interactions, I sought people’s advice on career paths and told them about my interests. One day, one of them came back to me and said: “Georges, a position just opened up in my group. I think it might be something for you”. Then the interview process started.

**What influenced your decision to join Roche?**
I think the healthcare industry is a fascinating place to be, as you make a contribution to improving peoples’ lives – and that is a unique driver. Why Roche? Because of its reputation of being an innovation-driven company and having a family business culture where all members are valued, respected and developed according to their aspirations.

**What does a typical working day at Roche look like?**
My job involves assessing the scientific value of external innovation, so my typical working day includes a lot of interactions with potential partners and various meetings with internal experts to discuss the science behind their assets. Next to that, I try to keep educating myself through numerous symposia organised internally.

**What in particular do you like about your job at Roche?**
What I really like about my job is the daily interactions with very smart and passionate people, the fact that you need to stay aware of the latest scientific innovations and the patient centricity. Often patients are invited to come and talk about their disease, which is incredibly motivating for us.

**What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?**
Start getting industry insights early enough by means of internships (e.g. the Roche Internship for Scientific Exchange program)! Attend career events like the Zurich Life Science Day! Talk and connect with people; get to know them and what they do! Share your interests with them and then seize the opportunity when it arises!
Change the future.
Push boundaries.

10.4 billion Swiss francs in core research and development expenditure in 2017 makes Roche one of the most research focused companies worldwide.

Our 120 year heritage and a stable shareholder structure ensure a long-term view and a strong commitment to finding new medicines and diagnostics that help patients live longer, better lives and evolve the practice of medicine.

You are a student or a Phd with interest in an internship or a postdoctoral position? Roche can be the perfect place to find out how your discipline looks in action. Interesting projects are taking place throughout the entire company.

Bring along your ideas and your ability to research, develop, plan and organise.

The next step is yours.
careers.roche.ch
Emanuel Thoma, 29
MSc ETH in Energy Science and Technology
Technical Trainee at SBB

Wie haben Sie Ihre Stelle gefunden?
Das Traineeprogramm war für mich der optimale Berufseinstieg. Ich konnte mir dort spannende Aufgaben ausuchen, wertvolle Bekanntschaften knüpfen, mich intensiv weiterbilden und viel Praxiserfahrung sammeln. Zudem ermöglichte es mir, verschiedene Bereiche der SBB kennenzulernen und eine Stelle zu finden, die perfekt zu mir passt.

Warum haben Sie sich für die SBB entschieden?
Die SBB zeichnet sich durch eine hohe Vielseitigkeit aus. Hier kommen sehr viele technische Disziplinen zusammen. Materialwissenschaften, Maschinenbau, Elektrotechnik, Informatik und Pneumatik müssen perfekt harmonieren, damit das komplexe Bahnsystem funktioniert.

Wie sieht Ihr Arbeitsalltag bei der SBB aus?

Was schätzen Sie besonders an Ihrer Tätigkeit bei der SBB?
Bei der SBB herrscht unter den Kollegen eine enorme Hilfsbereitschaft, gegenseitige Unterstützung und Wertschätzung. In diesem Arbeitsumfeld zu arbeiten ist sehr angenehm.

Was empfehlen Sie Studierenden für ihren Karriereeinstieg?
Ich empfehle Studierenden, sich gleichzeitig auf 3 bis 5 Stellen zu bewerben. So sind Absagen weniger enttäuschend und man kommt zeitlich nicht in Bedrängnis. Absolventen, die sich noch nicht sicher sind, in welchem Bereich sie später arbeiten wollen, empfehle ich ein Traineeprogramm, um sich richtig zu orientieren.
Stelle jetzt deine Weichen.

Und fahre mit uns in die Zukunft.
sbb.ch/einstieg
Berkan Gülenaltin, 32  
MSc ETH in Electrical Engineering and Information Technology  
Key Account Manager at Sensirion

How did you find your job?  
Sensirion is a name that came up a lot on lecture slides when I was studying at ETH. A number of friends also told me good things about Sensirion. So I looked for suitable positions via the homepage and have luckily ended up at one of the best employers in Switzerland.

What influenced your decision to join Sensirion?  
Sensirion offers me the opportunity to combine my technical background with customer contact in an exciting atmosphere. Sensirion has an excellent image, takes its company culture seriously and works together to achieve top-quality innovations every day. It’s right up my alley!

What does a typical working day at Sensirion look like?  
A large part of my work comprises customer discussions, exchanging ideas and working on projects together with R&D, as well as market research and the corresponding project management between interdisciplinary groups in-house and stakeholders outside of the company. In sum, I can honestly say my day-to-day work life is full of variety.

What in particular do you like about your job at Sensirion?  
I appreciate being able to implement demanding projects with big customers from across the world, thereby having a measurable impact on Sensirion’s success and strategy. I also think it’s great that I get to travel a lot and meet customers, while also having an interdisciplinary relationship with our R&D departments and thus maintaining my technical knowledge.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?  
I recommend that anyone who wants to get their foot in the door in sales start directly in key account management. Students that have excellent communication skills, like to travel and be around people, and who want to have an impact on a product’s long-term success on the market are a good fit for sales.
„Become Part of the Sensirion Story.” Want to tackle new challenges? Then technical sales at Sensirion is the right area for you. Internationality, top performance, trends and new technologies – technical sales at Sensirion is versatile, offering an international, creative and interdisciplinary working environment.

At Sensirion, you will work on the innovations of tomorrow. You will take part in crazy projects, drive new ideas and make a big difference to the world together with your team. Continue writing your success story with us and take on responsibility in international customer projects.

„Innovation and unique ideas are very important at Sensirion.”

Alfredo Soto,
Key Account Manager

www.sensirion.com/technical-sales
Sarah Preiswerk, 30  
MSc ETH in Management, Technology and Economy  
Product Manager Fire Safety at Siemens

How did you find your job?  
I submitted an application via the Siemens job portal (www.siemens.ch/jobs). Thanks to the job alert I set up I was regularly made aware of vacancies in my field. I had already met some Siemens staff in my field at a careers fair beforehand.

What influenced your decision to join Siemens?  
It was clear to me that I wanted to join a global player, so Siemens – as an internationally positioned technology group – was an extremely attractive prospect. Furthermore, the opportunity to start directly as a Junior Product Manager was ideal. In addition to its professional relevance, I was also won over by the corporate culture: I was able to take on responsibility from the very beginning, and I still feel supported in my further training and development.

What does a typical working day at Siemens look like?  
Above all, my work is varied: my job includes analysing the market, devising strategies to optimise my portfolio, and then coordinating the development process. I also oversee “my” products throughout their entire life cycle. This means that I am in regular contact with internal colleagues from various divisions and customers from all over the world, as well as out and about at trade fairs.

What in particular do you like about your job at Siemens?  
In this interface role and as a member of headquarters staff, I am able to exchange ideas with numerous skilled and experienced employees from a wide variety of backgrounds. I also value the opportunities for networking (for example within the Women’s Network) and the flexible working models.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?  
Think about where you would like to work, and then talk to people already working there – whether at a trade fair or in your personal life. You should also be open to unknown employers. And above all, ask yourself the question: where can I learn as much as possible?
We are Future Makers in Switzerland and around the world

We make real what matters

Moving people from A to B safely, working hand in hand with artificial intelligence, making buildings and cities smarter, and supplying people with environmentally friendly energy – shape the future with us!

siemens.ch/jobs
How did you find your job?
When I started looking for a job it was still unclear to me what kind of work would fit me best. In the internet, I learned about Swisscom’s Trainee programme, which lets you do several assignments in departments of your choice. After a successful application process, I have completed assignments in software development, security department and network construction strategy. I am still working as a Project Assistant in the network construction strategy.

What influenced your decision to join Swisscom?
I knew from a friend about the open friendly work atmosphere at Swisscom. On the other hand, Swisscom is a big national company and as such pioneers technological advances. This working environment combined with the possibility of getting to know several departments were the main reasons for me choosing Swisscom. In addition, Swisscom enjoys the reputation of an excellent employer, with which I heartily agree.

What does a typical working day at Swisscom look like?
As part of the technical management team I work on the development of our wireline and wireless networks. This consists of developing new measurement techniques, test network elements or programming analysis tools. We also shape the network element portfolio and handle project management in the implementation process of new technologies.

What in particular do you like about your job at Swisscom?
In particular, I like the diversity of my daily tasks: from strategic considerations and testing to practical implementation, a broad spectrum of skills is required. Furthermore, through the end-to-end involvement it is very satisfying when a new technology is implemented. And finally, I appreciate the opportunity to work with highly experienced people.

What advice do you have for students starting their professional career?
Take your time to try out different types of jobs and find out what you genuinely enjoy. It is never going to be so easy to change the path of your career as at the beginning.
I use artificial intelligence to inspire people in the connected world.

“Swisscom is a pioneer in the age of artificial intelligence. Thanks to AI, our team was able to effectively forecast and resolve problems.”

Viljami Laurmaa, Data Scientist.
For more information, go to

[swisscom.ch/jobs]
Simone Alber, 25
MSc ETH in Civil Engineering
Trainee at Tiefbauamt der Stadt Zürich

Wie haben Sie Ihre Stelle gefunden?
Ich bin auf das Traineeprogramm des Tiefbauamtes durch die im November angebotene Infoveranstaltung für Studierende aufmerksam geworden. In dieser wird das Programm von ehemaligen Trainees und erfahrenen Projektleitern vorgestellt und ein guter Einblick in die Arbeit der Trainees ermöglicht.

Warum haben Sie sich für das Tiefbauamt der Stadt Zürich entschieden?
Einerseits sehe ich das Traineeprogramm beim Tiefbauamt als eine gute Möglichkeit sich in die Berufswelt einzuarbeiten und andererseits bietet die Stadt Zürich als Arbeitgeberin eine grosse Vielfalt an unterschiedlichen und interessanten Projekten.

Wie sieht Ihr Arbeitsalltag beim Tiefbauamt der Stadt Zürich aus?

Was schätzen Sie besonders an Ihrer Tätigkeit beim Tiefbauamt der Stadt Zürich?
Was die Arbeit beim Tiefbauamt der Stadt Zürich besonders macht, ist, dass man direkt in die Entwicklung der Stadt involviert ist und eine neue und spannende Seite von Zürich kennenlernt.

Was empfehlen Sie Studierenden für ihren Karriereeinstieg?
Keine Angst vor «Neuland» zu haben und so viel wie möglich vom Wissen der erfahrenen Kollegen mitzunehmen.
Sie schliessen gerade Ihr Studium ab?

Dann dürfte Sie das Trainee-Programm des Tiefbauamts der Stadt Zürich interessieren. Bei uns haben Sie als AbsolventIn der Studienrichtungen Bauingenieur-, Umweltingenieurwissenschaften (Siedlungswasserwirtschaft) oder Infrastruktursysteme die Möglichkeit, eine der weltweit attraktivsten Städte mitzugestalten und mitzubauen. Gleichzeitig bieten wir Ihnen einen einmaligen Einstieg in die Praxis und einen attraktiven Start Ihrer beruflichen Karriere.

www.stadt-zuerich.ch/tiefbauamt-trainees
Entry-level positions

Before you start focusing and looking for specific job offers, there are a few general things you should know about entry-level positions. It is not always clear at first glance if a job posting addresses fresh university graduates or targets people with work experience. Many companies and institutions have internships, trainee programs and entry-level positions specifically for students and recent graduates.

A tell-tale sign of a career-entry position is a job ad that mentions “junior”, “entry level” or “young professional”, for example:

– Junior Product Manager
– Entry-Level Mechanical Services
– Young Professional, Electrical Engineering

Other ads may not mention any of these terms indicating that it is an entry-level position; some may even require a few years’ experience. However, you may still stand a chance of getting that job. If the ad does not clearly state that this is a senior or management position and work experience is merely “desired” or “beneficial”, it is possible that the company will consider fresh university graduates (see also the “Job advertisements” section in chapter entitled Focusing → Job advertisements).

Direct-entry and trainee programmes
Companies also distinguish between direct entry, where you jump straight into the job, and trainee programmes that ease you into working life. A direct-entry position fills a specific vacancy in a specific department; a trainee program has you working in various departments throughout the company. In the latter case, you might be able to pick a job in the department that suits you best when the programme ends, provided there is a vacancy to be filled. Although the assignments in the various departments are temporary, a trainee programme is not the same as an internship. It is a real entry-level job with certain responsibilities that gets your career off the ground.
Large enterprises especially offer special trainee programmes alongside direct-entry opportunities. These 12-to-24 month engagements give you plenty of time to get to know the company well. Trainees take part in the day-to-day business of each department and shoulder the responsibility for tasks in projects. This is to prepare you for future project management, leadership or other responsibilities.

Your trainee status usually transitions to a permanent position at the end of the program, but this is not always guaranteed. Trainee programmes are generally available for bachelor’s and master’s degree holders. Ask the company you want to apply to for details on their trainee programme and about any age limits.
Networking
What is networking?

*Networking is using your creative talents to help others achieve their goals as you cultivate a network of people strategically positioned to support you in your goals... Expect nothing in return!*

— Larry James

Many students are uncomfortable with the idea of “networking”. But as the above quote says, networking is not just something to do when you need help from someone else. It gets easier when you take an interest in others, their profiles and their background, and consider how you can help them with your skills, contacts or expertise. With that attitude, networking is more about giving than taking, which makes things easier — and the rest usually takes care of itself.

Conferences and company events

Academic and industry conferences and company fairs offer great opportunities to explore and learn more about industries, companies, and fields of activity, and to connect with people in the working world. The same goes for the “Career Breakfast”, “Career Sandwich”, and “Career & Beer” events and panel discussions hosted by the ETH Career Center. Striking up a conversation with interesting business people is easy over a drink or a snack.

Job fairs such as ETH’s Polymesse, trade fairs and conferences are also great places to reach out to prospective employers. This is where companies showcase what they do at stands and in presentations. Their stands are usually staffed with a lot of representatives from various departments of the company.

If you want to make a professional impression, you need to prepare well for your visit to a job fair or conference:
1. First consider which companies you want to approach at the fair.

2. Learn more about these companies before the fair. Company representatives are less than impressed by questions like, “What exactly does your company do?”

3. Make sure your application documents are ready to go so you can submit your CV if you have a promising chat.

4. Prepare a so-called “elevator pitch”. It is called that because it has to be quick and to the point, like a pitch you would give to a CEO, investor or other hard-to-reach decision-maker that you happen to meet in an elevator. You have 30 seconds to sell your business idea well enough for your captive audience to want to know more about it. This method is very well suited for introducing yourself to company representatives with a few well-chosen lines.

5. You should also prepare some good questions. For example:
   - What skills and experience are you looking for, especially from university graduates?
   - What are the biggest challenges for the xy position...?
   - How exactly do you go about recruiting? Do you recruit all year round or only at certain times?
   - How would you describe your corporate culture? What do you personally like most about the company?

6. You should come to some sort of arrangement by the end of the conversation. For example, you could ask whether you can contact the person you are talking to directly or refer to your conversation if you decide to apply to the company.

The most important company fairs and career events are posted on the ETH Career Center website and in the calendar of events.
Where are you headed?

Spring semester

ETH Zürich

polymesse

During three days more than 130 potential employers present themselves to interested students at the recruiting-fair Polymesse. Also, you have the opportunity to get your CV checked and to take application pictures.

The Polymesse will take place in the main building of ETH Zurich and on the Polyterrasse.

polyvortrag

At Polyvortrag about 30 employers have the chance to provide a better understanding of their activities. The presentations can give students a deeper insight into the work and typical projects of the companies, and show possible career opportunities (not only for employment but also internships or theses!).

Forum & Contact

polymesse.ch
Senior students and alumni
It is a good idea to stay in touch with senior students and alumni. You may perhaps also wish to keep in contact with tutors and study group leaders after the semester ends. Another option is to get involved in student organisations, where you will meet students of all semesters, some of whom are sure to be applying for jobs or will soon be starting to work. They could all become a valuable source of information for you.

Student associations
Another option is to join ETH student networks. They usually maintain a lot of ties to companies and again can be useful sources of job market intelligence. Additionally, getting actively involved in a student organisation can help you acquire and develop key transferable skills that employers are looking for.

A selection of associations that may be of interest to you follow:

- **VSETH**: Student Association of the ETH Zurich
- **Student Associations of each ETH department**
- **AVETH**: Association of doctoral students at ETH Zurich
- **ETH Juniors**: Consulting company run by students of ETH Zurich that organises the company fair “Campus Interview” yearly
- **Forum & Contact**: Student organisation that organises the yearly Polymesse fair
- **IAESTE**: The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience organises internships abroad for students in technical fields
- **Femtec**: Career-building program for women in engineering and natural sciences
- **Entrepreneur Club**: An ETH association that brings together students who are interested in entrepreneurship and helps them pursue their business ideas
Femtec.Network

Partner universities
- Technische Universität München
- ETH Zürich
- Universität Stuttgart
- RWTH Aachen University
- Technical University Dresden
- KIT Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

Partner companies and research institutes
- Fraunhofer
- Bosch
- Porsche
- ZF
- T
- BCG
- thyssenkrupp
- bp
- ABB
- Daimler
- EnBW

CAREERBUILDING
For Women Studying in STEM Fields

www.femtec.org
Societies, associations and organisations
Interest groups are also useful sources for obtaining information about job opportunities, contact addresses, industry insights and the like. A few examples follow:

- [www.ingch.ch](http://www.ingch.ch): Information about careers, training, further education and job platforms for engineers
- [www.industrie-schweiz.ch](http://www.industrie-schweiz.ch): A directory of Swiss industrial associations
- [www.sia.ch](http://www.sia.ch): Swiss Society of Engineers and Architects
- [www.stv.ch](http://www.stv.ch): Swiss Engineering
- [www.scienceindustries.ch](http://www.scienceindustries.ch): Swiss business association for the chemical, pharmaceutical and biotech industries
- [www.svial.ch](http://www.svial.ch): Professional association for university graduates in the agricultural and food sectors

In your free time
Recreational activities also offer good networking opportunities. Merely being in a club or on a sports team does not mean you are networking, but it does provide a platform for establishing and maintaining contacts.

Professional websites such as [www.xing.com](http://www.xing.com) and [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) – where you can post your profile and search for others’ profiles – can also be helpful. They afford you the opportunity to gather information on industries, companies and fields of activity, make new contacts, and even find jobs. These platforms were developed specifically for professionals to share information about jobs, business and common interests, so registered members are generally open to inquiries from other members. Write personal messages to connect with people. Avoid the standard phrase, “I’d like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn”. Get proactive on these platforms and keep your profile up to date. Uploading a profile just for the sake of it is not going to be enough.

On the next pages you will find an example of a LinkedIn profile with some key tips.
Sample LinkedIn profile

**Photo**
Adding a photo on your LinkedIn profile can result in an increased number of profile views. We suggest using a photo taken by a professional. Ideally, your face takes up at least 60% of the frame.

**Headline**
Answer the questions: e.g. what type of job/function are you looking for, what do you want to be known for, what are you passionate about? Include keywords you want to be found for.

**Industry**
Choose the relevant industry you are interested in and you want to be found for.

**URL**
Customize your LinkedIn URL under “Contact and Personal Info” to make it easier for people to find you.

**Summary**
Write a description of yourself. Talk about your experience, interests and skills using relevant key words. Repeat the key words in the different sections.

**Experience**
List your practical experience (including part-time jobs) and use relevant keywords to describe your tasks and skills.
I'm a graduate student from ETH Zürich (MSc in Biochemistry) currently looking for an entry level position as Clinical Researcher for an international pharmaceutical company. During my Master Thesis: “Glycoproteomics of human skin and the interaction of solar radiation” I had the pleasure to learn how to work in a Lab in collaboration with fellow Master and PhD Students. I was mostly focusing on the impact ... After my exchange semester at Caltech where I attended several classes ... Thanks to my experience at Medphabi, I improved my knowledge ... Supervisors and colleagues from the University and the industry know me as a highly reliable creative thinker who can ... I would love to bring my skills and motivation to a company that would offer me the possibility to develop myself in an international environment.

**Experience**

**Education**

**Industrial Internship**

Medphabi

Feb 2014 – Jul 2014 • 6 mos • Männedorf

- Assist in the conduct of clinical research studies including, but not limited to industry sponsor funded and grant funded research and/or clinical trials
- Perform a variety of duties involved in collection, compilation, documentation and analysis of clinical and imaging research data
- ...

**Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich**

Master of Science (MSc) Biochemistry

2014 – 2016

Master Thesis: “Glycoproteomics of human skin and the interaction of solar radiation”

Focus on:
- N-linked glycosylation of secretory proteins
- Enzymatic reactions in the glycoprotein synthetic pathway
- ...

Selected Master Courses:
- Glycobiology
- Enzymatic Chemistry
- ...

**Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich**

Bachelor of Science (BSc), Biochemistry

2010 – 2013

Activities and Societies: ...

**Volunteering Experience & Causes**

Marketing and Funding Assistant

Swim for Cancer

Oct 2013 | 1 mo

Health

- advertisement design: poster, flyer, newsletter
- ...

**Skills & Endorsements**

- Biomedical Engineering • Endorsed by Jennifer Aytanc and 1 other who is highly skilled at this
- Biocompatibility • Endorsed by 5 connections
- Heat Transfer • Endorsed by 45 connections
- ...

**Languages**

- German • Native or bilingual proficiency
- English • Full professional proficiency
- Spanish • Professional working proficiency
- Chinese • Elementary proficiency

**Project**

Young Projekt Switzerland

- leading a mini-company with 4 project members
- development, production and selling of handmade bags
- ...

**Featured Skills & Endorsements**

- Accomplishments
- Following
- Endorsed by 45 connections
- Endorsed by 5 connections
- Endorsed by Jennifer Aytanc and 1 other who is highly skilled at this
- Biomedical Engineering • Endorsed by Jennifer Aytanc
- Biocompatibility • Endorsed by 5 connections
- Heat Transfer • Endorsed by 45 connections
- ...

**Volunteer Experience**

Here you have the possibility to add extracurricular experience or activities, e.g. helping in a student association, team leader in a scout camp, etc. Explain your tasks and list your responsibilities.

**Skills & Endorsements**

Add skills which you acquired during your education/practical experience. If you don’t manage this, LinkedIn may pick random skills from your profile which might not be relevant (Ex: MS Office).

**NB:**

This example of a LinkedIn profile is by no means complete; LinkedIn offers many other categories that you can add to your profile.
ETH MSc in Biochemistry graduate looking for new challenges in pharmaceutical industries, preferably in clinical research.

Medphabi • Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Zürich Area, Switzerland  • 50

I'm a graduate student from ETH Zürich (MSc in Biochemistry) currently looking for an entry level position as Clinical Researcher for an international pharmaceutical company.

During my Master Thesis: "Glycoproteomics of human skin and the interaction of solar radiation" I had the pleasure to learn how to work in a Lab in collaboration with fellow Master and PhD Students. I was mostly focusing on the impact ...

After my exchange semester at Caltech where I attended several classes ...

Thanks to my experience at Medphabi, I improved my knowledge ...

Supervisors and colleagues from the University and the industry know me as a highly reliable creative thinker who can ...

I would love to bring my skills and motivation to a company that would offer me the possibility to develop myself in an international environment.

Experience

Education

Industrial Internship
Medphabi
Feb 2014 – Jul 2014 • 6 mos • Männedorf
– Assist in the conduct of clinical research studies including, but not limited to industry sponsor funded and grant funded research and/or clinical trials
– Perform a variety of duties involved in collection, compilation, documentation and analysis of clinical and imaging research data
– ...

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Master of Science (MSc) Biochemistry
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Master Thesis: "Glycoproteomics of human skin and the interaction of solar radiation"
Focus on:
– N-linked glycosylation of secretory proteins
– Enzymatic reactions in the glycoprotein synthetic pathway
– ...

Selected Master Courses:
– Glycobiology
– Enzymatic Chemistry
– ...

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Bachelor of Science (BSc), Biochemistry
2010 – 2013
Activities and Societies: ...

Languages
List your languages and your level of proficiency.

Projects
Add and update projects that you’ve worked on to demonstrate your skills and experience. Whether you led a team assignment in school or worked in a focus project during your studies, list tasks and skills.

Following
Add groups, companies, etc. that you are interested in to keep up to date to industry trends and companies.

Courses
List curricular and extracurricular courses that support the aim of your profile.

Recommendations
Recommendations add credibility to your profile. Aim to secure recommendations throughout your career.

NB:
We recommend that you go to Settings & Privacy / Profile privacy and set Share profile edits to No. That way, your contacts will not get a notification every time you update your profile.
ETH networks on LinkedIn

You will also find specific ETH groups that you can join on LinkedIn. One is the Career Center; others include the general Alumni Group and the various departments’ Alumni Groups.

On the ETH Zurich Career Insights LinkedIn site (see image to the right), you can also find interesting statistics on the careers of ETH alumni (LinkedIn/School/ETH-Zurich/Alumni).
Summary
The building blocks for focusing

The work you have done in this chapter *Exploration* has given you a good look at potential industries, companies and fields of activity.

To wrap up this section, enter the sectors, companies and fields of activity that interest you most in the table below. Then add the key requirements you identified above (chapter *Exploration → Companies and potential employers*).

This summary can help you narrow down your search for a suitable job, by focusing your search on those specific industries/companies and activities that you identified as important to you and by sifting through the job ads based on your requirements. It will make it easier to distinguish between suitable and unsuitable job offers and save you a lot of time and energy during the application process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Companies</th>
<th>Fields of activity</th>
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<table>
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<th>My most important requirements for a future employer</th>
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</table>
→ **Tips: Exploration**

→ Reach out to everyone who can help and tap their knowledge. Talk to your professors and ETH alumni at fairs and career events to learn more about various sectors, companies and career paths.

→ Take the time to dig deep and often, researching websites, online networks such as LinkedIn and Xing, and trade journals in your preferred fields.

→ Compare the information you gathered in this chapter *Exploration* with the insights you gained in the *Analysis* chapter to make sure that your chosen sectors, companies and job profiles really do match your personality, skills and values.

→ Stay flexible in your choice of industries and employers to keep your options open, regardless of what state the economy happens to be in.

→ **ETH Career Center offering: Exploration**

→ Individual sessions to determine sectors and fields of activity

→ Annual Career Weeks in March and October: Various career events with companies to provide insights into various job profiles and establish contacts with company representatives (e.g. Career Breakfast, Career Sandwich, Career & Beer, Active Career)

→ Long Night of the Careers at the ETH Zurich (biennially in November)

→ Panel discussions

**Information**

[www.careercenter.ethz.ch](http://www.careercenter.ethz.ch) – for students and doctoral students
IAESTE internships… apply for students in technical study fields and natural science. The internships are paid: the salary covers the local costs of living and lodging. The internships offer numerous benefits: support during the application period, social network in the country of internship and many more. The internships have a duration from 6 weeks to 12 months.

All currently available internships you can find here: www.iaeste.ch/students/traineeshipoffers

Living far away from home for a couple of months is a completely different experience from travelling. It is better! As an intern in Korea I had the chance to immerse myself in the day-to-day life of locals as well as learn a lot about their culture. This unique and incredibly interesting experience helped me gain new perspectives on mundane things and grow personally. As a research assistant at a technical university I could put my skills from the studies into practice by working on a research project. Besides all the personal and professional advantages, I had a lot of fun and an unforgettable time.

Grigoriy Khazaridi, Mechanical Engineering student of ETH Zurich. Grigoriy did his 2-month internship in summer 2017 at the ACE Lab of the Hanyang University in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

«Going abroad means tons of new experiences, new friends and new ideas – the IAESTE internship in Republic of Korea provided me a chance to explore a country with a completely different culture by combining interesting work with fun.»

Grigoriy with his work mates on a team event.
IAESTE internships...
... apply for students in technical study fields and natural science
... are paid: the salary covers the local costs of living and lodging
... offer numerous benefits: support during the application period, social network in the country of internship and many more
... have a duration from 6 weeks to 12 month

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All currently available internships you can find here:
www.iaeste.ch/students/traineeshipoffers
# 3 — FOCUSING

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Job search
Strategies and techniques

The ways to finding a job are many. But the most successful strategy is to pursue every avenue. The following section presents the different approaches to looking for a job. The addresses and hyperlinks are intended only as a first step in your research and are by no means exhaustive.

Company websites
Most companies post job vacancies on their corporate website. HR does not want to be swamped with applications, so these vacancies are often not published on other job platforms. Review the websites of companies you would like to work for and look for jobs that fit your profile. If you do not find any suitable listings, you can try submitting a spontaneous application on the off-chance that something is available (see the section Focusing → Proactive job search).
Job platforms
Companies post job offers on all kinds of internet platforms. Always check to make sure these job offers are current. Use any of the many support tools available to set up a search assistant or post your CV online.

General job portals
- www.eth-gethired.ch
- www.jobwinner.ch
- www.alumni.ethz.ch
- www.markenjobs.ch
- www.careerjet.ch
- www.monster.ch
- www.indeed.ch
- www.science-jobs.ch
- www.jobs.ch
- www.students.ch
- www.jobscout24.ch
- www.topjobs.ch
- www.jobsuchmaschine.ch

Some student associations also maintain small job platforms on their website.

Specialised job portals by sector/field of interest:
- Geology: www.geologieportal.ch
- Geomatics/planning: www.geomatik.ch
- Engineering: www.ingjobs.ch
- Math: www.math-jobs.com
- Public sector: www.publicjobs.ch
- Physics: www.tesla-jobs.com
Events
As you may recall from the *Exploration* chapter, career events such as ETH’s Career & Beer get-togethers and trade fairs offer very good opportunities to learn more about potential fields of activity, vacancies, entry programs and application processes. Often a good opening chat and a positive impression leads to a job interview. So be sure to prepare thoroughly before you talk to company representatives (see the chapter *Exploration → Networking* for more on this).
Recruitment agencies
Recruitment agencies specialise in searching for candidates to fit a given job profile. Some have contracts with companies, but these agencies are more likely to look for people for management positions or with highly specialised experience. These profiles are hard to find on the job market, so companies are prepared to pay the agency a finder’s fee.

These agencies rarely recruit fresh graduates and post-graduates. Relying exclusively on this type of recruiter is not a good idea when you are looking for a job. However, a recruiter with good connections to employers in your field generally knows the market and industry well and may be able to help you with a tip or two.

NB:
Recruiters occasionally publish ads for unavailable or even fictional jobs. They archive incoming applications in a database to generate numbers that will attract and acquire new corporate customers. This could explain why a recruiter who is interviewing you will not disclose the name of the company behind the job ad.
Personal contacts and networking
At career events and at play, nurturing your network is likely to pay off in terms of real job offers. It is not uncommon for employers to first seek potential candidates for a position through the networks that connect employees and colleagues before they officially advertise the vacancy.

A good network affords you the opportunity to learn of a pending or current vacancy at a very early turn because your contacts will tell you about it or even recommend the job to you (see the chapter *Exploration → Networking* for more on this).

Social networking platforms
Many vacancies are published on online platforms such as LinkedIn or Xing. In the chapter *Exploration → Networking*, we showed you how to use these platforms and what to bear in mind when creating your profile. The platform tries to match jobs to your needs, so the better and more detailed your profile, the more suitable the job ads that it proposes to you.
Proactive job search

Another option is to proactively search for a job with an unsolicited application – that is, to submit your unsolicited documents to a company rather than responding to a specific job ad. According to some estimates, up to 70% of vacancies are never advertised; as outlined earlier, they are filled by way of contacts and employee networks.

This is why it is so important that you do more than just apply to advertised positions where the competition may be great – also tap your network and send out spontaneous applications.

In this latter case, you will not have a specific job ad to refer to, or information about the company and the position, so be sure to use your various information channels (alumni, networks, private contacts, career events, etc.) to learn more about the company’s divisions and operations before you apply.
First visit the company’s website to see if you can find information about unsolicited applications. It’s good to know in advance if the company will accept this type of application; then you need to find a specific address or contact person to send it to. If you cannot find the information you need, call the company and ask.

**NB:**
Submit an unsolicited application only if this company has no suitable vacancies advertised at this time. A spontaneous application does not make a good impression if the company is advertising positions that fit your profile.
Job advertisements

Analysis

Your application stands a better chance of succeeding if you properly analyse the job ad. The trick is to distinguish between must-have (mandatory) and can-have (optional) criteria. The better your hard and soft skills fit the description, the greater the chance of you being invited to an interview.

→ Tips: Job advertisements

→ Read the ad carefully. It will normally describe the company, job specifications, tasks, and perhaps further career opportunities.
→ Apply if you meet most requirements, even if you do not meet them all.
→ Find out what type of employees the company is looking for. You can usually learn more about this in the careers section of the company’s website.
→ If the job ad leaves any questions unanswered, ask the person who is listed as the contact or take these questions with you to the interview. However, only get in touch with the company if you have truly relevant questions about the job. Questions like “Is this position still open?” do not make a good first impression.

Company description
This part of the job ad profiles the company in a few words. This should give you a rough idea about its size, international scope, and mission. To prepare for your application, be sure to research the company properly rather than relying on these few lines in the job ad.

Position description/key areas of responsibility
This part of the job ad outlines the job’s primary tasks. If it is not clear what day-to-day tasks will occupy most of your time, ask about this during the interview.
We are an international company headquartered in Biel focusing on driving next-generation products applying latest technologies. With our 19,000 employees worldwide, we believe in shaping smart change with solutions that empower meaningful data and ideas to do their greatest good.

**Experimental Physicist or Mechanical Engineer**

**Your main tasks**
- Perform applied research in the area of electrical power devices, including batteries, and thermal sciences
- Plan, construct and execute laboratory experiments
- Apply simulation tools in order to support your experiments
- Provide scientific and technical assistance for the development of new products
- Collaborate with scientists and engineers from our different business units and from universities

**Your profile**
- PhD in Physics or Mechanical Engineering
- Sound experience in laboratory work as well as know-how in experimental techniques
- Ideally, you have a background in the areas of heat transfer, thermodynamics, energy conversion or batteries
- Knowledge in Li-ion technology and/or power electronics is a plus
- Creative and communicative team player
- Fluent command of English

**What we offer**
We offer cutting-edge technology projects with challenging research and development tasks, a location with a high recreational value (fantastic for mountain and water sports), competitive compensation packages, and 25 to 30 days of vacation per year. Childcare centers, baby bonus and one-week paternity leave are also part of our attractive compensation packages. You can benefit from our generous pension and insurance schemes as well as our early retirement model. In addition, we offer flexible working time and support relocation and integration of our international employees. Our HQ is close to public transport.

**Professional qualifications/required experience/desired skills**

**Must-have requirements**
Mandatory or must-have requirements are skills that the employer definitely wants.

If you meet these requirements, make sure they are listed in your CV (see also the chapter entitled "Application"). A candidate who meets all requirements is not always to be found. This is why we recommend that you apply if you meet most requirements, even if you do not meet them all.

**Can-have requirements**
Companies are generally looking for candidates who meet all their specifications. These are few and far between, which is why some of the less important criteria are designated as being desirable or optional in job ads. You do not need to have all these qualifications, but it is beneficial if you do.

**Offer**
In this section of the job ad, the company describes what it has to offer to you and what the main advantages of the position are. You can also use this information to prepare your questions for the interview. Let’s assume the ad says something like, “We offer a friendly working environment.” Then you could ask, “What do you think makes the workplace so friendly?”
Required key competencies

Key competencies and soft skills are tremendously important to your future employer because the company is not just recruiting your mind or professional expertise; it is also bringing your personality on board.

Job ads often explicitly require key competencies such as the communication skills needed to work with clients, or with in-house teams, or the flexibility to roll with changes when the company is in transition.

In the following, we want to show you how to interpret descriptions of these skills. Be sure to mention and provide real-world examples of all the required soft skills in your cover letter (see the section Application → Application documents).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required key competencies</th>
<th>Likely interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Able to work under pressure</td>
<td>The job pressure may be greater than the industry norm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed employee</td>
<td>Working hours may be irregular and overtime could be the rule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliable employee</td>
<td>The company does not want a job hopper. Be prepared to stick with this job for several years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy / self-reliance</td>
<td>Experience in the described field of activity is absolutely essential. Do not expect any technical or specialist support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>The task or role may be very vaguely defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Expect to work in various places. You probably have to travel or change locations. Children and family obligations may be a deterrent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial mindset</td>
<td>This is a high-pressure job for business-minded people. Business management skills are beneficial. You will have to take several stakeholder groups’ interests into account.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required key competencies</th>
<th>Likely interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiative / proactive</td>
<td>You will be expected to outperform the stipulated requirements. You have to be self-motivated and set your own targets; do not expect praise or guidance from management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>This may suggest challenging working conditions and a fickle boss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A young, dynamic team</td>
<td>No need to try if you are older (perhaps even as young as 30). And no need to apply if your salary expectations are high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To join at the earliest opportunity</td>
<td>The predecessor may have been fired or quit. This begs the question of why he or she left.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary
The building blocks for your application

Analysis, exploration, focusing – these are the steps you need to take when setting out in search of a job. Thoroughly research the job, analyse must-have and can-have criteria, and devise a clear application strategy – that is what it takes to get off to a good start.

To conclude this chapter, define some actions that you can undertake and that will help you give focus to your applications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My favourite companies</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>e.g. Helbling Technik</td>
<td>Participate in the Helbling “Active Career Event” organised by the Career Center</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Talk to Johann (alumnus currently working at Helbling)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consult and analyse current job openings at Helbling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participate in one of Helbling Technik’s evening seminars</td>
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Tips: Focusing

- Create a folder for all documents you collected during your research (annual reports, job ads, press releases).
- Pursue every avenue using all the different job search strategies, all at the same time if you can. Take the conventional approaches but also send speculative applications.
- Analyse the job ad and write down the must-have and can-have criteria for each application.
- Archive all the details about job ads, contact persons, dates and meetings in an Excel spreadsheet, track the developments and keep this record up to date.
- Save a copy of the ad for every job you applied for. The ad is generally taken out of circulation once you are invited to an interview, but you will need it to prepare.

ETH Career Center offering: Focusing

- Individual counselling
- Annual Career Weeks in March and October: Various career events with companies to provide insight into various job profiles and establish contacts with company representatives (e.g. Career Breakfast, Career Sandwich, Career & Beer, Active Career)
- Long Night of the Careers at the ETH Zurich (biennially in November)

Information
www.careercenter.ethz.ch – for students and doctoral students
4 — APPLICATION

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Application documents
Your business card

Your application documents are very important and it is vital that you are aware of their value. A written application is the prospective employer's first impression of you, and it will determine if your application is considered further or rejected outright.

Its content and form should make people want to get to know you better in an interview.

There are several things you need to bear in mind here:

- HR managers often receive 50 or more applications for an advertised position, but just five to ten applicants are invited to a first interview.
- In the first selection round, HR managers' top priority is usually to assess the CV. They get so many applications that they often have just one to three minutes to devote to each. The CV has to be very persuasive for the other documents to be considered at all. It provides the evidence proving you are an applicant who meets the job’s requirements.
- Employers want to fill vacancies with candidates who have the required job skills as well as the personality and motivation to fit in with the company and team. As the selection process progresses, the focus will gradually shift towards personality and motivation, placing less emphasis on technical qualifications. In the end, it is usually the chemistry between the future supervisor and the applicant that decides who will get the job.
Scope

The full application package includes the following standard documents, whereby the most recent document in each category goes on top:

- The cover letter
- A resume or CV
- Copies of school and university certificates (school-leaving onward)
- Copies of all references, confirmations of employment and letters of recommendation mentioned in the CV
- Copies of training certificates and the like, if relevant to the job
As we mentioned in this chapter’s introduction, HR managers usually decide whether or not to invite a candidate to an initial interview based on the CV. This is why it so important for you to present the information in your CV clearly and concisely.

Will Evans of Ladders, Inc., conducted a survey in 2012 using eye tracking technology to measure recruiters’ eye movements as they scanned CVs. Here is what the study found:

- Participating recruiters spent six seconds looking at a CV.
- They devoted 80% of their time on these six items: Name, current position, last employer, start and end date of the last job, start and end date of the current position, and the educational background.

The researcher generated heat maps for two CVs, using colours to show the average dwell time. The red areas indicate what the recruiters looked at longest, on average.

The two sample CVs shown here track the recruiter’s eye movements on heat maps. The one of the right got more attention because of its clear and concise structure.

Curriculum vitae

As we mentioned in this chapter’s introduction, HR managers usually decide whether or not to invite a candidate to an initial interview based on the CV. This is why it so important for you to present the information in your CV clearly and concisely.

Will Evans of Ladders, Inc., conducted a survey in 2012 using eye tracking technology to measure recruiters’ eye movements as they scanned CVs. Here is what the study found:

- Participating recruiters spent six seconds looking at a CV.
- They devoted 80% of their time on these six items: Name, current position, last employer, start and end date of the last job, start and end date of the current position, and the educational background.
So be sure to bear the following in mind when drafting your CV:

- It presents your background and career path, so it needs to be individual and unique.
- Its layout should be clear and well-structured.
- Make sure it is complete.
- In each section, the most recent information comes first in reverse chronological order.
- We recommend keeping it to two pages for bachelor and master students and up to three for doctoral candidates.
- Use the same font throughout, with no more than two different font sizes and never smaller than 11 pt. Bold type works well for headings.
- No spelling mistakes or grammatical errors.

The standard practice is to structure the CV by topics. The following topics and sections are key components of a CV:
- Contact details
- Personal information
- Education
- Work experience
- Language skills
- Computer skills
- Hobbies
- References

You can add the following sections to your CV to reflect your background:
- Military service
- Further education
- Laboratory skills/methods
- Extracurricular activities
- Scholarships/honours
- Two or three select publications

Please note that these are recommendations for Swiss CVs. Some other countries have different rules (see the section entitled Application → Applying abroad).
Sample CV – MSc and BSc

Contact details
- First name, last name
- Full home address
- One personal phone number only, ideally a mobile number
- Email address that is appropriate for business use:
  e.g. firstname.lastname@xyz.com

Photograph
- A photograph on your CV is optional, but very common in German-
  speaking countries.
- Have your application picture taken by a professional photographer.
- Dress professionally as you would for an interview.
- Be well-groomed.
- A good picture is no guarantee that you will be invited in for an interview,
  but an unflattering photograph may sink your application before you
  even get started.

Personal information
- Date of birth
- Nationality: Indicate all citizenships (e.g. Switzerland/France).
- If you have a work permit, mention it.
- Marital status (optional, e.g. married, single)
**Education**
- List all graduation certificates, diplomas and degrees obtained from secondary school and higher.
- Give the dates you attended each institution in months and years.
- State the name and location of the institution and the received or pursued certificate, diploma or degree at each stage.
- Indicate extension courses, specializations, major subjects and titles of theses or papers if they are relevant to the job you are seeking.
- State the selected track you chose during secondary school.
- Generally, final grades only get mentioned if they are high, in which case you have to be consistent and give the grades for all school-leaving certificates.
- Put foreign grades into perspective by stating the highest possible grade, e.g. “Final grade: 3.8 out of 4.0” or “3.8 / 4.0”.

**Work experience**
- List internships, assistantships, part-time jobs and volunteer work.
- You may have gained practical experience working for a student association when you attended a university. This is unpaid work, but the experience may be relevant to the prospective job. If so, list it alongside other internships and the like under the heading of “Practical experience” rather than “Work experience”, indicating your position in the association, tasks and responsibilities. If this experience is irrelevant to the job, you can list it under “Extracurricular activities”.
- Specify the time on each job in months and years.
- State the employer, place of work and your function for each job.
- Describe your responsibilities or at least two tasks that you accomplished in your position.
- Describe your activities precisely and expressively using strong verbs (“Successfully developed new method for...”) or nominalised verbs (“Successful development of a new method for...”), if possible, in combination with one adjective.
- Mention special accomplishments and successes.
Sample CV – MSc und BSc

**Extracurricular activities**
List job-specific and non-job-specific pursuits and volunteer work with charities, clubs, associations or community services.

**Further education/training**
This section includes participations in symposiums and conferences, trade fairs, language courses and personal development seminars such as public-speaking courses, preferably indicated in months and years.

**Military service**
You can list military service under a separate heading to provide the complete chronological picture of your background.

**Scholarships and awards**
Notable scholarships or awards should be listed under a separate heading, indicating the dates in months and years whenever possible.

**NB: Gaps in your CV**
Gaps during or immediately after your studies left by travel, language studies abroad, volunteer work and the like are usually not a problem. However, you should list them under “Interests or hobbies” or “Extracurricular activities” (e.g. 06/2017 – 10/2017: Toured South America).
**Interests or hobbies**
The aim of mentioning interests or hobbies is to give the reader a better and bigger picture of who you are. This can serve as an opening talking point for the job interview. Do not invent any “strategic hobbies” that you think will make your CV more interesting. Be true to yourself.

**Language skills and stays abroad**
- Be honest and realistic in assessing the level of your knowledge.
- For languages, state the skill level or your self-assessment using for example the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the language certificates you have acquired.
- Use just one name for each level, e.g. native speaker, business fluent, basic knowledge, or B1, C2, etc.
- Also avoid terms that refer to school leaving certificates (i.e. A-levels). They do not say much about your actual language skills.
- List stays or language studies abroad, preferably with the dates in months and years.

**Computer skills**
IT skills are grouped by type such as programming languages, operating systems, graphics programs, user software, etc. and/or in accordance with the requirements specified in the job ad, e.g. very good knowledge, basic skills, etc.

**References**
Do not enclose or mention references by name unless specifically requested to do so. You will be asked to bring them to the interview or submit them later.
Sample CV – doctoral student

Daniel Kaufmann

EDUCATION

07/2012 – 06/2016 Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETHZ), Zurich, Switzerland
Computational Laboratory


10/2007 – 03/2012 Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL), Lausanne, Switzerland
MSc in Computer Engineering, final grade 5.25/6

10/2011 – 03/2012 University of Florida (UF), Gainesville FL, USA
Process Control Engineering, final grade 5.5/6
– Modelled and validated the model for a small articulated robot
– Developed a modern predictive control algorithm using Matlab/LabVIEW
– Successfully implemented algorithm on a real vehicle

08/2009 – 05/2010 Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), Pittsburgh PA, USA
Electrical Engineering, exchange program

Grade point average 3.9/4.0, on Dean’s List for both semesters

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

07/2012 – 06/2016 Research Assistant, ETH Zurich, Computational Laboratory, Switzerland
– Responsible for control systems engineering in an interdisciplinary collaboration with GreatCorp., Basel, Switzerland
– Modelled and controlled diesel injectors using Matlab/Spice
– Served as teaching assistant for robust control and control experiments
– Supervised students writing semester papers
– Published research results, presented to management, attended conferences

Doctorate
– Doctoral students should list the doctorate under both “Education” and “Work experience”.
– Under “Education”, indicate the doctorate, chair or institute, university and location along with the thesis title. Under “Work experience”, state that you are a staff researcher and then the chair or institute, university and location. State the activities and responsibilities that represent practical experience here.
– The title “Doctor of Science (Dr. sc. ETH Zurich)” is awarded after the candidate successfully completes the required course of studies.
– The term “PhD” is usually only used colloquially or in English-speaking countries.

Methods
– List specific knowledge of laboratory methods or software environments here. If you wish, you can indicate software environments under “IT skills” instead.
– You can rate this knowledge on a scale as required, e.g. very good knowledge, basic skills, etc.

Publications & conferences
– Specify just a few select publications rather than a complete list.
Curriculum Vitae

05/2011 – 08/2011
Summer Intern, Ford Motor Company, Kansas City, Kansas, USA
– Assisted Ford Customer Service in the launch of the Ford Mustang
– Mined large databases and generated reports for management
– Served as a liaison between the customer and Ford Engineering

02/2009 – 03/2009
Winter Intern, GreatMachines Ltd., Stans, Switzerland
– Completed design projects using Unigraphics software
– Apprenticed in milling, turning, drilling and welding

LANGUAGES

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<th>Level</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Proficient (level C1 on the CEFR scale)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>Proficient (level C2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>Advanced Knowledge (level B1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Basic knowledge (level A2)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

METHODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matlab / Simulink</td>
<td>Very good knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dSpace Control Desk</td>
<td>Very good knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LabVIEW</td>
<td>Good knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-DEAS</td>
<td>Good knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unigraphics</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANSYS</td>
<td>Good knowledge</td>
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</table>

COMPUTER SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pascal</td>
<td>Good knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Good knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LaTeX</td>
<td>Good knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS-Office</td>
<td>Very good knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

03/2013
External Relations, VIS (Verein der Informatik Studierenden) ETH Zurich, Switzerland
– Strategy for international networking
– Customer acquisition and partner support
– Organised and led excursions

03/2013
“Go Digital!” workshop, McKinsey & Company, Zurich, Switzerland
– Set up an online shop
– Worked in a team and presented the project

SELECT PUBLICATIONS


HOBBIES

– Mountaineering
– Sailing
– Scuba diving
– Reading

REFERENCES
Available upon request
Main differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main differences between CVs of BSc / MSc students and doctoral students</th>
<th>Main differences in CVs for applications in industry and academia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bachelor / master students</strong></td>
<td><strong>Industry</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV max. 2 pages</td>
<td>State the title of bachelor, master or doctoral thesis, but details only if they are relevant to the position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List the master thesis under “Education”. The exception is an external master thesis pursued at a company. In this case, you can give the title of the paper under “Education” and the details of the research conducted at the company under “Work experience”.</td>
<td>You can list methods and laboratory experience, but details only if relevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not list publications unless the master thesis was published in a journal or the like.</td>
<td>Indicate lab experience and describe working methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doctoral students</strong></td>
<td><strong>Academia</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV max. 3 pages</td>
<td>List details of bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral theses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List the doctorate under both “Education” and “Work experience”. You can list the title or topic under “Education” and the details of the research, project management, teaching, etc., under “Work experience”.</td>
<td>List participations in conferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List titles of select publications in the CV if relevant to the position (max. 3).</td>
<td>Names of professors are usually not listed unless he or she is well-connected throughout the company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List professors’ names.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wherever you want to land with your application.

Ramzy S.
MSc ETH Masch.-Ing.

> www.eth-gethired.ch
Photograph

You are not obliged to include a picture with your CV, but it is commonly done in Switzerland.

If you decide to do so, we recommend that you have your picture taken by a professional photographer. Selfies taken while hiking, on holidays or for your student union ID do not look professional.

Put on a friendly face and smile. A good photographer will also help you adopt the right posture.

Make sure you look well-groomed. You may wish to look up a good hairdresser before the photo session. Dress professionally as you would for an interview.
FIRST IMPRESSION IS EVERYTHING

BOOK YOUR SHOOTING NOW

49.90 CHF

www.cvpics.ch/cs
Short profile

In English-speaking countries, it is not uncommon to insert a short profile between the sections “Personal details” and “Work experience” or “Education”. These profiles can also be found in Swiss CVs, but they are not standard practice.

A short profile consists of three or four brief sentences providing additional information. Rather than restating the CV’s content, they answer questions like this:

- What is my goal, where do I stand now?
- What qualifications/expertise do I bring to the table?
- How are my skills relevant to the job?

A short profile could be a good option mainly for students looking for a change of direction after graduating. This may be the case if the academic degree given in the CV does not explain your interest in or qualifications for an advertised job. For example, you could have a master’s degree in chemistry, but would like to get into marketing. A short profile could highlight qualifications that you acquired in elective courses, during the listed internships or outside your studies.

If you opt for a short profile, do not make it all too generic; instead, adapt it to the given job and describe only those skills that are truly relevant to that position.
Cover letter

The cover letter alone will rarely make or break your application’s chances of getting preselected. However, it does play an important part in the subsequent selection process. If you are able to word this letter in a way that briefly and succinctly conveys your qualifications and motivation for the given job, your chances of being invited to an interview are good.

No two advertised position are the same, so you have to address the company’s specific requirements in your cover letter. They all require different combinations of technical skills and key competencies, and you have to address each individually (see chapter Focusing → Job advertisements).

Content is important, but a cover letter also has to have a clear structure to make a good impression.

General tips

- The cover letter should be no more than one page in letter format.
- Use the correct and full salutation, including titles.
- It is best for the letter to match the CV’s font and font size.
- Write in your own style; do not recycle pre-worded sentences found online or in guides.
- Convey a brief, precise picture of your qualifications and motivation, always in the context of the job and company, and underscore your experience with examples.
- State your skills and achievements objectively and neutrally without rating yourself on any scale.
- Use active verbs (see the list of “Active verbs” on the next page) and avoid nouns when describing what you did. Example: “During my internship I drew up development concepts and was able to put them into practice.”
- Check your cover letter for spelling mistakes and grammatical errors; have someone else proofread it.
### Active verbs for German applications

#### Management
- Analysieren
- Ausführen
- Betreuen
- Delegieren
- Empfehlen
- Entwickeln
- Erwirtschaften
- Evaluieren
- Führen
- Konsolidieren
- Koordinieren
- Leiten
- Organisieren
- Planen
- Prioritäten setzen
- Reorganisieren
- Überprüfen

#### Communication
- Abstimmen
- Ansprechen
- Beeinflussen
- Beteiligen
- Entwerfen
- Führen
- Interagieren
- Mitarbeiten
- Mitverfassen
- Moderieren
- Publizieren
- Überzeugen
- Verfassen
- Verhandeln
- Vermitteln
- Vorschlagen

#### Research
- Abhandeln
- Abklären
- Beaufsichtigen
- Befragen
- Diagnostizieren
- Entdecken
- Erkunden
- Erläutern
- Evaluieren
- Identifizieren
- Organisationen
- Recherchieren
- Recherchen
- Untersuchen
- Zusammenfassen

### Techniques

#### Teaching / Coaching
- Anleiten
- Beraten
- Beraten
- Betreuen
- Betreuen
- Darlegen
- Lehren
- Lehr
- Lehren
- Lehren
- Lehren
- Lehren
- Lehren

#### Accomplishments
- Ableiten
- Abschliessen
- Beheben
- Beschleunigen
- Bewirken
- Einführen
- Entdecken
- Erfinden
- Erreichen
- Erweitern
- Erzielen
- Gründen
- Konzipieren
- Lösungen
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active verbs for applications in English</th>
<th>Active verbs for applications in English</th>
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<td>Evaluate</td>
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<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Fabricate</td>
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<td>Maintain</td>
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<td>Program</td>
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<td>Remodel</td>
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<td>Repair</td>
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<td>Supervise</td>
<td>Solve</td>
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<td><strong>Teaching /Coaching</strong></td>
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<td>Introduce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervise</td>
<td>Introduce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample cover letter – structure

Contact details
- First name, last name
- Full home address
- One phone number
- Email

Company address
- Correct and complete name of the company
- Name of the contact person, if available

Place and date

Subject heading
- State the job title and a reference number, if available. Example:
  • Application for "Change Management"
  • Consultant job – your ad on ETH get hired
  • Job ad on your homepage – "Consultant, ref. 42810CH"

Salutation
If you know the contact person’s name, address the letter to this individual. Otherwise, use the salutation "Dear Sir or Madam".

Closing and signature
- “Sincerely yours”, “Yours sincerely”, or “Sincerely”.
- If it is a digital application, you can dispense with a handwritten signature or insert a scanned signature

Enclosures
The term “Enclosed” is outdated and no longer used.
Whether you think you can or you think you can’t, you’re right.

HENRY FORD
Sample cover letter – contents

Again, you should summarize your achievements and motivation in a few short and precise sentences in your cover letter. This is by no means an easy task. Application guides suggest that you will have to put in around a full day’s work to write your first good cover letter. Our experience bears this out.

It is very important that you align your cover letter with the job you are seeking. You will have to do more than just restate the bullets in your CV as sentences – provide additional information and describe the highlights of your profile that make you an interesting candidate for the job and company.

Section 1: YOU (the company)
- What do I know about the company?
- What fascinates me about the company and job?

Be sure to avoid superficial opening lines like, “I am hereby applying for the job advertised on ETH get hired.” Rather than lifting passages verbatim from the company website, put some thought into why you are interested in this enterprise. Describe your reasons in brief sentences. It is the personal touch that makes your message authentic.

Example: “Management Consulting AG has earned its reputation with innovative strategy projects. I relish the opportunity to put my skills to work in very different projects for various companies and to find solutions in collaboration with customers.”

Section 2: ME (my qualifications as a candidate)
- Why am I a viable candidate?
- What qualifications do I have for the advertised job?
- Where did I acquire and prove my skills?

Describe your current job or situation and address the criteria described, required and desired in the ad. Citing the criteria in the job description, provide examples of where and how you have performed these tasks. Do not just list the skills and requirements of this position in your cover letter without providing specific examples. Also avoid using simple phrases such as “I am communicative”, “a team player” and the like; instead, illustrate these qualities with real-world examples.
Dear Ms Braun,

Section 1: Lorem ipsum ut quod ferri definiebas quo, ius graeci laboramus honestatis, id ius nullam soluta partiendo. Duo te corpora professed posidionum velit et doctus an quo, id mani cita. No usu saperet apparent probatue, usu ipsum intellegebat ex.


Yours sincerely,

Jane Doe

---

Example: "During my internship at XY, I learned to quickly get acquainted with unfamiliar topics and to work in an international team. I was also able to further develop my presentation skills when interacting with customers."

Section 3: WE (closing, request)
- How do I wish to sign off?
- What is the next step?

A cover letter usually ends with a word of thanks and a show of interest in a meeting to learn more about the company and job.

Examples:
- "I look forward to meeting you in person and learning more about the job, tasks and team in an interview."
- "I would be happy to talk to you personally and look forward to learning more about the job and its requirements."

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Zurich, 27 October 2017

Application for the position of Junior Consultant, ID # 293754

Dear Ms Braun,
Application channels

Most companies tell job applicants to apply by email or online; that is, via the company’s application platform. These days, there is very little demand for applications sent by postal mail.

When applying via a company’s online platform, attach your CV and cover letter as a document in the desired file format whenever you can. This is the only way you have to determine the look and feel of your message so that it stands out among the sameness dictated by a predetermined format. Then use the “Remarks/Message” box to politely draw attention to your cover letter and other attachments.

ATS software – what is it?
An applicant tracking system (ATS) serves to manage job applications. Many large companies have been using an ATS for years to keep track of thousands of applications; now SMEs are also starting to integrate these systems into their processes.

This means that your personal data, contact information, experience and education, CV and cover letter will be uploaded to a company database as soon as you apply online.

An ATS helps HR staff do things like publish job ads on its website and on job portals, and screen, document and sort applications. Companies also use an ATS to do other things like send automated notifications to applicants to let them know that their application has been received, to conduct online tests, to schedule interviews, and to send rejection messages.
**Tips: Online applications**

- First read through the online form. Gather up all the information you will need before you start filling in the form (you may not be able save data before completing the form).
- Format the requested documents as instructed.
- Check all documents that are to be attached for completeness and proper grammar and spelling, particularly the company’s name and address and the name of the contact person.
- Check everything on the form for proper grammar and spelling before sending it in.
- If possible, print out the completed form and file it with your application records.

**Tips: Applicant Tracking System (ATS)**

- Do not put contact information in a header because the software may be set so that a document’s headers and footers are not displayed.
- If possible, use standard fonts like Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, Tahoma or Verdana. Unusual or rarely used fonts could be rejected by the ATS software.
- The font size should be at least 11 pt, not smaller.
- Do not use extravagant formatting, graphics, images or logos.
- Do not format information in tables as these may go unrecognized.
An ATS can also automatically filter and preselect applications according to criteria such as keywords, skills, previous employer, work experience and qualifications.

Keywords really are essential because these systems are so widely used. These could be terms that appear in the requirements of the job ad, or they are used as standard vocabulary in the industry and profession. You should in any case seek to identify the key words that are relevant to your application and use these terms in your cover letter and CV. The LinkedIn and Xing social media profiles of the target company’s employees are also good sources of keywords. They can also be found in the job and task descriptions.
Application documents checklist

The following tables recap key important points in your application documents – use them as a checklist when reviewing your applications before submitting them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General checklist for application documents</th>
<th>Checked?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application documents</td>
<td>Meet the company’s requirements (email, online, etc.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Save all documents as separate PDF files (CV, cover letter, certificates...)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Documents are all attributable to you by name (e.g. cv_janedoe.pdf, coverletter_doe.pdf)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Review all files for completeness before submitting them</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Send only files with certificates, evidence of employment, etc. mentioned in the CV</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have someone else proofread spelling and grammar</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General checklist for application documents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application via email</td>
<td>Include your contact details in the signature when applying via email</td>
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<td>Write a short, formal email drawing attention to the attached files</td>
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<td></td>
<td>State in the subject line what this is about: e.g. “Application for a job as a development engineer for turbines”</td>
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<td>If you catch a mistake after sending the email, correct it immediately with a friendly follow-up email</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General checklist for application documents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing your documents</td>
<td>Keep track of all your applications and save the job ads and contact persons</td>
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<td></td>
<td>It is important that you have both at hand if you are invited to an interview</td>
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### CV checklist

#### Contact details
- First name, last name
- Full home address, incl. the country
- Phone number (mobile)
- Email address

#### Personal information
- Date of birth
- Nationality (residence permit, if applicable)
- Marital status (optional)

#### Photograph
- Business formal attire suitable to the position

#### Education
- Secondary school diploma and university degrees (most recent first)
- A complete record of months and years
- If you disclose final grades, state them for all university degrees and school diplomas
- Uniform structure (name of school, title of degree, etc.)

#### Work experience
- List all relevant positions
- A complete record of months and years
- Describe activities and responsibilities with at least two bullet points
- Uniform structure (name of employer, job title or function, etc.)

#### Language skills
- State your native language
- Indicate the skill level clearly and consistently for all languages
- List language studies abroad

#### Computer skills
- List all relevant skills
- Specify the level according to job requirements

#### Hobbies
- Listed

#### References
- Note: available on request
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<th>CV checklist</th>
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<td>Military service</td>
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<td>Indicated separately</td>
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<td>In the same structure as education or work experience</td>
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<td>Continuing education</td>
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<tr>
<td>A complete record of months and years</td>
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<td>In the same structure as education</td>
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<td>Scholarships, awards</td>
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<td>Listed</td>
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<td>Extracurricular activities</td>
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<td>Listed</td>
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<td>Knowledge of methods</td>
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<td>For R&amp;D jobs or where relevant</td>
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<td>Select publications</td>
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<td>Relevant only for doctoral students, post-docs</td>
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<td>Number of pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bsc, msc students max. 2 pages</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctoral students, post-docs max. 3 pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contents</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use keywords found in the job ad and in the company’s vocabulary</td>
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<th>Checklist for the cover letter</th>
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<td>Contact details</td>
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<td>Email address</td>
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<td>Company address</td>
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<td>Correct company name</td>
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<td>Contact person, if known</td>
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<td>Full address</td>
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<td>Place and date</td>
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<td>Up to date</td>
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<td>Subject line</td>
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<td>Proper job title, reference number, etc.</td>
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<td>Contents</td>
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<td>YOU – ME – WE structure</td>
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<td>Length</td>
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<td>No more than one page</td>
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<td>Spelling and grammar</td>
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<td>Checked by other people</td>
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Applying abroad

There is little difference in the content of applications within Europe. In Switzerland and elsewhere, the focus is on providing a concise overview of accomplishments and the motivation for the application. However, the formal details of applications vary from country to country and need to be taken into account. Consult local universities’ career service websites to learn more.

Applying in the USA

There is no fundamental difference between the content of American resumes and cover letters and European applications. However, you should be aware that the priorities are different from those in our latitudes.

As a rule, you will submit only your resume and a cover letter for a non-academic job.

Like a European CV, the US resume is divided into sections by topic:

- No longer than one page
- Contact details
- Heads up: Applications in the USA do not include personal details such as a photograph, nationality, marital status, sex or date of birth.
- Education: Mention exceptional achievements and put foreign grades into perspective by specifying the highest achievable grade (e.g. GPA [grade point average]: 5.8/6.0) or quantify your performance as in “top 5% of the class”.
- Work experience: Focus on actions and outcomes (projects, activities, results), e.g. “Assessed profitability of expansion strategy in the biotech industry; the results were used by the client to make market entry decisions”.
- Language and computer skills
- Other activities (hobbies, voluntary/community work)
- Awards/honours

To learn more about applications in the USA, we recommend that you read the MIT Career Handbook (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). You will find it online at: https://gecd.mit.edu/resources/career-handbook.
Interview
How you present yourself

Congratulations! Your application was persuasive and the employer wishes to meet you. This probably makes you one of the top five or ten candidates that are usually selected from a pool of many applicants. You can be proud of this achievement, as you are now a great deal closer to your goal. But the most important part still lies ahead – the interview. Your goal in the interview is to confirm the good impression created by your application. In this section, we want to show you how to best prepare for your interview, what questions to expect, and what to do after the interview. A few days before the interview, be sure to take plenty of time to work through the following checklists and questions.

Different types of interviews
Interview techniques vary. When you get invited to an interview, you may encounter a combination of methods rather than just one. To be well-prepared for the discussion, it will benefit you to understand the fundamentals of the different styles and techniques. An overview and brief explanation of the most important and most common types of interviews follows.

Interviews are usually conducted in a structured, semi-structured or unstructured way. So, what does that mean?

A fully structured interview is scripted – all questions and the sequence are predefined, and all applicants for a given job are asked the same questions. This method gives the company a good way of comparing candidates. It will feel more like a question-and-answer session than a discussion. If you find yourself in this situation, make sure your answers tell the interviewer everything you want to convey because there will be few or no follow-up questions.

Most questions in semi-structured interviews are scripted, but their order may be changed and questions may be omitted and added during the interview. Most job interviews follow this pattern. If your interviewer asks scripted questions, but also responds to your answers and occasionally follows up on your answers, than this is a semi-structured session.
In an **unstructured interview**, interviewers do not have scripted questions; they respond intuitively to you and your profile. It feels more like a conversation that unfolds naturally. Entirely unstructured interviews are rare. If you find that your interviewers do not have scripted questions, you can steer the conversation in a certain direction. The interviewers, too, can dive deeper into topics and spend more time following up on your replies.

**Screening or pre-screening interviews**
These types of interviews are usually shorter. They serve to discover if a candidate has the right motivation and meets the fundamental requirements for a job. Usually conducted by phone or video link, these are often the first interviews in the application process. Screening interviews are often conducted by recruiters and HR managers, so be prepared to answer the usual questions about yourself and your motivation, goals and basic qualifications. The questions rarely venture into deeply technical territory.

**Phone interview**
Keep the following in mind for a phone interview:
- Prepare just like you would for a face-to-face interview.
- Be wide awake and alert even if you are conducting the interview from your living room.
- Find a quiet place where you will not be interrupted or disturbed by others.
- Keep your CV in sight and have paper and a pen ready to take notes.
- Make sure you have a good connection, use a landline if available, and switch off call waiting and the like to make sure nothing interferes with your conversation.
- Do not eat, smoke or chew gum during the interview.
- Try to smile – we can hear a smile in someone’s voice as it changes the tone for the better. Some people find it helpful to stand or walk around the room during an important phone call. This can also make your voice sound more powerful.
- Speak clearly and do not rush your words. Give some audible feedback during the interview, for example, by saying “Mmmh”, “I understand”, or the like when the interviewer offers more information about the job.
Video-Interview
A video interview usually consists of a set of pre-recorded questions for you to answer using your computer’s camera and microphone. It can also be a live interview via Skype or similar software. In addition to the points made above, keep the following in mind for a video interview:

- **Dress appropriately as you would for a face-to-face interview.**
- **Pick a quiet, neutral spot where you will not be disturbed.** Places like your shared kitchen are not the best choice; the interviewer may well be distracted by the environment.
- **Make sure you have a good internet connection and try your webcam and microphone beforehand to confirm that they work.**
- **Rather than staring at your tabletop or studying your notes, look into the camera during the interview or when answering questions.** During a live interview, try to maintain eye contact with the interviewer.
**Technical interviews and questions**

Technical interviews are usually conducted by prospective line managers or team members. They focus on your technical skills and knowledge. To prepare for an interview with a prospective superior, be ready to answer questions about all technical requirements set out in the job description and to demonstrate your technical knowledge, for example, by describing your master’s thesis or dissertation.

**Competency based interviews and questions**

The premise for this interview method is that a past behaviour is an indicator of a candidate’s future conduct. These questions address competencies that are essential to the advertised job and ask for specific examples. The interviewer may ask you something like, “Describe a situation where you had to make a difficult decision that turned out to be wrong.” To answer these questions well, you should prepare examples of all the required competencies set out in the job description. Use the STAR method to do this [see the chapter entitled “Analysis → What am I good at? – STAR method”](#).

**Situational interviews / questions**

Although situational questions are much like skill-based questions, they focus on a hypothetical situation rather than a past experience of yours. For example, “Imagine you have a deadline in three days; today you realise that you probably will not meet it. What are you going to do?”

**Stress interviews and questions**

Rare in Switzerland, this interview technique is usually only used for high-pressure, very stressful jobs. However, interviewers may want to see how you deal with pressure and stress. To this end, they could ask you a provocative question or put you under pressure in some other way. One technique is to repeatedly interrupt you. It is important to stay calm and focused in these situations and avoid being angry, aggressive or defensive.
Preparation
Always bear in this mind when preparing for an interview: If you are invited to an interview, this company sees you as a viable candidate. Businesses have no time or interest in interviewing applicants who are unsuitable for the position. If you keep this in mind during your preparations, it will affect your attitude and behaviour during the interview. You will start to see interviewers as “allies” who are pursuing the same goal as you. Both sides want a good interview and the best match of requirements, qualifications and expectations.

Add these points to your list of important to-dos when preparing for an interview:

– Learn as much as you can about the company beforehand: Read press releases and annual reports on the website and research the trade press.
– Build on your research findings to consider what questions you have about the company. Jot these down on a notepad and take it to the interview with you.
– Find out who will be interviewing you and in what language; research the interviewers’ backgrounds (position, CV, skills).
– Reread the job ad thoroughly. Make a list of the stated job requirements, the skills you have to tackle these tasks, and specific examples of these skills in action (see the chapter entitled Analysis → What am I good at? – STAR method).
– A few days before the interview, ask friends or family members to conduct a mock interview with you. Go through each of the interview stages, answering every set of questions just like you would in the actual interview.
Etiquette

Although there is no hard-and-fast rule as to how you should dress for an interview, it is definitely in your best interest to be well-groomed and look professional. This shows respect for the company and interviewers and sends the message that you are serious about this application. It is better to err on the side of being slightly overdressed than showing up in all too casual attire.

If you are unaccustomed to wearing a suit, trouser suit or jacket and skirt, get comfortable in your business attire by wearing it once or twice before the interview. You definitely want to feel at ease during the interview.

→ Tips: Preparing for the interview

→ Prepare the application documents and take a copy of each to the interview, including any certificates or grades that you have yet to add to your application.
→ Study the directions, train or bus timetables carefully to ensure you will arrive on time rather than stressed out in a hurried rush.
→ Bring a pad and pen to take notes during the conversation.
→ Note the company’s and your contact person’s phone numbers for use in the event of emergency.
The sequence and potential questions
There are no fixed procedural rules for interviews. However, you can expect most HR managers to prefer a structured or semi-structured discussion.

The order can vary from interviewer to interviewer, but most sessions follow a pattern in line with the topics to be addressed:

- Warm up
- The interviewer presents the company and the job to be filled.
- The applicant introduces herself/himself and is interviewed.
- Explore the details of the job.
- The applicant asks questions.
- You may even start discussing the terms of a contract.
- Wrap up

Warming up
The company’s representatives first want to break the ice and gain an initial impression of you. Be sure to greet all interviewers in an open and friendly manner and with a firm handshake. The various parties will introduce themselves and one will explain the order of the interview. Be attentive and friendly even at this early stage. And remember to watch your body language.

More on the company and job
Your interviewer will usually describe the company and the position to be filled before the questions start. Listen attentively and show you are interested. If you have any questions, make a note and address them at the end of the interview or ask politely if you may raise them immediately.
Up to 8 job interviews with companies of your choice on a single day.

Looking for a job?

Interview Day | campusinterview.ch | End of October

Further information and free registration:
www.campusinterview.ch

Over 50 companies.
Previous participants:
**Your turn to present yourself**

The actual interview commences; now it is time for you to sell your skills and strengths to the interviewers. Keep it natural, answering the questions briefly and to the point. Strike a clear, friendly tone and do not rush your words.

The following examples aim to help you prepare yourself well for this interview stage. Come up with a good answer to every question and rehearse its delivery with friends or your family in a mock interview. The better prepared you are for the actual questions, the less inhibited and the more comfortable you will be talking to your interviewers.

Below are some typical questions you should be prepared for.

**Background**
- Talk about your CV, emphasizing what you feel are the important points.
- What motivated you to choose your particular field of study? Why did you choose that particular university?
- How would you describe your attitude to academic life?
- What aspects of your field did you specialize in, and why?
- Share some insight into your bachelor’s or master’s thesis.
- How do you see your future career, and why?
- Do you think that your studies have prepared you well for your professional future, and in what way?

**Motives**
- Why did you apply for a job with us? What do you know about our company?
- Do you have any special connection with our company or products?
- What interests you particularly about this job?
Motivation
– Why should we employ you rather than someone else?
– What achievements are you particularly proud of?
– What has priority for you at work?
– Have you ever been dissatisfied with your performance and how did you deal with it?
– If you got the job, what would you do in the first 30 days?
– Where do you want to be in five year’s time?

Personal and social background
– How do you spend your free time?
– In a nutshell, how would you describe yourself?
– What do you think your last boss would say about you?
– Have you ever had difficulties getting along with people, and what consequences did you draw from that?
– What three positive character traits would you like to further develop?

Professional skills and inclinations
– How well do you know our profession?
– Which technical books and articles have you read recently?
– In which fields do you still have gaps and what do you intend to do about them?

Challenges
– Why is there a gap in your CV?
– Why is the grade for your bachelor’s degree so poor?
– You realise that it is impossible to meet the deadline for a job because members of your team are not reliable. What do you do?
– If I were your boss and I asked you to do something you had reservations about, what would you do?
– Do you have other applications currently under consideration?
Competency-based questions
- Describe a situation in which you had to work in a team.
- Tell me about a situation in which you had to assert yourself.
- Can you give me an example of where you had to explain something complicated to another person in easily understood terms?

Situational and hypothetical questions
- Picture this: Two of your teammates do not get along; each approaches you on their own to complain about the other person. How do you react?
- What would you do if you were a team leader and a customer called you to complain about one of your employee’s behaviour?
- If you were our company’s sales manager, what would you do first to boost our sales?

Exploring the details of the job
After the prospective employer has asked all the questions, he will probably describe in detail the main and secondary tasks of the job at hand. This may include targets, requirements, development possibilities and on-boarding. Again, listen attentively and with interest, and ask questions if you can.

Applicant’s questions
At this stage of the interview, you will be given the opportunity to ask any questions you may still have. This is your cue to take out the notepad with the questions you prepared earlier and demonstrate that you did your homework for this interview. You may ask any product-related, job-related or technical questions that were not answered earlier in the interview. Salary is a topic best left to the company representatives to bring up. Be prepared to give an annual salary range when asked about your expectations.
Examples of an applicant’s questions
- How does the department fit into the overall organization?
- What departments will I be working with?
- What is the average seniority and educational background of my prospective colleagues?
- How will I be on-boarded?
- What other projects do you have planned?
- May I ask you how long you have been with the company and how you would describe your experience?
- Can you tell me something about your corporate and management culture?
- What do you expect of me in the first three months?
- Would it be possible to see the prospective workplace and meet team members?
- What further training programs do you offer?
- What are the next steps? Will there be further interviews?
- By when can I expect to hear from you?

Discussing contract terms
Once you have asked your questions, the HR manager may explain the standard terms of employment with the company. This could happen even if the salary has yet to be discussed. Listen closely, for you are getting key information about a prospective employment contract, such as:

- A description of your functions
- Earliest starting date
- Probation period
- Notice periods
- Leave time
- Salary policy
- Social security benefits

If any of this goes unmentioned, it is best not to bring it up. Often these talking points - and the salary, especially - are not discussed in detail until you have been selected as a candidate for the position.
Wrapping up the interview
First impressions count; last impressions last. Be as mindful about your conduct at the end of the interview as you were at the beginning. It is important to arrange the next steps, particularly who calls who. If this is not clear, ask which of you will be getting in touch. Thank your interviewers for the interesting discussion and for their time.

→ **Tips: Things to do throughout the interview**

→ Be true to yourself in every situation and authentic in each answer. There is nothing wrong with admitting to the odd occasion where you failed to think about something, or didn’t know or do something.
→ Watch your body language, facial expressions and gestures.
→ Maintain eye contact with all interviewers.
→ Pay close attention to and show interest in what your interviewers are saying. Look them in the eye and signal that you are listening attentively by nodding or saying things like “I understand”.
→ Think before you reply; ask the speaker to repeat a question that you did not quite understand.
→ Keep it short and be specific.
→ Always use examples to show what you are good at and what you want. Take every opportunity to tie your answers in with your background and CV, and be sure to mention extracurricular activities.
→ Skip the personal stuff. Problems, worries, concerns or negative experiences have no place in a job interview.
→ Let your interviewer lead the conversation and do not interrupt.
→ Speak in the active voice with strong verbs and keep it positive and optimistic.
Body language

Body language sends a powerful message – we often underestimate how much we are saying without speaking. This is why we want to give you some key pointers about body language.

**Eye contact**
Make eye contact. It is through eye contact that we establish a connection with others and are perceived as an individual.

**Voice**
Pay attention to your voice and try not to speak too softly even if you are a shy person.

**Posture**
Adopt an open and alert posture, keeping your arms and hands on the table rather than folded over your chest. You may hold a pen if this calms you down.

**Handshake**
Greet your counterpart with a confident, firm handshake.

**Smile**
Try to smile even if you are nervous. This demonstrates a friendly, open attitude that can have positive impact on the course of the conversation.
Companies’ assessment criteria
Applicants never see what goes on behind the scenes of the selection process and are often left in the dark about what makes or breaks an interview. All you can do is give it your very best; the final decision will inevitably be based on an aggregate of impressions.

To give you an idea of what plays into this decision, let us recap the key assessment criteria:

- What motivated you to apply for this job?
- What are your professional and soft skills?
- What impression do your appearance, comportment and manners make?
- What are your character traits?
- How open are you to cooperation and teamwork?
- Are your ideas about the job realistic?
- Do your statements sound genuine and truthful?
- Have you given serious consideration to the question of why you are suitable for the position?
- How perceptive are you?
- How well are you able to express yourself; how strong are your communication skills?
- How does your overall behaviour come across?
- Are you a good fit for the company, institution or team?
→ **Tips: What to do after the interview**

→ Recap the interview in your mind. How did it go? Were there any unexpected questions? What went well; what could you do better next time?

→ Use your wit and intuition to assess the big picture: On the whole, did you feel comfortable? Did your potential superiors and staff colleagues seem likable? Did the described position match the expectations raised by the job ad? What is your gut telling you: Would you accept an offer?

→ Follow up on the next day by emailing some brief feedback to your contact person. Thank them again for the interview. If you still wish to pursue this job, reiterate your interest and let them know that you look forward to hearing from them again soon.

→ If you have not heard from the company by the agreed date, get in touch with your contact person.

→ If you get a job offer, you can ask for a day or two to consider it if you need this time or have questions that you want to clarify. Use this time to discuss and clear up any doubts with a company representative before accepting the offer.
Starting salaries

Differences by industry, company and position
The amount of your starting salary depends on the industry, the size of the company and your position. There are also strong regional differences within Switzerland.

When you consider a salary offer, you need to look at the whole package. The total compensation can roughly be divided into the following components:

- Base pay (annual salary, paid out in 12 or 13 instalments)
- Performance bonus
- Fringe benefits (non exhaustive):
  - Pension fund contributions
  - Paid vacation days
  - Public transportation allowance (e.g. half-fare travel card)
  - Discount on products

**→ Example A**

CHF 70,000 annual salary  
+ 25 vacation days  
+ discount on company products  
+ discount in the company cafeteria  
+ employer pension contribution above the legal minimum  
+ overtime compensation  
+ further education  
≈ CHF 95,000

**→ Example B**

CHF 82,000 annual salary  
+ 20 vacation days  
+ minimum employer pension contribution mandated by law  
+ discount on company products  
+ no overtime compensation  
≈ CHF 85,000
There are all kinds of statistics about starting salaries to be had, but these should serve merely as indicators. You can find them on the ETH website (Studies/Bachelor/Advice/Comparing degree programs), at Swissengineering, Swiss ICT and so on.

Compensation is just one of many criteria when choosing an employer. The tasks, team, company culture, development opportunities and further education programs are other important aspects to consider when you make your decision. And what matters most to you is very much a personal thing.
Alternative selection procedures
Tests and assessment centers

Before you are invited to a face-to-face meeting or an initial phone interview, you may be asked to take one or more **online tests** as part of a preselection process. There are many different types of tests that companies use to suit their purposes and the position to be filled. Some gauge personality, cultural fit, performance, or numerical and verbal skills; others test candidates using case studies. There are many online platforms where you can try out these tests. It pays to take some practice tests – then you can step up to a real test situation with the peace of mind that comes with knowing what to expect. Keep it authentic when taking personality tests; do not answer questions the way you think the company expects you to. It is hard to stay consistent if you do this in a test, and the skewed results are of no use to anyone. Stay calm and focused in performance tests. They often leave you little or no time to answer all the questions to see if your concentration slips under pressure.

Some firms use **assessment centers** to find potential employees. Companies that go down this route to select employees want to get a big-picture look at their applicants. They are interested not only in technical qualifications, but also in learning more about candidates’ personalities.

Large firms especially use assessment centers to recruit young talent. This intensive recruiting method has the advantage that it serves to assess several candidates simultaneously (group assessments as opposed to individual assessments) as they interact with one another. A team of HR officers and line managers monitor the candidates for a day or two, observing how they present themselves, communicate, behave in teams, and tackle problems. This situation puts applicants under time pressure and constant observation to test their endurance and ability to cope with stress and frustration.
Assessment criteria
Assessment centers serve the sole purpose of evaluating candidates. To this end, they often assess the following key competencies:

- Analytical and strategic thinking
- Problem solving
- Planning and organising
- Initiative and decision making
- Teamwork and cooperation
- Communicating and presenting
- Flexibility and resilience

Try to sell yourself well without exaggerating and be as natural as you can.

Tips: Preparing assessments using online resources
Here are some examples of online platforms where you can view and practice taking various tests or find more information:

- Case studies
  - www.preplounge.com
  - https://graduateconsultingclub.org/

- Assessment centers

- Other types of tests
  - https://practicereasoningtests.com/
  - https://www.einstellungstests-ueben.de/
Structure of assessment centers
Assessment centers may incorporate the following components:

- Presentation
- Group discussion
- Case study
- In-tray exercise
- Conversation with a client or an employee
- Interview or case interview

Assessment centers vary from company to company and may include other components such as personality, ability and concentration tests.

Presentation
The company wants to test your communication skills with this exercise. You receive a topic and some time to prepare, after which you have to present something on the topic. Often you are given a standpoint and have to argue persuasively in favour of it.

Here is how to make your presentation a success:

- Take a differentiated approach to your topic and structure your arguments logically.
- Try to present your thoughts in a lively, entertaining manner, and smile while speaking.
- Maintain eye contact with your audience.
- If you suddenly draw a blank, pause to think of something constructive to say rather than “um-ing” and “er-ing”.
- Use your time wisely.
Group discussion
A group discussion can address a global topic (e.g., “Smoking ban in the workplace”, “Pros and cons of phasing out nuclear energy”) or a specific business problem that needs to be solved. Participants are at times assigned specific roles.

In a group discussion, it is best to:

– Look at the person who is speaking
– Stay attentive
– Respond in a calm, level-headed way
– Be enthusiastic
– Speak slowly and clearly
– Argue rationally and do not get emotional
– Show that you are eager to promote harmony in the discussion group
– Take others’ arguments seriously and expand on them constructively
– Keep your arguments balanced
– Show that you understand others’ viewpoints before expressing your opinion
– Admit mistakes in your thinking: “That’s right; I didn’t think of that”
– Try not to come across as a know-it-all who has an answer for everything
– Throw your opinions into the ring for discussion: “I’d like to know what you think of this”
Case studies
Case studies test your analytical, logical and organizational skills. They are often interactive, but may also be an individual assignment. They usually deal with a complex problem involving one of the company’s fields of activity. The object is to analyse the problem and develop potential solutions within the allotted time. The object of a case study is not to find the “right solution” in a given scenario; it is to develop approaches to solving problems that demonstrate your ability to employ various skills in completing the assignment. This evaluation also looks at your ability to concentrate, analyse and quickly grasp complex situations, and work under pressure. Group assignments serve to assess you as a team player.

When tackling a case study, methodically analyse the task, carefully read and understand the assignment, put the information in order, and take all aspects into account. If it involves direct interaction, always share your train of thought with your interview partners. In group exercises, it is best to map out your path with documentation; evaluators can then see clearly how you arrived at your solution.

Tips: Case studies

- Take notes.
- Do not make assumptions.
- Ask questions.
- Listen carefully to the answers.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Think out loud.
- Map out your approach clearly and logically. Use frameworks and concepts to structure your solution when it is beneficial to do so.
- Briefly summarize your results.
- Take your time.
**In-tray exercise**

The point of this exercise is to allow the observers to assess your ability to work under time pressure and prioritize tasks. You are given a pile of documents to review and make decisions about. The challenge is to determine the order in which you would process the documents and to explain your priorities. Time pressure figures prominently in this exercise. You need to see the big picture and get the priorities straight – important and urgent matters come first.

The following decision-making matrix can be helpful for this exercise:
**Conversation with a client or an employee (role play)**
The idea behind role play is to put yourself in the position of an HR manager, a CEO, your superior or a team leader. You will have 5 to 15 minutes to prepare, after which you will act out a typical conflict situation with a company representative. You may have to fire, reprimand or otherwise criticize for a lack of motivation or the like. The pointers given for group discussions in the previous section also apply to role plays.

**Interview**
The assessment center interview is usually much like a “normal” interview (see the chapter entitled *Application → Interview*). But it could also be a stress interview and may focus on addressing a weakness or on posing provocative questions, e.g.:

- What speaks against our hiring you?
- What goals have you yet to attain in your [professional] life despite having resolved to achieve them?
- What is your greatest failure or disappointment, and what lesson did you learn from it?
- How do you define the terms “leadership”, “responsibility”, and “performance”?  
- There seems be no common thread running through your CV!

Do not let the questions in stress interviews throw you; just try to argue matter-of-factly. Bear in mind that your interviewer is pushing your buttons not to make a fool of you, but to see how well you stand up under pressure.
Summary

The actual application is the final step in this process. This is where all your efforts to analyse, explore and focus come together. First you need to know your skills, weaknesses and professional and personal interests and values; only then can you put together a purposeful application and prepare well for an interview.

Do not be discouraged by a rejection or a lack of response. You learn something new with each application, and success will soon follow with patience and proper preparation.

Tips: Assessment center

- Show up at the assessment center well-rested and comfortably but appropriately attired.
- Always be authentic; never put on an act for the observers.
- Make an effort to introduce yourself to the other participants before the exercises start.
- Stay open, friendly and alert.
- Tackle all assignments with a total focus and wholehearted effort.
- Never allow yourself to be provoked; always respond in a businesslike, matter-of-fact way.
- There will be no feedback given during the assessment, but do not let that bother you.
- Let others finish speaking and maintain eye contact during discussions and team assignments.
- Bear in mind that you might also being observed during breaks and meals. Steer clear of complicated issues and politics when you are making small talk and keep it innocuous during discussions.
Tips: Application

→ Know the value of your application documents: They decide if you will be deemed an interesting prospect and afforded the opportunity for an interview.
→ Invest plenty of time and money in preparing your documents – the effort and expense will be worth it, particularly for your photograph.
→ Show up for your interview well-prepared, properly attired and in a composed frame of mind.
→ Take plenty of time to recap the interview and apply what you learned to be even better prepared for other interviews to come.
→ Keep good track of your application process. Retain copies of job ads and set up an Excel file to list all contacts, applications, and the status of applications that are underway.

ETH Career Center offering: Application

→ CV workshops and checks
→ Interview/video interview training
→ Presentations on applications, CVs, LinkedIn and job interviews

Information
www.careercenter.ethz.ch – for students and doctoral students
If you worked your way through this guide, you are sure to have learned a little more about yourself and your interests and skills. You also know how to gather information about the job market and prospective jobs, and present yourself well in your documents and interviews. We hope that the wealth of tips and pointers in this application guide will ease your transition into working life and get your career off to a great start.

Now it is your turn to get your feet wet, hop on your board, and ride the wind and waves. Even the well-trained surfer needs patience and strength when the weather changes quickly, a wave breaks sooner than expected, or the wind suddenly shifts. The job market is like that – despite the best preparation, some things are simply beyond our control. The economy runs hot and cold, sectors and companies are changing, and new fields of activity are emerging.

It will take a little luck to catch the wave at the right moment, to get that gust of wind in your sails that will send you off on the perfect ride.

We wish you all the luck in the world and every success as you embark on your career. And we are delighted to have helped you set off on your important journey.

Your ETH Career Center Team
All our thanks goes to these four ETH students!
If you haven’t found it yet, keep looking.
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